

**TOWN OF WEBSTER
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
DONALD BOURQUE, CHAIRMAN
RANDALL BECKER, VICE CHAIRMAN
ANDREW JOLDA
MARK DOWGIEWICZ
ROBERT MILLER**

Executive Session was held in the Auditorium at Bartlett High School on Monday, October 17, 2016. Vice-Chairman Becker called the meeting to order at 6:05 P.M.

Attendance: Robert Miller, Mark Dowgiewicz, Andrew Jolda, Randall Becker, Attorney Brian Maser & James O'Mara

Absent: Don Bourque

Topic: James O'Mara Contract

James O'Mara stated the contract got revised to reflect a new start date of November 21, 2016. Selectman Jolda stated they went by Mr. McAuliffe's old contract to guide them in this contract. Selectman Becker read Chairman Bourque's letter. He asked why the starting salary was so much money for a person with less experience than Mr. McAuliffe. Selectman Jolda stated Mr. Miller or himself did not feel comfortable giving Mr. O'Mara his full request of \$140,000 right away. He stated he consulted with the Finance Committee member and they advised him that they would support the \$135,000 then increasing it to \$140,000 in six months. Selectman Dowgiewicz stated Mr. McAuliffe was at \$125,000 when he left. Selectman Becker asked if any information has been gathered by Selectman Jolda and Selectman Miller on salaries of local Town Administrators or their contracts. Selectman Becker stated he compiled information from other towns. He handed out a spreadsheet. He stated he felt \$135,000 was too high. He stated he recommended starting at \$130,000. Selectman Miller stated it was Selectman Becker's ideas to increase the salary after the first Town Administrator's search Committee failed. He stated we needed someone to take hold of the town. He stated Mr. O'Mara has given his commitment to spend a minimum of sixty hours per week working. Selectman Becker stated the salary was also to be commensurate with qualifications, education and experience. Selectman Becker stated the contract needs to be specific with COLA. He stated the correct amount of hours needs to be changed for the personal days. He stated on page 2 under performance evaluation that it should be the Chairman not the designee. He stated on page 4 that language should be put in there to notify all of the Board of Selectmen if out more than half a day. He stated also on page 4, section 8 that the stipend is currently only offered to union employees. He stated union employees only get \$2,000. He stated this would set precedence for non-union employees. He stated he is not in favor of giving Mr. O'Mara this stipend. He stated under section C on page 4 that there shouldn't be a payout for unused vacation time. He stated vacation time is there for a reason. He stated non-union employees are not allowed this benefit. He stated in section 8K the Town of Webster does not offer short term or long term disability. He stated he would recommend offering a stipend in order for him to buy his own policy. Mr. O'Mara stated if he gets hurt with a non-work related injury that his family wouldn't be covered. Selectman Becker stated Dudley offers a \$1,500 stipend to their Town Administrator based on a copy of his contract Mr. Becker obtained. He suggesting offering a \$2,000 stipend and try to help him find coverage. He stated if they can't find coverage then they would keep the language in the contract as written.

Motion: made by Selectman Jolda, seconded by Selectman Miller to recess Executive Session at 6: 40 p.m. until after Town Meeting.

Vote: Selectman Miller – yes, Selectman Dowgiewicz – yes, Selectman Jolda – yes and Selectman Becker – yes.

Selectman Becker called the Executive Session back to order at 9:24 p.m. in the Meeting Room outside the Auditorium at Bartlett High School.

Selectman Becker stated on page 6 he would recommend striking out ICMA. He expressed concern that no review of salaries had been performed and a salary history for Mr. O'Mara had not been obtained. He stated he would like to add language to number 11 on page 6, 5th line down that states provided the Town Administrator acted within the scope of duties. He stated he would add "non-union full time employees" to section B on page 8. He asked when Mr. O'Mara would be seeking residency in Webster. Mr. O'Mara stated according to the Charter he has twelve months to seek residency or a waiver. Selectman Becker stated that would be putting a lot of mileage on a town owned vehicle. He stated he would recommend providing Mr. O'Mara with a \$400.00 a month stipend until he moves to town.

Mr. O'Mara left the room.

Selectman Becker stated the salary should start at \$130,000 and increase to \$135,000 in six months. He stated he would like to see some changes to the contract but is trying to be reasonable. Selectman Jolda stated Mr. McAuliffe did not take any raises. Selectman Miller stated experience doesn't mean everything. He stated Mr. O'Mara can see a vision. Selectman Dowgiewicz stated they can offer him \$130,000 to start then increase it to \$135,000. Selectman Miller stated that would be fair enough. He stated Webster can't compare with other towns. Selectman Becker stated he also believes they should strike the Health Insurance stipend. He stated he believes this would set up precedence for non-union employees.

Motion: made by Selectman Jolda, seconded by Selectman Becker to agree to the changes as presented.

Vote: Selectman Miller – yes, Selectman Dowgiewicz – yes, Selectman Jolda – yes and Selectman Becker – yes.

James O'Mara returned.

Attorney Maser went through the changes with Mr. O'Mara. He stated the Board voted to approve these changes. Mr. O'Mara stated he would like to see the document as a whole. Selectman Dowgiewicz asked Mr. O'Mara what his thoughts were looking at the contract. He stated he thought it was close to complete. He stated it is different now than when he came down here this evening. He stated he would need time to go over the salary, the Health Insurance stipend and the vehicle. Selectman Becker stated the town would have to buy a new car and a lot of miles will be put on it driving back and forth from Amherst. Mr. O'Mara stated he knows there is a lot of pressure to get this done. Selectmen Dowgiewicz stated he wanted to get this contract done before he left for vacation. Mr. O'Mara stated he also has a problem with the vacation day payout.

Mr. O'Mara left the room.

Selectman Becker stated he would compromise with the vehicle. He stated the Board can keep all of the changes and offer him the use of the vehicle.

Motion: made by Selectman Jolda, seconded by Selectman Dowgiewicz to offer Mr. O'Mara the use of a town owned vehicle.

Vote: Selectman Miller – yes, Selectman Dowgiewicz – yes, Selectman Jolda – yes and Selectman Becker – yes.

Selectman Miller stated the Board should offer him \$132,500 to start. Selectman Becker stated he would start with the vehicle first then the salary increase. He asked the Board to regroup before offer him the additional money.

Motion: made by Selectman Jolda, seconded by Selectman Dowgiewicz to offer Mr. O'Mara a starting salary of \$132,500 as a further negotiation point if needed.

Vote: Selectman Miller – yes, Selectman Dowgiewicz – yes, Selectman Jolda – yes and Selectman Becker – yes.

James O'Mara returned.

Attorney Maser stated the Board voted to offer him a town owned vehicle for transportation. Mr. O'Mara stated he would like to take time and discuss with his wife. He asked if he would contact Selectman Miller and Selectman Jolda. Attorney Maser stated the Board took a vote and that he can respond to entire Board. Attorney Maser agreed to make the changes as discussed and send the revised contract out as soon as possible to everyone.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: made by Selectman Miller, seconded by Selectman Jolda to adjourn Executive Session at 10:43 P.M.

Vote: Selectman Miller – yes, Selectman Dowgiewicz – yes, Selectman Jolda – yes and Selectman Becker – yes.

Respectfully submitted,
Courtney M. Friedland
Executive Secretary