



TOWN OF EAST LONGMEADOW
60 CENTER SQUARE
EAST LONGMEADOW, MA 01028

TOWN COUNCIL

(413) 525-5400 ext. 1001

Kathleen G. Hill, President
Michael J. Kane, Vice President R. Patrick Henry
Donald J. Anderson Thomas C. O'Connor
Joseph A. Ford Ralph E. Page

MINUTES

Town Council Minutes
August 21, 2019 at 6:00 P.M.
Council on Aging Media Room
East Longmeadow, Massachusetts 01028

Present: President Kathleen Hill, Vice President Michael Kane, Joseph Ford, Thomas O'Connor, and Ralph Page.

President Hill opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a Moment of Silence. Announcements were made in accordance with Mass General Law, and it was noted that ELCAT was taping the meeting.

President Hill announced that, before the Council addresses the agenda items, she wanted to report the reason for a loud noise that was heard earlier that day by many residents. Because there was a thunder storm occurring, it was thought that maybe the noise was thunder. However, the true origin of the noise was a controlled detonation set by first responders in reaction to an accidental chemical spill as high school teachers were preparing their rooms for the upcoming school year. The procedure followed bomb squad protocol and resulted in all forces coming together for a safe and happy outcome.

ACT ON MINUTES AND MOTIONS OF OPEN SESSION MEETING OF AUGUST 6, 2019

Motion: Councilor Page made a motion to approve the minutes of the Open Session Meeting of August 6, 2019. Councilor O'Connor seconded and all were in favor.

ACT ON MINUTES AND MOTIONS OF OPEN SESSION MEETING OF AUGUST 13, 2019

Motion: Councilor Page made a motion to approve the minutes of the Open Session Meeting of August 13, 2019. Councilor Ford seconded and all were in favor.

OLD

BUSINESS

Selection of Agency to Conduct Professional Search for Permanent Town Manager

President Hill reported that she and Vice President Kane reached out to three agencies that all have a known history of performing public office professional searches, and they had asked each agency for a proposal for a Town Manager recruitment. Each of the Council members had received all three proposals, which were from Community Paradigm Associates, Municipal Resources, and the Collins Center.

President Hill stated that she had a lengthy conversation with the principal owner of Community Paradigm Associates. She found that they are a relatively new agency, and thought their most notable strength is that the staff, including the principal owner, has all served as town managers or town administrators in their careers. She felt those staff members would have a good feeling as to what their client is looking for.

President Hill then added that all three agencies had a lengthy list of communities where they have had successes in their searches. Also, all three proposals were similar in what was offered, since the scope of work is standard in that industry. She did not have the opportunity to speak with the Collins Center, but they are familiar with the Town since they conducted the search for a permanent Town Manager three years ago. She also had not talked with Municipal Resources.

President Hill then briefly reviewed the differences in each of the agencies' costs. While they were all within a comparable range, the price of advertising is a separate cost outside the service, which would be invoiced separately.

Vice President Kane said in working with the Collins Center most of his conversations took place with sales people. He liked speaking with Community Paradigm Associates, since he was talking with the owner of the company who seemed very aggressive and interested in doing work for East Longmeadow. In fact, that owner said he would come and meet with the Council and walk them through the process.

Councilor Page said when he looked at the three proposals the costs were close, and therefore, would not affect his decision. However, being a past member of the Charter Commission, he did get to work with the Collins Center hand-in-hand for over a year. Councilor Page said the Collins Center has increased their staff dramatically since then and he felt it was important to have more people on staff to be able to cover for one another. He would be open to any of the three agencies, but felt that the Collins Center had a track record with East Longmeadow and would have a feel for what the Town is looking for.

Councilor Ford said he had a very positive experience working with the Collins Center; in fact, they had him listed as one of their references. He doesn't mind choosing a different agency, even though he liked the Collins Center. What's swaying Councilor Ford is that Community Paradigm Associates is also working with Longmeadow and their search for a permanent Town Manager, and they could be ahead in the process by already vetting candidates in this geographical area. President Hill said because Community Paradigm Associates are searching for a Longmeadow Town Manager and has just concluded a search for Palmer they are getting a pronounced understanding of Western Massachusetts culture. However, all three agencies bring viable experience to the table and none of them are separated by a weakness.

