

# **TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

## **Thursday, January 26, 2023**

### **I. ROLL CALL**

A special meeting of the Jamestown Town Council was held on January 26, 2023. Town Council Members present were as follows: Nancy A. Beye, Mary Meagher, Michael G. White, Randy White, and Erik Brine

Also, in attendance: Town Administrator Jamie Hainsworth, Solicitor Peter Ruggiero, Finance Director Christina Collins, and Town Clerk Roberta Fagan

### **II. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Town Council President Beye called the meeting of the Jamestown Town Council to order at 2:01 p.m. in the Jamestown Town Hall Rosamond A. Tefft Council Chambers at 93 Narragansett Avenue and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **III. SPECIAL AGENDA ITEM**

- A) Review, Discussion, and or Action and/or Vote: Town Administrator Search
  - 1. Review of applications received for the Town Administrator position.  
Possible decision to select applicants for interviews, possible decision to set interview dates, times, and place for candidate interviews.

Councilor R. White explained the process the Town Council followed for the selection of a possible Town Administrator candidate. Councilors were tasked with reviewing the applicants individually.

Vice President Meagher clarified the methodology and general process for identifying qualified candidates.

Councilor R. White stated that he knows several of the candidates from his personal/professional time in public service. There was a core of candidates that live outside of Rhode Island. Selecting a qualified professional for the Town Administrator's position weighs on the Town Council with many variables to consider such as who would be best suited to the Town's needs while also considering the importance of Town staff interaction. He made observations about the process and shared his opinion that the Open Meeting Act (OMA) created a challenge in the selection of a Town Administrator. OMA restricts the Council members from freely discussing the candidates, and Councilor R. White feels encumbered by it. He theorized that qualified individuals did not apply because their identities would be subject to OMA. He respects and agrees with the premises of the OMA, but suggests that it is not appropriate and/or applicable to this process. There should be a middle ground on certain issues.

Councilor M. White believes in the spirit of the law (OMA) but it creates challenges for municipalities. He does not believe it is applicable in the process of searching for qualified candidates.

Vice President Meagher noted there was a lack of women/diversity in the list of applicants. In the past, there was more diversity in the pool of candidates.

Town Administrator Hainsworth urged the Town Council to bring the issue to the attention of the Rhode Island General Assembly.

Councilor Brine commented on the methodology. He found it difficult to select the top three based on cover letters and resumes. Rather leadership, management, public service, other governing experience, and familiarity with Rhode Island and Jamestown specifically were candidate attributes that Councilor Brine considered. He also stated the importance of recognizing internal candidates.

All agreed 3-5 candidates should be selected. Vice President Meagher also stressed the importance of governmental experience. The candidate should enhance Town staff. She noted there was a very good pool of experienced applicants.

Solicitor Peter Ruggiero suggested that each councilor state their top three candidates.

Councilor M. White stated his top three candidates: Mark Carruolo, Edward Mello and Mark Stenkiewicz.

Vice President Meagher stated that she had selected the same 3 candidates.

President Beye also selected the same three candidates, Mark Carruolo, Mark Stenkiewicz and Edward Mello.

Councilor R. White also selected the same three candidates, Mark Stenkiewicz, Edward Mello and Mark Carruolo

Councilor Brine stated his candidates: Edward Mello, Mark Stenkiewicz, David Marciello, and Robert Zernesky.

A lengthy discussion ensued. President Beye asked if Councilor Brine was comfortable with interviewing Mark Carruolo, Mark Stenkiewicz and Edward Mello. He stated yes, but also suggested that after interviewing the three candidates the Town Council may want to review other top candidates. Mark Carruolo also rated very high on Councilor Brine's list of candidates.

Councilor Brine asked if it was advisable to send a potential list of questions to Solicitor Ruggiero which would be unique to the applicants as well as standard questions.

Dates and times for interviews were discussed.

Town Administrator Hainsworth commented that Town staff was available to assist in the process.

#### **IV. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Councilor M. White with a second by Vice President Meagher to adjourn at 2:48 p.m. Vote: President Beye, Aye; Vice President Meagher, Aye; Councilor Brine, Aye; Councilor M. White, Aye; Councilor R. White, Aye.

**Attest:**

  
**Roberta J. Fagan, Town Clerk**