

MONTAGUE BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

Wednesday, February 8, 2023 – 5:30 PM

Town Hall – Second Floor Meeting Room AND ZOOM

Meeting Minutes

Present: Melanie Ames Zamojski, Rachel Stoler & Michael Nelson, Gina McNeely – Acting Health Director

Staff: Steve Ellis – Town Administrator

Guests: Candaicy S. David – Candidate for Health Director, Christopher Boutwell (6:07 PM)

Melanie Ames Zamojski opened the meeting at 5:34 PM

Health Position Interview Candaicy S. David

- Michael Nelson gave an overview of the Health Director position and those who have held the job in the past including Gina McNeely and Daniel Wasiuk.
- Michael Nelson made it be known that this is public meeting that it would be recorded and available for the public to view.
- This meeting was the first time that the BOH members officially met her and will have the chance to ask questions.
- The hiring committee had a diverse representation of the town and the community with a unanimous recommendation to bring forward Candaicy S. David to the BOH.
- The Board of Health members interviewed and produced candidate Candaicy S. David after a three- and half-month search. The Board of Health members were enthusiastic as they received the candidate being recommended by the hiring committee and submitted to them for tonight's meeting.
- Candaicy David has been a health officer for 16 years in the Turks and Caicos. She has an extensive background in public health as well as in the areas of septic, hurricane preparedness and wastewater as noted by Michael Nelson.
- Melanie Ames-Zamajoski asked why Montague, MA? Ms. Candaicy David expressed the preference for working for a small town similar to the island community which allows you to know who you are serving, while giving a seamless transition oppose to that of a larger community. She has done previous research and passed up jobs in the Boston and Worcester areas.
- Ms. Candaicy David also said that the Montague position would help to advance her career while she would bring a broad skill base it would provide her some opportunity to learn new skills and develop as a professional; including the ability to advance her education in the higher education arena.
- Rachel Stoler asked Ms. David if she could have dinner with one person who would it be? Ms. David responded that she would want to sit at the table with Nelson Mandela who became South Africa's first black head of state in 1994 after serving 27 years in prison; because she wanted to know how you get to a place to offer that much forgiveness. Ms. David compared this to having difficult situations everyday in public health..
- Michael Nelson brought up the health equity concern and asked Ms. David her view on the situation. She felt it is a "coined term" used most recently in the public health world and not everyone has equal access or ability to have access. In her current role, there are folks in her community where English is not their first language, so services are underutilized or unknown and she tries to make sure to address this by putting

information out in different languages and pictures to educate that portion of the population that there is help available. Another example she gave was those individuals that are the food business are usually not as educated and need coaching and assistance to comprehend and answer the exams and are given the opportunity to test one on one with an instructor orally. This ensures that members in the community have equal access to the services that are provided.

- Rachel Stoler wanted to know what the skills were of the best and worst supervisor that Ms. Candaicy had.
 - The best supervisor had skills of sharing and collaboration regarding the job and information, gave advice and presented themselves in a calm demeanor which helped to shape and control difficult situations.
 - The worst supervisor was one that was a micromanager which is very frustrating and demeaning when you know your position, have knowledge, work independently, can manage your time and those of your subordinates and resources.
- For the COVID-19 response it is an endemic disease and did manifest differently in different countries or islands from flu symptoms to more serious health issues. The response of the Turks and Caicos was tiered and included a color-coded system similar to what we have used here in Franklin County. There was a lock down within each island to contain the disease, inboard and outboarding vessels had capacity levels and sanitation was done, some inter island travel was allowed for banking and food services. Waste disposal and sanitation was done both in business and home life.
- Ms. David discussed how her office breaks down inspections of various job duties by quarters and with various staff assistance.
- Hurricane management and the partnership with the Department of Disaster Management expects along with the local public health department is an instrumental part of the needs assessment team after a disaster. This takes a major part of time during the hurricane season depending on the hurricane category. Each instance gives a lesson, and you have to bounce back from that particular situation and get the community back up and running.
- Ms. Candaicy has a staff of 5 which includes 1 Environmental Health Assistant, 2 Vector Control Officer and 2 Compliance Officers.
- Gina McNeely has over 27 years of Public Health work and was thrilled to see the extensive curriculum vitae and noted Ms. Candaicy does much more extensive work than what would be needed of her in Massachusetts. Gina noted that Ms. Candaicy also can proctor the Food Manager exam.
- Ms. Candaicy noted that they get food professionals from all over the world coming to the Turks & Caicos including Michelin Chefs or from Michelin Star restaurants. There is a need to be able to convey the needed knowledge and materials in the Food Manager classes to those individuals as those credentials are required in the Caribbean.
- Steve Ellis has spoken to the Town Counsel and they don't do immigration law. Steve has submitted a request to a firm in the Northampton area specializing in immigration matters and should hear back from them in the next few days or so. The H1-B visa is a process that is employer led and normally by larger companies. There are many eligibility requirements including a Bachelor's degree that Ms. Candaicy needs in terms of educational requirements. In comparing education requirements (WBS is a firm that does reports that compares degrees from overseas to USA equivalents) and those that Ms. Candaicy currently has include: an equivalent of a USA Associates Degree, along with a post graduate diploma which acknowledges a bachelor's degree level requirement but does not say it is a bachelor's degree. The H1-B visa is a lottery system, and it has 65,000 spots per year available (30% chance) for over 200,000 applicants. Steve spoke to the state representative office to see if there is a role they could play in helping with the

