



## **TOWN OF BEDFORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE COUNCIL PROCEDURE FOR TOWN MANAGER SEARCH AND SELECTION DECEMBER 2011**

The Town Council decides to conduct a search for a new Town manager using one of two methods: 1. Employing an outside agency (“headhunter”), or, 2. Conduct their own (“organic”) search without collaborating with an outside agency. If the decision is made to employ the “organic” approach, then the following format is provided, having been used previously.

NOTE: RSA 91-A: 3 WILL DETERMINE THE JUSTIFICATION AND ABILITY TO CONDUCT NON PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS AND PREVENT THE DISCLOSURE OF PERSONNEL DOCUMENTS.

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1. The Council must commit to a series of frequent dedicated working meetings. An agreed-to meeting date once a week....SAME DAY EVERY WEEK....is advised.
  2. Council reviews the Town Manager’s Job Description with the Personnel Director and other outside sources as deemed necessary, the intent of which is to require the most up to date professional standards.
  3. Council Chairman and Town Personnel Director write the “search” advertisement announcing the opening, minimum requirements, submission requirements and deadline. The announcement should indicate the Town’s commitment to protecting candidate confidentiality throughout the process as is reasonable. All resumes will be addressed to the Town Personnel Director.

4. Personnel Director submits the announcement to regional newspapers and professional publications as well as use of electronic postings including the Town's website. (The advertisement should allow two or more weeks as a deadline for receipt of applications. More time may be considered if a holiday is within the timeframe.)

5. Council meets to review the Procedure (this document), the existing Manager's Contract, and begins to develop a series of questions the Council will use to interview each prospective applicant. (Sample questions to be provided.)

6. The Town Personnel Director will receive and screen all applications to determine if the applicants meet the minimum advertised/published requirements. The Personnel Director will list each applicant according to the advertised criteria in one of three categories: 1. "qualified" 2. "gray area" 3. "not qualified". The Personnel Director will make a notation on the application as to what precipitated the "gray" area, and will note on the "not qualified" candidate's application what criteria was not met. Copies of all applications (qualified; gray area; not qualified) will be forwarded to each Town Councilor. The Personnel Director shall retain all submitted applications in accordance with the Town Personnel policy.

-The names of the applicants will be removed from the application packages (resumes, etc) prior to being reproduced (preferably electronically) for the Councilors use. An alpha numeric identifier will be used to track each package to the applicant's name. The Personnel Director shall develop a cross check procedure for identifying and protecting each applicant's identity. Only the identity of the FIVE (or less) "FINALIST" applicants will be known to the Council members (at the time of the interviews).

- The Councilors must be reminded of the CONFIDENTIALITY COMMITMENT made to each applicant.

7. The Personnel Director will acknowledge all applications reassuring the applicant of the safeguards of their confidentiality and informing them of the remaining steps in the process and the planned schedule.

8. The Personnel Director will provide each Councilor with an electronic copy of each qualified application not later than seven calendar days prior to the first scheduled Council working session after the closing of the application deadline.

- Councilors must be advised of applicant confidentiality and the need to protect all resumes in their possession. DO NOT DISCUSS THE CANDIDATES OR THE PROTECTED DETAILS OF THE PROCESS WITH ANYONE OTHER THAN COUNCIL MEMBERS.

9. ALL SUBSEQUENT TOWN COUNCIL WORKING MEETINGS IN WHICH SPECIFIC APPLICATIONS WILL BE MENTIONED WILL BE DISCUSSED IN NON PUBLIC ONLY. Such working meetings should have a published agenda announcing both Public and Non Public sessions. The Public session (IF NECESSARY) will be used to discuss or take action on any administrative actions related to the search.

10. Each Councilor, prior to the FIRST scheduled working meeting will review all applications and rank the entire list of applicants from most to least qualified (no ties) and be prepared to discuss his/her reasons for their rankings.

11. The Council will meet to review and discuss all qualified applications and by vote reduce the original list of applicants by one half or more (first pass). Three “no” votes will be considered an automatic disqualification.

12. After the first pass down selection, the remaining applicants will be asked to submit their answers to up to FOUR essay questions. The request will identify a time deadline for submission along with word limitation and pagination requirements. Essay submissions will be processed with the same confidentiality procedures as the applications.

13. The Council will meet one week later and again reduce the candidates (using the same process) by one half or (depending on the number of applications) identify up to five top applicants.

14. Upon determination of the top five applicants, the Council will interview each of the final applicants. The Council will be provided with the essay submissions for the selected five (or less) finalists prior to the interviews. (The

Council should have the essay submissions for a minimum of one week before the interviews begin.)

-The Council should plan to spend up to ninety minutes with each applicant to assure time for all Councilors' questions and follow-up as needed.

-The schedule for the interviews may require one dedicated day (weekend day preferred) or several consecutive weekday evenings.

-The interviewers should ask the same or similarly oriented questions of each applicant.

15. ALL questions should be "previewed" by the Council prior to the interview(s) to prevent redundancy of questions between Councilors. Follow-up to "planned" questions is encouraged.

16. After the selection of the FIVE (or less) FINALISTS, all applicants not meeting the minimum criteria for selection to the final five category will be sent a notification from the Personnel Director informing them that they were not selected to continue in the process. Applicants not meeting the minimum requirements shall be provided with the reason(s) for that determination.

17. The Personnel Director will draw up a DRAFT Contract after consultation with legal Counsel for the Council's consideration. The Director will offer a suggested salary range (this may be further revised after the top candidate is identified), any allowances, moving expenses or other consideration not within the Town's customary benefit package. The Council will decide on values for each offered consideration based upon the Director's recommendations.

- The Chairman and Vice Chairman will be consulted by the Personnel Director in the drafting of the Contract.

- The DRAFT contract will be discussed and agreed to by the Council before any offer is tendered.

18. Within one week the Council meets to rank the applicants based upon the resumes, essays and interviews. Each Councilor will discuss the five applicants and his/ her recommendation. After hearing all discussions each councilor will rank order the five applicants on a printed ballot. The three (3) applicants receiving the highest number of first place votes become the top choices. Should two applicants receive the same number of top choice votes the Council will discuss these two candidates and vote again; the top choice should be decided upon.

19. Selected Town Council members shall contact the references provided by each of the top two applicants to verify the applicant's resume and gather information to substantiate the recommendation. (Contact questions should be determined in advance and used in all contacts.) A minimum of three (more if determined necessary) contacts be should made to validate each application. Any discrepancies must be brought to the attention of the Chairman and the Council for consideration.

20. Upon determination of the Council's top two choices, the applicants should be scheduled to meet with the Department Heads for brief (thirty minute maximum) individual interviews. The Department heads will provide written comments back DIRECTLY to the Council Chairman (the Personnel Director will not be utilized for this step).

- Should the Department Heads' feedback indicate an "issue" (same issue voiced by more than two DHs), the Chairman will interview the respective DHs individually to determine the criticality of the "issue".

- Should the Chairman determine a valid issue he/she shall arrange for a Council discussion and decision on how to proceed. The Council may elect to disqualify the candidate and select the number two candidate.

21. Upon the Council's receipt and review of the department heads feedback the Council will meet to finalize the Council's decision, also to finalize the Contract and Salary offer.

-The top candidate will undergo a comprehensive background check including financial and criminal.

22. The Council will authorize the Chairman and Vice Chairman to meet with the selected candidate to negotiate the final Contract.

1. The Council, with the recommendations of the Personnel Director, shall provide a "negotiation" range for the elements of the proposed contract to facilitate the Chairman's ability to close the agreement without further Council consultation.