Councilor Ford asked President Hill if either she or Vice President Kane had a sense of how Community Paradigm Associates would conduct their search. President Hill responded that, if chosen, Community Paradigm Associates would be present at the earliest Town Council meeting to let the public know how they envisioned the process. They would then brainstorm with the Council as to the goals and missions of the Town and also meet with department heads in a separate meeting. Also, they highly recommended a public forum to get community input. At that point they would have enough information to develop a profile and a job description with qualifications. President Hill added that Community Paradigm Associates has a highly developed data base where they can draw candidates from that fit the profile. Ultimately, a screening committee would have to be created.

President Hill continued to say that Community Paradigm Associates would present eight or nine very strong candidates and work with the screening committee to interview and choose three or four candidates for public interviews.

Councilor Page said he had noticed that Community Paradigm Associates' proposal states that additional services, such as community forums, are billed on an hourly basis. Councilor Ford commented that there may be only one community forum, but can clarify this with them if they are chosen.

President Hill said they are probably looking at a fourteen week duration for the scope of work, which would bring them well into the December timeframe. Councilor Ford commented that, assuming the Council reaches a general consensus, the chosen agency could attend the Council's September 10 meeting, and a contract would be negotiated before that. The Council was in agreement that they should not delay the process since they will be entering the holiday and budget seasons.

Councilor O'Connor said he agreed with Councilors Ford and Page with some of what they said, and said it could save East Longmeadow some time and money if they chose Community Paradigm Associates since they are already working with Longmeadow.

At that point President Hill wanted to clarify that East Longmeadow was a distinct community from Longmeadow and the Town Manager chosen for the Town would have to be a good fit, even though East Longmeadow could capitalize on the footwork done by Community Paradigm Associates in completing their search for Longmeadow.

Councilors O'Connor and Page discussed the job description created by the search agency, and agreed that this could've been done better during the last search, and may be modified as they move forward in the process this time.

Councilor O'Connor said it appears as though Community Paradigm Associates doesn't use social media as a part of their vetting, and he thought it is important to do so. President Hill said the Council can address this with them. Councilor Ford commented that checking social media should be the Council's responsibility and it's a common practice and public information. He feels it's the search agency's responsibility to write the job description, vet the basic references, and do background screenings. Councilor Ford described the screening process done with the last search, including the importance of asking the same questions to each candidate as a way to standardize the process. He added that both President Hill and Vice President Kane felt very comfortable with Community Paradigm Associates.

President Hill replied, not to exclude Municipal Resources or the Collins Center, that she had a good feeling in talking with the owner of Community Paradigm Associates and felt they were very amiable and flexible in their discussions. President Kane commented at the time he was having conversations with Community Paradigm Associates, he had not yet received the Collins Center's proposal.

Councilor Page noticed that Community Paradigm Associates' advertising costs were the least of all three and he thinks it's one of the most important costs. He wanted to make sure the advertising goes out in many ways to the right people. If that cost ends up being more than they predicted, he is okay with that as long as the advertising is getting out. President Kane said he felt that Community

Paradigm Associates want to accommodate East Longmeadow and have their reputation reflect that the Town was happy with their services.

Motion: Councilor Ford made a motion to select Community Paradigm Associates as the agency to conduct a professional search for the permanent Town Manager position. Vice President Kane seconded and all were in favor.

Motion: Councilor O'Connor made a motion to authorize the Town Council President and Vice President to enter into negotiations with Community Paradigm Associates on any final contractual language and have that executed before the September 10, 2019 meeting. Councilor Page seconded and all were in favor.

President Hill said when Finance Director Sara Menard returns to the office on Monday, August 26, she will meet with Ms. Menard regarding the contract to make sure she is aware of the financials involved. President Hill will also set up a timeline for when the payments need to go forward.

Motion: Councilor Page made a motion to adjourn at 6:40 p.m. Councilor O'Connor seconded and all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne R. Quaglietti
Assistant Town Clerk