process - there is not. The lottery happens one time a year and it is in March so the timing is perfect for this process.

- There is a small fee due for the initial application to be in March 2023
- The applicants are notified by the end of March if they are selected from the lottery
- If Ms. Candaicy is chosen there will be some significant cost to obtain her as the next Public Health Director
- The applicant process costs \$5,000 to \$7, 000 which includes a premium processing fee of \$2,500
- The fee for a lawyer that specializes in Immigration runs \$300.00 -\$400.00 per hour
- There is a prevailing wage requirement for a professional job through the H1-B visa process.
- If the BOH members feel that Ms. Candaicy David is an extraordinary candidate, we can bring her as the candidate to the Selectboard on 2/13/2023
- We do not have a firm timeline in which to get her to the USA if she is chosen.
- Steve Ellis recommends if we move forward with Ms. Candaicy David the town will need to go with the immigration counsel as that would give the town the best shot as they know the requirements and process for immigration.
- Gina McNeely and Steve Ellis have discussed continued coverage given what might be necessary in the future and she would be happy to mentor Ms. Candaicy David if needed.
- Gina McNeely mentioned that she must be cautious of how many hours she works and the money she makes due to her being retired from the Town of Montague (a municipality).
- Ms. Candaicy David thanked Gina for the opportunity to mentor her if she gets the position.

*Michael Nelson **Motioned** to authorize himself and Steve Ellis to continue to work on the H1-B visa process together with Ms. Candaicy David and to recommend Ms. Candaicy David to the Selectboard as the next Director for Public Health. Seconded by Melanie Ames Zamojski. **Motion passes.***

Zamojski – Aye, Nelson – Aye, Stoler - Aye

*Michael Nelson **Motioned** to rescind the above motion. Seconded by Rachel Stoler. **Motion passes.***

Zamojski – Aye, Nelson – Aye, Stoler - Aye

*Michael Nelson **Motioned** for the BOH to offer the position of Health Director to Ms. Candaicy David pending the negotiation of terms and confirmation of availability to fill this role which will be determined through the H1-B visa process. Seconded by Rachel Stoler. **Motion passes.***

Zamojski – Aye, Nelson – Aye, Stoler - Aye

*Michael Nelson **Motioned** for the BOH to offer the position of Health Director to Ms. Candaicy David pending the negotiation of terms and confirmation of availability to fill the role which will be determined through the H1-B visa process. Along with authorizing*

*Michael Nelson and Town Administrator to manage the process of negotiations and visa application. Seconded by Rachel Stoler. **Motion passes.***

Zamojski – Aye, Nelson – Aye, Stoler - Aye

Discussion Medical Director Update:

- Melanie stated that the reason for the stipend is that we have gone a year and half without a Medical Director due to Patricia Iverson’s retirement. A request would have to go to Annual Town Meeting to ask for the position and a stipend. The BOH feels there is no question that a Medical Director is needed, and a line item added to the BOH budget. Melanie would like Gina to pursue getting the position and the stipend on the Annual Town Meeting agenda.
- We can’t offer any type of vaccines without a Medical Director. The Public Health Nurse, Cheryl Volpe would be able to administrate vaccines if we get a Medical Director. Some names that were floated as possible Medical Directors were Dr. Viadero and Dr. Lepore.
- Melanie Ames-Zamojski will touch base with Gina McNeely regarding what is needed for the Town Meeting.

Discussion Opioid Settlements Allocation of Funds:

- Steve Ellis, Town Administrator gave an update that he received approval to move forward with the application process for additional opioid settlements from retailers such as Walmart and CVS. All funds will go into the opioid stabilization account and any spending would have to go through town meeting appropriation.

Meeting adjourned: 7:16 PM

*Michael Nelson **Motioned** to adjourn the Board of Health meeting. Seconded by Rachel Stoler. **Motion passes.***

Approved by: _____

Date: _____

Documents: