

Westbrook Public Library Board of Trustees
Special Meeting
September 3, 2019
At Westbrook Public Library, Ct

Called to Order at 7:00 p.m. by MaryJo Noonan, Chair

In Attendance:

Katherine Bishop, Martha Neale, MaryJo Noonan, Lynda Tragakes, Paul Winch, Melinda Xenelis, Lewis Daniels (Library Director).

Guest: State Librarian Kendall Wiggins

Agenda: To discuss the hiring of a new Library Director.

Discussion with Kendall Wiggins:

Search Committee:

- Should include Board reps as well as members of the community- town officials, reps from schools, patrons/friends, member of library staff (not Lew), librarian from neighboring town
- The Search Committee/Board should not meet w/ all of the staff
- Chair should be a Board member
- Does the town's HR require a rep for compliance purposes?
- Role of search committee: to receive, share applications
- These meetings are not open- not subject to FOI so no need to post
- SC does the initial interviews

Process:

- Share info & resumes ahead of time
- Have a rubric for evaluation purposes, based on the job description
- Interviews do not need to be consistent- can be phone, skype, in person
- The cost of transportation to interviews is not covered by the Board
- The Search Committee interviews possible candidates, narrows the choice down to a few & then Board interviews those selected by the search committee, with possibly separate set of questions

Job Description:

- Skill based
- Although Lew should stay out of the actual search, he can provide crucial info about skill set, provide ad content, create a fact sheet, possible challenges, his reflections on the job, etc.
- Lew's job is to organize/clear out files & organize building info
- Make the job sound attractive
- Point out retirement of current Director
- Provide plenty of info about the community
- Sell your community & sell your library
- Include what the vision for the future is
- Date expectations should be clear.
- Do they need a driver's license?

- Include salary range so this is known from the start & there are no misunderstandings later in the process. A range allows flexibility, based on experience.
- Or, you could just set the range w/no flexibility
- Our salary is competitive, considering size & location

Current Job Market:

- At this time, there are a fair number of retirements
- You will not get many, but don't get discouraged
- Expect 7-8 applicants
- Assistant Librarians might apply, but should have experience w/Boards, decision making, supervision, town committees. WPL is a good place for someone to move up.
- Possible candidate might include folks retiring from large libraries.
- Do you want someone who may not want to be here too long & just work a few more years, or someone who is eager to grow & wants to build a career?
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Listing:

- List Jan-Feb '20
- Dawn Lavelle (?), at the State Library, can help w/ where to place ads and questions to ask during interviews.
- Advertise for 1 month, but not much longer
- Accept electronically
- Create a new email (librarysearch...) through which to receive applications
- Out of state listings might not be too helpful
- It is not required to be in the newspaper (as in the past)
- Let the community know- maybe an article in the local newspapers, that references the website through which one can get info about the job?

Interviews:

- Do them all in a couple of days
- Better to do all at once because it is easy to forget if spread out over a long time
- Lew should not be involved, should not sit in on interviews
- He can be very helpful w/ listing, using job boards- RI & NYC listing is free
- All questions must be consistent, with the same questions
- Relate them to the job posting & description
- "Give me an example of how you communicated to your..."
- You can do some follow up questions, but be very careful
- Don't show favoritism
- Take careful notes during the interviews, on each question
- Provide interviewees an opportunity to ask questions & include any info that did not come out in the interview, that he/she feels is pertinent
- The Search Committee recommends 2-3 for interview by the Board
- The Board will have a set of the same questions that are to be asked of each candidate
- All Board members should be engaged
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Evaluations & Decisions::

- Who does the background check? Town HR? Chair of Search Committee?

- The Search Committee or Chair should meet w/ town HR, even though the Board has authority.
- Maybe have HR rep come to a monthly Board meeting? Maybe earlier in the process so there is an understanding of who does what?
- It is legitimate to not have a reference from current employer
- The Board, not the Search Committee makes the final decisions

Timeline (?):

- Jan- Feb: get Search Committee going- working on details
- March-April: post ad
- 30 day window
- April-May: interviews
- June 1: hire. Should not be too much overlap of Lew & new hire
- June 30: Lew finishes up

Misc:

- Bishop mentioned how helpful the State Library workbook is. Lots of resources.
- How to monitor job performance of new hire? How to review? Should be done by Board member. 90 day probation? Can we use Lew's "to do" list?
- How to address upcoming retirements? Will need a children's Librarian & library technical assistant

Adjourned: 8:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by M. Neale