

**RECORD OF SPECIAL MEETING
ELLSWORTH CITY COUNCIL**

DATE: SEPTEMBER 21, 2020

TIME: 6:00 PM

PLACE: ELLSWORTH CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

CITY COUNCIL PRESENT: BLANCHETTE, GRINDLE, HAMILTON, KAPLAN (arrived before the adjournment), MILLER, MOORE, AND PHILLIPS.

CITY COUNCIL ABSENT:

KEY SPEAKERS PRESENT: INTERIM CITY MANAGER GLENN MOSHIER, TONI DYER, RICHARD TUPPER, HEIDI GRINDLE, AND DON GERRISH.

In accordance with An Act To implement Provisions Necessary to the Health, Welfare and Safety of the Citizens of Maine in Response to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, as enacted to read: Sec G-1 1 MRSA §403-A Public proceedings through remote access during declaration of State of Emergency due to COVID-19, the meeting will be held live at 1 City Hall Plaza in the City Hall Council Chambers with only the allowable number of participants according to the Governor’s executive orders. Citizens may email questions and public comments on the public hearing agenda items as well as other items this evening to Chair Dale Hamilton at dhamilton@ellsworthmaine.gov prior to and throughout the duration of the meeting. The meeting will be broadcast live on the City of Ellsworth, Maine Facebook page and YouTube Page; as well as recorded and made available live on Spectrum Channel 1303.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ellsworthme>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/CityofEllsworthMaine>

Call to Order.

Chair Hamilton called the special meeting of the Ellsworth City Council to order at 6:00 PM.

Discussion on the planning process for the new City Manager search.

Don Gerrish explained he had provided a proposed draft of the timeline and advertisement to Councilor Grindle. Gerrish introduced himself as being from Eaton and Peabody Consulting Group as well as a retired City Manager. Grindle explained the City has contracted with Gerrish to assist them through the process of hiring a new City Manager. The process will include the advertising phase, reviewing resumes, as well as similar items. The purpose of the meeting this evening is to review that timeline as well as the advertisements. Gerrish oversaw the City Manager search five years ago for the City. The Council will need to make a final decision on a couple of items this evening so that Gerrish can start the search. The draft timeline starts with tonight’s meeting; the goal of this meeting is to finalize the process and the advertisement. Once that is completed the remaining timeline will fall into place. If the advertisement is approved this evening, it could be placed as early as September 24, 2020. Gerrish would like the Council to decide if they want him to interview all of the department heads. This process was used five years ago and involved interviewing all of the department heads individually. They were asked two questions: 1) What are the issues facing Ellsworth in the next five years and 2) What are you looking for in a new City Manager. The responses

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are confidential; however, the responses will be included within a document. Copies from five years ago were given to the HR department and the Council may have seen them as well. There was also a public meeting held. Both of these opportunities are options for the Council to consider. The public was invited to attend a meeting ran by Gerrish; he asked them two questions. What are the issues facing Ellsworth and what are you looking for in the new City Manager? This document will be created and provided to the City Council. This could also be on the website for others to see what everyone is considering for this position. Gerrish has included within the timeline a date to hold those meetings if the Council decided to move in that direction. The decision on where to advertise needs to be made this evening. If the advertisement is placed on September 24, the proposed deadline would be October 21(approximately 4 weeks). The resumes would all go to Gerrish, he will respond to everyone that submits a resume to let them know it has been received. A booklet containing all of the resumes is created; it will also have a recommendation by Gerrish on who he thinks the Council should consider interviewing. Ultimately it will be up to the Council on who to interview; however, he will write a recommendation on who he feels is important to interview. Once this is completed, a date will be scheduled to meet with the Council and review the resumes, and decide on who the Council would like to setup interviews with. The next step would be the first round of interviews. This would take a few days depending on the number of candidates the Council would like to interview. After the first round of interviews are held, then there will be a meeting to discuss which two or three candidates the Council would like to interview a second time. Gerrish will provide proposed draft questions, the Council can also add their own questions. The proposed window for the second interviews is November 16th through the 19th. Five years ago, the department heads interviewed the final candidates. Gerrish then asked the department heads for any positive or negative observations with each candidate. These comments will be written up and considered in the process. The Council will then meet again. The public gathering is a piece Eaton and Peabody Consulting Group have been conducting for the past six or seven years. This involves bringing the two finalists (the finalist will be public information) in for a meet and greet event. This will not be an opportunity for official questioning but rather just to meet the candidates. Five years ago this opportunity was given to the public and not a lot of people took advantage of the occasion. This is now held on the same evening rather than having the public make two trips out to meet the potential candidates. At this point, in the timeline the Council would make a final decision on who to hire. Gerrish has offered to negotiate the contract with the new manager. Once the contract has been agreed to the announcement is made. If the process is started this evening a manager will be named by the first of December.

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The question of where to advertise was discussed. Gerrish recommended the Council consider advertising with the following groups: ICMA (International City Manager Association) at cost of \$450 per month, MMA (Maine Municipal Association) job site for no cost, Maine Job Bank, and the City website. Gerrish stated the communities that have wanted to concentrate in the New England area have advertised in the Massachusetts Association (approximate cost per month is \$300) and New Hampshire Association (approximate cost per month is \$250). Councilor Blanchette inquired if there was a New England Association, the answer was no. There was a discussion on where to advertise with the pros and cons being considered. Gerrish provided some examples of interest netted from the different sources. Gerrish was not positive if Ellsworth advertised in Massachusetts and New Hampshire five years ago or not. The consensus of the Council present at the time (Hamilton, Phillips, Blanchette, Grindle, and Miller) agreed the advertising should be with Massachusetts Association, New Hampshire Association, and ICMA in addition to MMA and the City website. Moore had stepped out of the room and Kaplan had not arrived yet. Gerrish randomly picked November 5th through the 8th for inviting the public to a public meeting and interviewing the department heads. Hamilton was not confident of what the turnout at a meeting of that nature would be; however, he was in favor of at least offering the opportunity to the public. The public should be given an opportunity to have some involvement and the department heads to be heard in the process. It may have to be a nontraditional type of meeting in light of COVID-19 restrictions; however, is an important piece. The Council is currently holding public meetings. Gerrish stated within the advertisement it can allow residents to email comments to him so they do not have to attend in person. Electronic comments will be added to the final document. Gerrish believed it would be a good practice to include the public as much as possible. The consensus of the Council members present at the time (Hamilton, Moore, Phillips, Blanchette, Grindle, and Miller) agreed to offer both an opportunity for a public meeting of the residents and interviewing the department heads individually. Kaplan had not arrived at the meeting yet. Sometime was spent reading and describing the different elements of the advertisement from five years ago and discussing the amendments that might be needed for this time around. Gerrish may need to update the population number, the number of full-time staff members, and the budget figures. One of the items that will need to be discussed and agreed upon is whether residency in Ellsworth is desired but negotiable. Grindle noted the website needs to be updated to reflect ellsworthmaine.gov instead of what is contained in the current edition of the advertisement. Hamilton noted the advertisement lists the 23rd but the timeline lists the 21st as a deadline; he also explained his feelings in regard to the residency requirement. Hamilton felt it was

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negotiable for someone from the area that might already be established with a home and is then selected. He was not sure it would be negotiable with a successful candidate that is coming from outside of the area. The Council may want someone from outside the area to live in Ellsworth. This topic can be narrowed down or discussed as each candidate is interviewed. Gerrish noted it is important the advertisement state there is a Wastewater and Water Department as part of the City structure. The consensus was the advertisement was appropriate once the amendments mentioned this evening are included. The notebooks will contain a very preliminary background or discussion summary on the candidates that Gerrish recommends. He will not recommend any candidate that he has not at least spoken with or done a little research on. This step will not be completed on every candidate; only the ones he sees value in. The notebooks will be overnighted to the Chair of the Council and then can be delivered to the remaining Councilors. Hamilton noted that will need to be changed to have the notebooks delivered to Grindle because she is managing this process. The delivery to one person makes the process a little bit more confidential. Hamilton suggested the first round of interviews be bumped back a week as the current timeline has that falling on the week of the election (November 3rd) and that means there will be new councilors at that point. City Clerk Heidi-Noel Grindle stated a special Council meeting to accept the election results and approval to notify the people who were elected will be held on November 6, 2020. The following Monday (November 9, 2020) will be the Organizational meeting to swear in the new Councilors. Hamilton suggested considering the week of November 9th to conduct the first round of interviews. Councilor Blanchette noted the meeting with the Council, the week of October 28th or 29th will involve using the rooms that will be setup for the elections. The rooms will not be setup for the elections until Friday, October 30th. It should not be a problem to use either the Auditorium or Council Chambers on Wednesday or Thursday of that week. There was a lengthy discussion on the timeline for conducting the first round of interviews considering the unknown element of how many qualified applicants they will attract. The possibility of conducting the first round of interviews via a zoom meeting was discussed. If the timeline is kept on track the candidates will only have to travel once compared to trying to make the trip during back to back weeks. Gerrish believed the candidates should be given the option on the first round of interviews whether they would like to do that in person or through a venue like zoom. He would prefer to have a candidate appear in person for the first round of interviews; however, could understand using technology instead if they are from out of state. Blanchette was concerned about conducting an interview through zoom; Gerrish prefers using skype for interviews it is less confusing than the zoom technology. This process was described and

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considered but will be finalized later in the process. There will definitely be one new Councilor with the possibility of two new. It appeared the consensus of the Council present (Hamilton, Moore, Phillips, Blanchette, Grindle, and Miller) agreed November 12 and 13 would work best to conduct the first round of interviews. Kaplan had not arrived at the meeting yet. Gerrish did not recommend having the second interviews Thanksgiving week. Those will need to be moved to the week of November 30th through December 4, 2020. Gerrish stated if the COVID-19 restrictions are still in place the public gathering will not work. He did not think it would be safe to have members of the public come in-person to meet and greet the candidate in light of COVID. Gerrish agreed having department heads interview the candidates is important. He clarified department heads will be interviewed individually; any person who works for the City who would like to email their comments to Gerrish are welcome to do that. The interviews with the department heads could potentially be held on November 3 or 4. Prior to a successful candidate being chosen, a decision will be needed on whether the Council would like Gerrish to negotiate the contract with the successful candidate or if they would like to use someone else. He believed the Council had him handle the negotiations last time on behalf of the City. The process of negotiating with the successful candidate would take place the week of December 7th through the 11th. Potentially a new City Manager could be named the week of December 14, 2020. The date when the new manager starts will depend on how much notice they are required to provide, whether they are currently working or not, and where they are currently living. Gerrish believes anyone who is currently working will want to provide 30 to 45 days' notice to their current employer. A new manager will likely start working in either February or March depending on whether they have to relocate to this area or not. Especially during this Pandemic when so many people are out of work, communities are receiving a number of resumes; however, many are not qualified for the position. Gerrish will need a signed contract; that is an agenda item scheduled on the meeting later tonight. Hamilton noted a citizen emailed a request to hear a little more about Gerrish's background. Gerrish is from Bangor and has a degree in Public Management. He was employed for 38 years in municipal government. He held jobs such as the tax assessor, assistant manager, City Manager for 30 years in different communities, and then he retired in 2009. He has been working for Eaton and Peabody Consulting Group for approximately 11 years conducting this type of work for communities. They have completed over 45 searches which include anything from managers, police chiefs, and finance directors. Gerrish has also been appointed interim manager in nine communities. Currently, he is the Interim Manager in Casco. He was President of the International City Manager Association in 1998. He has connections throughout the

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Country. When he receives resumes from applicants outside of Maine he has a network of people to use when researching the credentials listed in their resumes. Gerrish also conducts trainings with city councils and department heads on working together as well as trainings on the roles and responsibilities of elected officials and managers. Hamilton noted in regards to the second portion of the resident's question the Council will be addressing the contract in the Regular Council meeting later this evening. The details of the contract will be available at that time. Gerrish clarified during the public meetings, he will run the meeting; the Council does not control those meetings. He will make it clear they are moving forward and not backward during those meetings and negative comments will not be entertained; the meetings have worked very well in the past. All the comments received during the public sessions will be captured within the final document. Gerrish will send the Council emails once a week on how many resumes have been received once the advertisements have been placed. The information will be detailed to include how many are from Maine, New England, and the rest of the Country. He encouraged the Council to remain positive even if during the first two weeks they do not receive very many resumes. It is common for people to wait until the end to submit their resumes. Recently, the term of a manager has been five years in most communities.

Adjournment.

*On a motion by Phillips, seconded by Moore, it was unanimously
(Councilor Kaplan was present for the vote)*

RESOLVED to approve adjournment at 6:40 PM.

A TRUE COPY

**ATTEST: _____
HEIDI-NOËL GRINDLE**

Adjournment.