

JOHNSON VILLAGE TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MONDAY, MAY 13, 2022

Present:

Trustees: Steve Hatfield, Lynda Hill, Diane Lehouiller,

Others: Rosemary Audibert, Alan Gould, BJ Putvain

Absent: Ken Tourangeau

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. Call to Order

Steve called the meeting to order at 4:30.

2. Review of Agenda and Any Adjustments, Changes, Additions

3. Steve added a request from the town to use the village tractor to pull the town's york rake.

4. Presentation from Municipal Resources, Inc. for Recruitment Services for Village Manager Position

Steve invited Alan Gould to speak about the recruitment services his company, Municipal Resources, Inc., could offer to assist us in finding a new village manager. Alan said MRI has been in business for about 35 years. They predominantly work in New England. They recruit about 30-40 people a year, including city managers for cities of around 50,000 people and town administrators for communities of a few thousand. The most fiscally responsible package is what they call the assistance service package. They would function as the village's HR office. They would write up and post ads and receive and score resumes. They typically like to send out around 3 essay questions based on challenges or special needs of the position. They do preliminary screening of the applications then typically they would forward the resumes, essays, etc. to the trustees and the trustees could do interviews. They can provide sample interview questions. They charge on an hourly basis for this package. If they did a more comprehensive recruitment the cost would start around \$14,500 and could run up above \$20K.

Steve said we have an electric department and it has been suggested to him that we might be able to find a superintendent who was a retired person not able to do the physical work but knowledgeable about electric departments to help manage the electric department, which is a big piece of what the village manager traditionally has done. Then we could look for a village manager who did not necessarily have electric expertise and the manager could learn that as they went along. He asked what Alan thinks about splitting the search into two different positions.

Alan said it is definitely more difficult to find a suitable manager with utility experience. He thinks that is a pretty good way to do it. For a community this size, the village might have just as much luck advertising for a part-time manager. He often suggests that. In the current market it is very difficult to find suitable candidates. Sometimes a part-time position can attract experienced older managers who don't want to work full-time anymore. Steve said the previous manager worked 30 hours a week. If we can find an electric department

superintendent then maybe we could even cut it down to half-time. Alan agreed. He said cities of up to 20,000 people often have manager positions that are 24 hours a week.

Steve asked what Alan would suggest for a salary for a half-time manager for the Village of Johnson. Alan said he would have to do some research before giving a figure. There are a lot of wage and class studies he could refer to, though since the pandemic most older wage figures are out of date.

Steve said an electric department superintendent would most likely have to be in the union and be paid a union rate. Alan said typically management positions are not considered union positions. Rosemary said a manager would not be in the union.

Diane asked if Alan has advertised for electric department superintendents. Alan said he has done recruiting for some utilities and some manager positions that include managing utilities. It would not be unusual for his company to look for an electric department superintendent but he can't immediately recall a search for one.

Diane asked if he knows where he might advertise for an electric department superintendent. Alan said no, not off the top of his head, but there are specialized venues for each position. He would talk to people who work for him who have a background in utilities and ask them for suggestions on where to advertise. They like to get an advertisement in a live publication newspaper and a couple of specialized venues.

Diane asked, do you ever go to colleges and look at people who are graduating? Alan said they don't do that. They advertise in professional publications that would be viewed by people who are graduating and looking for jobs and they advertise with colleges. They may direct ads at alumni for a particular topic. Because they do 30 or 40 searches a year they have an extensive list of people who have applied for management positions within the last year. They may do some direct recruiting to see if they are interested in this position.

Lynda asked if Alan has any idea how to recruit a retired person. Alan said that is one reason they use the newspaper. Someone who is retired from public management or a utility and looking for work will likely see the ad there. They also have a network of people in New England for direct recruiting.

Lynda asked how big of a geographical circle they expand out to. Further than New England? Alan said some advertising venues could potentially reach a nationwide audience. We might want to advertise with the International City/County Management Association. Some people who are retiring might want to move here and get a part-time job. Advertising specific to the electric utility will probably be more regional. He doesn't know how many people would relocate into that type of job.

Steve said if Alan could give the trustees a proposal that is a little more specific, like a potential contract, the board could show it to the village attorney and discuss it at the next regular meeting.

