

## Summary of the Selectboard Discussion on the AD Hoc Town Government Committee Recommendations

August 19, 2024

Near the end of the time frame that the Ad Hoc Committee had submitted their recommendations, the Town Treasurer (AP position) resigned. We have been advertising for a replacement but have had few applications and none with the required qualifications. The Town Clerk has taken on that role for now. We have contracted a company to help with the financials until a qualified candidate is hired.

The Committee decided against hiring a Town Manager, recommending an Administrative Assistant with additional responsibilities similar to a Town Manager such as assisting with personnel management and hiring. The committee added additional tasks including acting as Road Commissioner, tax collector, and information and human resource officers. The Committee recommends the town keep the two current office staff positions until the Administrative Assistant analyzes the tasks performed by the Town Office Staff and recommends if both positions remain. The Committee would like the administrator in the office full-time. Please refer to the Ad Hoc Committees' recommendation for further information.

The committee asked that their proposal be brought before the Town with a warrant article and that the article be reviewed by an attorney.

Given the vast overarching authority to be assigned to the Administrative Assistant, the position would be equivalent to that of a Town Manager. Current compensation for that or similar positions is compensated in the vicinity of \$100k +/- . The Committee recommendation is \$50k to \$70k for the position, currently more in the line of an AP/Treasurer/Deputy Clerk. In the Board's opinion, it is

unlikely that we could fill the position with the qualifications and responsibilities desired at that rate, which doesn't include benefits.

The Committee also expressed that the potential hire resides in Hebron or within 30 minutes of Hebron. We believe this adds to the unlikeliness of filling the position, unsure that someone would uproot themselves and their family to move to this area for a probationary position. They might take the position as a stepping stone to say a Town Manager position in a city where they could be compensated at those rates.

The Committee suggested that the potential full-time Administrative Assistant could go to meetings/events and write grants in the hopes that they could financially support their salary. The board does not believe that is realistic. It is also unclear what grants the town would benefit from. While grants can be helpful many come with many strings attached that they are not worth the effort and time spent. We have applied for and accepted grants, such as FEMA and ARPA.

The Board believes the recommendations are a bit overkill and unrealistic for Hebron. The committee's research indicated that the Town's population will continue to decrease with time. The board believes the Town does not need 3 office people.

It is true that the current board members are unable to be in the office for hours at a time on a weekly basis but most issues that do not require a vote can be handled with good communication between members information, and direction can and have been provided to constituents. When there is a constituent issue that cannot be resolved by the office or one of the Board members the constituent with the concern(s) has come to a scheduled board meeting. There haven't been many. The board has good two-way communication with the Town's departments. In other words, there hasn't been an unmanageable

number of questions Board/Office personnel have been unable to respond to.

The Board has dealt with turnover and has made every effort to find and hire qualified and responsible people for those positions.

The Board agrees that it would be good to have someone in the office as much as possible. To that end, the Board recommends searching for an individual who would take on the role of an Administrative Assistant with responsibilities that are currently under the Board's purview but must be discussed and determined with the advice of an attorney. The Board suggests a 28 hour position, best days to be determined, with benefits (to be negotiated). On days that the Administrative Assistant is not working, non-emergency issues can be postponed or referred to a Board member.

The Board believes that the Town financials are the most important responsibility and intends to hire someone with a strong financial background. The Board also intends to contract with an outside professional agency to help oversee/check the finances as long as necessary for a few hours a month. The Board will continue to work to fill the open office position. Part/Full time, and benefits TBD.

The Board is skeptical that either a position as outlined in the Committee's report or this version will decrease the Selectboard members' commitments to merely regular board meetings, with a few extra meetings thrown in. As such the Board does not believe that the Committee's recommendation to reduce the members' "stipend" to \$1500 is reasonable, although none of us are in it for the money, recruiting future board members may also become more of a challenge than it already is. The Board has a goal in the ongoing process to try to set future board members up for success.

