

April 28, 2021 special called meeting,

The Town of Franklin Town Council held a special called meeting on Monday April 28, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Board Room. The purpose of the meeting was to consider the next steps in the search for a Town Manager. Mayor Robert S. Scott presided. Vice-Mayor Jack Horton, Council Members Joe Collins, David Culpepper, Mike Lewis, and Dinah Mashburn were present.

Staff persons present were Town Manager Summer Woodard, Town Clerk/HR Director Travis Tallent, Finance Officer Sarah Bishop, Police Chief Bill Harrell, Public Works Director Nathanael Moore, Planner Justin Setser, and Fire Chief Ben Ormond.

Town Attorney John Henning, Jr. was also present.

Discussion on the Process of Hiring a Town Manager

Town Manager Summer Woodard passed around a sample job ad, the contract that is currently being used for the position, and a proposal from Developmental Associates.

Town Attorney John Henning Jr. also gave out a proposal from Campbell Shatley Law Firm to assist in the search.

Town Manager Woodard said that Developmental Associates offered their services for \$17,400.

Town Attorney Henning, Jr. said that his law firm had done several searches for organizations in the area and that they could do something similar for probably around \$10,000.

Mayor Scott said the League of Municipalities and/or Region A was capable or helping in a similar search that would be free.

Council Member Collins said he would like a firm to narrow it down to 3 to 5 candidates before the board gets involved.

Council Member Lewis asked how much money would be left in the budget from the salary line after Summer left.

Finance Director Bishop said that there will be \$4,704 left after all payouts.

Council Member Mashburn said that she had been involved in a hiring process before with Developmental Associates and that board members were able to see all of the applications as they came in.

Council Member Culpepper said he appreciated Henning's proposal but wondered if it may place the attorney too close to the process.

Town Attorney Henning, Jr. told the Council that there are enough attorneys on staff and that they had process to avoid conflicts.

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Council Member Mashburn said that the emotional testing that Developmental Associates does is important.

The Council asked Woodard what her experience had been during the Reidsville process.

Town Manager Woodard said she never met the Council until she was one of two final candidates.

Council Member Lewis said the proposal says they will get it down to 10 and then the Council helps to guide the next steps.

Mayor Scott said he thinks the Council should look at other options. He said that he would like to choose someone local who would have experience in WNC.

Council Member Lewis said he thought it would be a disservice to the tax payers if they didn't use a firm to get the best candidate.

Council Member Culpepper asked if the Mayor was more concerned about the money or having control of the process. He said the way the proposal is laid out; the Council would still have control.

Council Member Collins said he wasn't sure that he wanted to be involved until the end.

Town Manager Woodard said that she thought the Council in Reidsville was privy to each step of the process.

Vice Mayor Horton said the process didn't have to be complicated. He said the Town needs to find somebody who's compatible with the board but also somebody who can manage day to day operations. He said the Council needs to set parameters like basic qualifications but that a decision has to be made.

Council Member Culpepper said that his biggest fear is having a yes man or woman. He said he wants somebody who is willing to disagree on one item but on the next item can be on good terms with the board. He said he doesn't want somebody who uses favoritism with board members or staff.

Town Attorney Henning, Jr. said that it was important to find somebody who is competent, that it would be a mistake to hire somebody who is not qualified.

Council Member Mashburn said that she agreed and that Developmental Associates can help avoid that.

Mayor Scott said he doesn't want to miss out on a local, well qualified candidate. He said he cannot support spending \$17,000 on a firm when there are other options.

Council Member Culpepper said that in the parameters the Council can specify a preference towards local candidates who qualify. He said he would like to have somebody in place quickly.

Council Member Collins said the Town has competent department heads and that an Interim Manager would help to get through the transition.

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Mayor Scott said that if a very qualified candidate came along then maybe they could go ahead and start and work with the current Manager.

Council Member Mashburn said the process will take 70 days according to the proposal.

Council Member Culpepper said that he could see the Mayor's point, that if a firm was involved in the past then the Town may not have ever gotten Woodard.

Council Member Mashburn said that based on her experience with the firm, Woodard would have gotten through if the Council was interested in interviewing her.

Motion was made by Collins, seconded by Lewis to accept the proposal from Developmental Associates. Motion carried. Vote: 5 to 0.

Adjourn

Motion was made by Culpepper, seconded by Lewis to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 p.m. Motion carried. Vote: 5 to 0.

Robert S. Scott, Mayor

Travis Tallent, Town Clerk