

Planner and Conservation Agent Hiring Committee

Montague Town Hall – Annex Conference Room

1 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376

Also Available via Zoom

Wednesday, September 28, 2022

10:00 am

Members Present: Jen Audley (FRCOG), Mark Fairbrother (Con Com Chair), Suzanne LoManto (River Culture and Asst. Planner), Erin McClean (business owner), Francia Wisniewski (Finance Committee, Business Owner), Bill Ketchen (Building Inspector), Walter Ramsey (Assistant Town Administrator), Ron Sicard (Planning Board Chair). Also in attendance, Steve Ellis (Town Administrator), serving as facilitator. All meeting participants were physically present at the meeting.

Mr. Ellis agreed to facilitate the meeting until a chair is elected.

1. Welcome and swearing in of members. Town Clerk Deb Bourbeau appeared and swore the committee members in to their roles.
2. Review of Committee Charge. Town Administrator Steve Ellis reviewed the panel's charge in this hiring process. The committee is to manage and implement advertising and screening, forwarding potential finalist candidates for the role of Planner & Conservation Agent to the Selectboard for consideration. Charge is not to change job description. Mr. Ellis emphasized that once we start looking at resumes, it is a very private process and confidentiality is required.
3. Election of Committee Chair.

Mark Fairbrother nominated Jen Audley to be committee chair, 2nd by Erin McClean. Motion carried 7-0-1.

Mark Fairbrother nominated Suzanne LoManto as committee vice-chair, 2nd by Ron Sicard. Motion carried 7-0-1.

4. Review of Position Description/ Requirements. Walter Ramsey reviewed the job of Planner, which includes developing both comprehensive and targeted development plans, seeking funding sources, does lots of community outreach for input on given plans. Developing forward-looking plans. Oversees implementing of approved projects. Administering by-laws that are state or locally mandated. Implementing physical improvement plans, downtown revitalization and redevelopment projects. Planner should be a good facilitator and work well with other towns and agencies, and bring people and entities together. Balancing development with preserving open space/farm land. Upcoming projects: Master Plan process, reuse of the Farren property. This position does do grant-writing. Someone who can think big-picture.

Position requires a masters degree in planning or a related field, or equivalent experience. ACIS qualification is not required but a strong bonus as it is a key credential for planners.

5. Review of Hiring Process/Logistics.

Position Advertising: Discussion of what should or should not be included in the advertisement. General feedback received for edits to the proposed language, which was used in the internal (union) posting.

Discussed timeline and deadline for applications. Consensus was to state that resumes are due in by Oct 21, so that they can be reviewed the following week and interviews can start in early November. With time for the Selectboard to review candidates and then notice, we are likely looking at a start date after January 1.

Review a list of possible advertising venues, including both print and electronic, with members strongly leaning toward investment in online as opposed to print media. Considered a range of professional associations, academic institutions, traditional and online media, and diversity focused resources. The committee desires that advertising should make a pointed effort to proactively seek diversity in hiring the position, including language that is proactively encouraging of such applicants. Walter and Steve will work with Wendy to expedite advertisement and report back next meeting.

6. Next meeting: October 5 @ 4:00 Focus on development of screening/interviewing format, schedule, and protocols.

Motion to adjourn at 11:10am. Moved by Mr. Fairbrother, 2nd by Mr. Sicard. Motion carried 7-0. Mrs. Wisniewski had to depart prior to vote.

Attach job description as presented (we discussed it as is)