

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Monday, August 13, 2018
Groveland Town Hall
183 Main St, Groveland, MA 01834

Present: Chair Bill O’Neil, Vice Chair Lisa Dube-Carpenter, and Selectmen Bill Dunn, Ed Watson, and Mike Wood

Also Present: Finance Director, Denise Dembkoski

The Chair opened the meeting at 6:30pm. Cemetery Commissioner Chair Rock Dower was present to request an appointment by the Board for the recommended Foreman. Mr. Dower presented Charles “Chuck” Desrosiers to the Board. Ms. Dembkoski explained the interview process and stated that Mr. Desrosiers was the standout candidate and is very qualified for this position. Mr. Dower agreed and reiterated the same.

Selectman Dunn asked Mr. Dower about handling paperwork and if the new Foreman would handle that. Mr. Dower stated that would be the ultimate goal to get to that point, but for now the Commissioners would still handle some as the transition occurs. Selectman Dunn asked Mr. Desrosiers about his licenses. Mr. Desrosiers stated that he has his CDL. Mr. Dunn asked if Mr. Desrosiers is mechanical and could he fix a lawn mower. Mr. Desrosiers said he has some experience and can fix, or at least try to fix, most of the small equipment up there.

Selectman Watson said he was present when the Cemetery Commissioners interviewed the two finalists and he supports the appointment of Mr. Desrosiers as he seems very qualified for the position.

Selectwoman Carpenter made a motion to appoint Charles Desrosiers, of Methuen, to the position of Cemetery Foreman effective August 14, 2018, at a rate of \$18.42/hour for 40 hours/week, subject to a successful CORI. Seconded by Selectman Wood. Approved unanimously.

The Chair made a motion to enter Executive Session pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, §21 (a) (2) for the purpose of conducting employment negotiations with Rebecca Oldham, for the position of Town Planner. (Vote may be taken) He stated the Board would not be returning to open session. Selectman Wood seconded the motion and the Chair called for a roll call vote. Wood – Yes, Dunn – Yes, Watson – Yes, Carpenter – Yes, O’Neil – Yes.

Rebecca Oldham joined the Board to enter into negotiations for her employment as the Town Planner. As Ms. Dembkoski previously informed the Board, Ms. Oldham is expecting a child and given the fact that, under our current Personnel Policy, new employees receive no time off, she would like to negotiate a paid maternity leave.

Ms. Oldham presented the Board with a proposal.

- Three weeks to work from home and be available by phone and email at full pay.
- Three weeks to work in part at the office - Monday, Thursday and Friday- for four (4) hours each day, and the remaining work week hours to work from home, available by phone and email at full pay.
- Available for meetings. (One conflict, she will be unavailable for the 11/6/18 Planning Board meeting.)

Additionally she wanted to note, the Town is part of the GIC and therefore there is a 60 day “waiting period” in order to receive health benefits. Therefore, she will need to elect for COBRA (approximately \$2,700) for one month and will personally cover the cost.

Selectman Wood asked Ms. Oldham if she has worked from home before. She stated that she has. Selectman Wood said he works from home and has no problem with the proposal.

Selectwoman Carpenter asked Ms. Oldham if she would prefer to begin work on January 1, 2019 following her full maternity leave with Methuen, instead of beginning on September 4th and having to work through a maternity leave. Ms. Oldham stated that she knew the town has been looking for someone to fill this roll and she did not want to miss the opportunity of this position, so she understands the concessions she would have to make. The thought of January 1st is appealing, but was not something she was expecting. Selectman Watson agreed with Selectwoman Carpenter and thought January 1st may be a better approach. Selectwoman Carpenter stated she is concerned with Ms. Oldham’s wellbeing and wants to make sure she is doing what is best for her. The Board discussed several other options with regards to a start date.

Selectwoman Carpenter asked Ms. Dembkoski what her thoughts were on the matter. Ms. Dembkoski stated that there is not an imminent need to fill the position; however, she thought it would be best to get Rebecca on board for September 4th, have her work approximately 8 weeks to get acclimated, then take her 6 week leave and be back mid-December. The only crucial requirement is the Open Space and Recreation Plan is expiring in 2019 and Ms. Dembkoski wants to be sure Ms. Oldham will have enough time to complete it.

The Board discussed Ms. Oldham’s COBRA and the town’s waiting period under the GIC. Selectman Wood asked the Board if they would consider offering a bonus of the \$2,700 to Ms. Oldham to cover those costs. Selectwoman Carpenter and Selectman Dunn said they are not comfortable with that, but are sympathetic to the fact that there is a large expense to Ms. Oldham. Ms. Dembkoski explained that the waiting period is a state requirement, as we get our insurance through the Group Insurance Commission. Ms. Oldham said she knew that could be on the table for negotiations, but she believes that should be her responsibility and is prepared to cover that cost herself.

After further discussions, Chairman O’Neil made a motion to approve Ms. Oldham to begin work on Tuesday, September 4, 2018 and that on, or around November 1st, Ms. Oldham would be taking a six (6) week maternity leave with the first three weeks to work from home and be available by phone and email at full pay. The next three weeks to work in part at the office - Monday, Thursday and Friday- for four (4) hours each day, and the remaining work week hours to work from home, available by phone and email at full pay. During this time, Ms. Oldham will also be available for meetings, with an understanding that she will be unavailable for the 11/6/18 Planning Board meeting. Also acknowledging that Ms. Oldham will need to elect for COBRA (approximately \$2,700) for one month and will personally cover the cost until her health plan through the Town of Groveland is in effect. Seconded by Selectman Wood. Chairman O’Neil called for a roll call vote on his motion. Wood – Yes, Dunn – Yes, Watson – Yes, Carpenter – Yes, O’Neil – Yes. Motion passed unanimously.

The Board offered their welcome to Ms. Oldham and looks forward to her coming on board with the Town.

Selectman Wood made a motion to close the executive session and adjourn at 7:09pm; Seconded by Selectman Dunn. Unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

Respectfully Submitted by: Denise M. Dembkoski