Lynda asked if Alan has a ballpark idea how many hours we would be billed for. Alan said typically these searches are done for \$4500 or less, sometimes well under that. The candidate pools are going to be very small for this. Cost is driven by the size of the candidate pool. He noted that his company has had little success with venues like LinkedIn. They don't typically use that. Rosemary said we advertised on Indeed twice. Alan said he would want to see the ad that was used. He would probably want to edit it. He would want to see the venues we used. He will get a proposal to the village in the form of an agreement that includes the whole scope of work. *(Alan left at 4:52.)*

5. Request from Town to Borrow Village Tractor

Steve said the town has a big tractor but the village's smaller tractor is more appropriate to use for pulling the town's york rake, so the town would like to borrow the village tractor. Steve assumes liability is covered on both ends and that they will bring it back washed and gassed up. **Lynda moved to loan the town the village tractor to use with their york rake for as long as they need it, Diane seconded and the motion was passed**

6. Decision about Village Participation in the WRAP Program

Steve said he spoke to Troy this morning and Troy did not know if we would have the option of getting into this program in the future if we decline now. Rosemary explained that the program is for low income people, including renters, who cannot get money through conventional ways to weatherize their apartments or homes. This program puts their monthly loan payment on their bill and we would have to do the collections. If someone renting an apartment gets one of the loans and they move out the next tenant has to take over the loan. The loan period could be up to 15 years. Marla prepared a document listing the pros and cons, which the board reviewed. Steve said it would be a lot of extra bookkeeping for us and there are other programs available for weatherization. Diane said she thinks if we had a village manager we might consider it more seriously but she doesn't think we should participate now. Rosemary said the office employees are not in favor of participating.

Diane moved to decline participation in the WRAP program, Lynda seconded and the motion was passed.

7. Executive Session – Employee Assessment

Diane moved to go into executive session for employee assessment pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3), Lynda seconded, and the motion was passed at 4:59. The board came out of executive session at 5:20.

8. Appointment – General Foreman Position

Lynda moved to appoint Nate Brigham as general foreman for the village, Diane seconded and the motion was passed.

9. Other Business

Diane asked Rosemary who has submitted a form to have their name on the ballot for the trustee election. Rosemary said the only one so far is BJ Putvain. Monday is the deadline. Diane asked what happens if there is no one else. Rosemary said we would have a ballot with one person on it and the other article. Diane asked, if there is nobody else who wants to run, do we have to have the election? Rosemary said nothing has officially been posted yet. Steve said if we don't get any other interested candidates we can consult with VLCT about options. Rosemary said she sent the consent form to Kyle and Jena. They had a few questions and she answered them but they have not submitted consent forms.

Steve said he thinks the economic development position has become more important than ever. He met this morning at the village garage with Engineering Ventures, the architect, Troy and Nate. It is looking like the cost of the garage project will be close to a million dollars. We are probably going have to put it out to bond. We don't have anyone who has the skills to look for grants but we have this job we know we are going to have to do in about a year and a half. We had discussed that this coming winter should be the last winter the employees have to work in that garage. Rosemary said we need someone to work on the ARPA money, too. Lynda said what Steve just said needs to be repeated over and over on Front Porch Forum. Steve said he will post a short piece about the village garage. He thinks there is a lot of support in the village for keeping our electric department. When people know that huge expense is coming up that we might have to have a bond vote for, they may see value in hiring someone to look for grants. Lynda said many people don't know that. Steve said Duncan Hastings has talked about how the town got a couple of bridges built with grant funds. Rosemary said we need sidewalks.

Diane asked if we want to have the election if there is not more than one candidate. Steve said we will have to reach out to VLCT about that. We still want to have a vote on the economic development position and it doesn't cost us anything to include the vote on electing a trustee. Diane said she is thinking of not having a vote on either thing. Lynda said she thinks we need to vote on the economic development article. Diane asked, the cost will probably be \$1000? Rosemary said it will be about that. The warning has to be posted no later than May 20. Printing of the ballots is done in-house. If we don't get any other candidates for the trustee board she will contact the elections division at the Secretary of State's office to ask if we have to have the election.

10. Adjourn

It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 5:29 and the motion was passed.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths