

Yardley Borough Council Meeting
May 29, 2018

The meeting was held in Council Chambers with the following members present;

Ryan Berry	David Bria	Sandi Brady	Michael Ruttle
Matthew Ross	Bryon Marshall	Caroline Thompson	

Also in attendance were Mayor Chris Harding, Interim Borough Manager Paula Johnson, Chief Joseph Kelly, and Solicitor E. Closser. President Marshall calls the meeting to order at 8:00 pm, and leads with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

None

Old Business

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss and select a Search Committee for selection of a new Borough Manager. Ms Thompson states that Council voted to retain a search firm at the last meeting on May 15th. Fees were renegotiated with both firms.

The Pennsylvania firm would reduce their fee to \$4,000 if Council would form a subcommittee of 2 to 3 members who would vet candidates and provide some finalists for interviews.

The New Jersey firm suggests the job posting should be for 20 hours per week, with 3 days in the office, and agreed to lower their fee to \$11,000.

Ms Thompson moves to retain the Pennsylvania firm, Lafayette College, as the search firm for a part time manager, at a cost of \$4,000, which is seconded by Mr Bria. Mayor Harding suggests putting the “not to exceed” amount in the motion. Motion is amended, and Ms Thompson moves to retain Lafayette College as the search firm for a part time manager, at a cost of \$4,000, not including advertising costs, and not to exceed \$6,000, which is seconded by Mr Bria.

Ms Brady points out that the original proposed hours for the job were 20 to 25 hours, and not 30 to 35. Mr Ruttle states his position that hiring a search firm would be a waste of money, and that Council should vote to hire Bryon Marshall, who has expressed an interest in the job. Motion is amended to add “pending review of the contract.”

Dawn Perlmutter, 18 West College Ave, does not feel that past search firms have had good results, and that it would not be money well spent. Ms Perlmutter also feels that the candidate should live in Yardley Borough.

Susan Harvey, 141 North Main St, believes a search firm is not needed, and suggests the Council should hire Mr Marshall.

Michelle Smull, 181 S Canal St, asks if a job description has been created. The Solicitor responds that there is an Ordinance that creates the office of Borough Manager, which is a detailed description. A search firm would further clarify the job description by defining day to day functions, the hours and special projects.

Susan Taylor, 35 Lookover Lane, asks if this meeting was advertised, and why a special meeting was needed. The meeting was advertised, and was called because a decision needs to be made, and the search firms are also waiting for a decision. Ms Taylor feels that Council is not being transparent, and also believes the Borough Manager job should be a full time position.

Dawn Perlmutter suggests forming a citizens committee, to help with the search.

David Appelbaum supports hiring a search firm, but would like to see a full time Borough Manager. Mr Appelbaum asks how the Borough handled recent threat of a flash flood, without a Manager, and was told the Borough staff handled the situation. Susan Taylor points out that she and her husband opened the Canal flood gates at Afton Avenue and Lock 5, and would like to see a procedure put in place for the future.

Irene Silveus, 135 Pennsylvania Ave, supports using residents to help with the search, and believes the manager should be a local resident.

Mr Ruttle would like Council to take action now, and not spend the money on a search firm.

Mr Marshall points out that he has been public about his interest in the job, but the salary and the hours have not been made clear. He does not believe a search firm is necessary, but there needs to be standards, performance measures and reviews of the new hire.

Mr Ruttle comments that General Government and the Solicitor should explore with President Marshall the terms of employment, and move forward from there. Mr Ruttle makes a motion to table the motion. Motion fails.

A roll call vote is taken on the original motion as follows;

Ms Thompson, aye, Mr Berry, nay, Ms Brady, nay Mr Bria aye, Mr Marshall abstains, Mr Ruttle, nay Mr Ross, nay. Motion fails 4 to 2.

Ms Thompson, Mr Bria and Mr Ross, do not wish to be part of the search committee any longer. Mr Berry moves to hire NJPM as a search firm, which is seconded by Ms Brady.

Susan Harvey, 141 North Main St, comments that Council is being ineffective, and must come to a decision.

Mr Ruttle makes a motion to table the motion on the floor. Motion fails.

Roll call vote is taken as follows;

Ms Thompson, nay, Mr Berry, aye, Ms Brady, aye, Mr Bria, nay, Mr Marshall abstains, Mr Ruttle, nay, Mr Ross, nay. Motion fails, 4 to 2.

After the original search committee of Ms. Thompson, Mr. Ross and Mr. Bria stepped down, Mr. Berry agreed to lead the search process, and hopes to have a proposal at the next council meeting.

Meeting adjourns at 9:00

Submitted by,
Cheryl Cler