

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

Special Meeting

Monday – April 29, 2024 – 11:00 A.M.

The Special Meeting of the Knox County Commission was held on Monday, April 29, 2024, at 11:00 A.M., at the County Courthouse, 62 Union Street, Rockland, Maine.

Commission members present were: Edward B. Glaser, Commissioner District #1 and Richard L. Parent, Jr., Commissioner District #2 and Sharyn L. Pohlman, Commissioner District #3. (Via ZOOM)

County staff present included: Gordon V. Page, Interim County Administrator and Administrative Assistant Wendy Galvin

Others: None

Special Meeting – Agenda
Monday – April 29, 2024 – 11:00 A.M.

Town Hall Streams:

https://townhallstreams.com/stream.php?location_id=50&id=60007

ZOOM link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88351674796>

- I. 11:00 Meeting Called to Order**
- II. 11:01 Public Comment** - Public Comment during other portions of the meeting will only be granted by permission of the Chair.
- III. 11:02 Action Item**
 - 1. Act to Determine the County Administrator Hiring Process
 - 2. Act to Approve and Authorize Gordon V. Page, Interim County Administrator to Sign and Execute all NBRC Documents Including Investment Documents That Bind the Applicant.
- IV. Adjourn**

- I. Meeting Called to Order**

Commissioner Glaser called the Special Meeting of the Knox County Commission to order at 11:04 P.M.
- II. Public Comment** - Public Comment during other portions of the meeting will only be granted by permission of the Chair.
None
- III. Action Items**
 - 1. **Act to Determine the County Administrator Hiring Process.**

All to participate in discussion.

 - **Commissioner Glaser** – We have on our table a few alternative possible ways of doing this. It seems like the first one is for the Committee that we have created that has been interviewing people to make an offer to the top candidate, and forward the decision to the Commission for ratification. The other one is having the Committee make a sole recommendation to the Commission, and then the Commission ratifies by unanimous consent, and makes an offer to that candidate. The third one would be the Committee submits more than one candidate in a 1st, 2nd and 3rd format. Then the Commission would decide on how it wants to proceed. Following the Oral Boards, the Committee could also submit 1, 2 or 3 finalists, and the Commission would make the final selection. Or following the Oral Boards the Committee makes no recommendation and the process begins anew. I will open this up to

any discussion any Commission member would like to have. Does anyone have a preference?

- **Commissioner Parent** – I would like to hear the recommendation from the Board Member we have here on who they would feel would be the best.
- **Interim County Administrator Gordon V. Page** – There was some discussions about these options and some disparity. I sent the option sheet to the 3 Commissioners, and heard back from 2. Of the 2 there was disparity in those choices. I'll speak for myself then would like to hear from the other members. My recommendation would be the Committee submits 1, 2 or 3 finalists for the Commissioner meeting. There were 3 finalists, and the Committee may have not made a decision. The Committee may in fact whittle out 1 or 2 or all 3. So, at this point my recommendation would give the Committee the opportunity to select 1, 2 or 3. That is my singular opinion.
- **Finance Director Kathy Robinson** – I thought the purpose of having a Commissioner on the board was to have a voice for the Commission as a total in that 1 name would come for you to agree upon & approve. My recommendation would be that 1 would come forward.
- **Human Resources Manager Amber Christie** – I agree with Gordon but also feel it was important to have a Commissioner on the Board to help make a selection. I am just not sure how much information the 2 of you would like to have in regards to the candidates. We chose a Commissioner to represent the Commission and to give their stamp of approval. (Inaudible)
- **Commissioner Glaser** – The last person that we have here who is on the Committee is Commissioner Pohlman.
- **Commissioner Pohlman** – I would like to hear yours as well since I believe you and I differed. After going through it as Gordon suggested, there were some differing opinions and my understanding is that the reason why we are having this meeting today is because the Commissioners are not on the same page to move the process forward. Given that you are the Commissioner that will be working with this individual, you had an opinion and I would like to hear yours.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – I'm happy to share my opinion. There are not a lot of things that the Commission does on a regular basis. One thing we do is we hire the Administrator, which sets in motion everything else. It is appropriate to have a committee of staff and a Commissioner to choose who they think is the best candidate, but it really is up to the Commission to hire that person. Some of things that basically says that the Committee is the one that is hiring the person and we just rubber stamp it. The 2nd one is the same thing, and make a sole recommendation to the Commission and we just ratify by unanimous consent. This doesn't give us any way to interview the person to decide whether or not that's the person we want. There may not be the 3rd one where we'd have the 1, 2 & 3rd choice, and there may not be a 1, 2 & 3rd choice. It may be that one person rises to the top, but I would like to know who the other 2 people are and what they brought. The one about the Committee submits the 3 finalists for the Commission to meet, interview and we make final selection from that seems to me to be the way for us to go. Otherwise, it leaves the other 2 Commissioners out of the decision whatsoever. I don't think that is our role. Our role is to hire this person. It may be that having been through this process before that really there is only one candidate who is better than everybody else. The 5th one here is following the Oral Boards. The Committee makes no recommendation. That really is a matter of whether there is nobody who's any good. I will leave that up to the Committee to decide if there is nobody who rises to the top. I don't think it's up to the Commission to step in and oh but we like this one. The Committee is to weed through the people. If they have weeded through the people, it is appropriate for us to at least mirror that process to so extend and understand why they came to that decision. I don't know if we should aggregate our authority as the body that makes that decision or to just go along with whatever the decision is. That's my take on it.
- **Commissioner Parent** – I won't be as elaborate as you, but one thing that would bother me in terms of me making the selection, is I don't know the information that the Board knows. I

don't see the applications; I don't know the background or anything about the candidate. I don't feel like I'm equipped to make that selection. You folks are the ones that have that information, not I. I think 1 is a good choice, and not comfortable with 3 for the same reason I just gave you. I don't know the information you know. I might be able to tell from the interview to make a choice, but I am depending on you to make that choice.

- **Commissioner Glaser** – If you had that information, we can get packets from those 3 people. That is within our authority. It's not like it's a secret they are keeping from us. How many did we get?
- **Commissioner Parent** – How come we had this Board?
- **Commissioner Glaser** – We had this Board because we had how many different applications?
- **HR Manager Amber Christie** – We received 10-15.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – At this point they decided that 3 are the best. They will be doing in person interviews now. We need to make sure this person fits all of our needs.
- **Commissioner Parent** – If they number them 1,2,3 then we know their choice, and we could work from that.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – There is one more process there. Once we get the applications and we see who the 1st, 2nd & 3rd is, then we make a decision on how to proceed. I think we would want to meet in Executive Session to discuss this.
- **Finance Director Kathy Robinson** - Can I make a middle of the road recommendation. How about if you interviewed the 1st & the 2nd.
- **Commissioner Pohlman** – I agree with Kathy.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – I'm willing to do that. I don't want us to interview a second person if you really think that 1st person is the best. I don't want to go through a process of interviewing a second person just because we said there is a second person.
- **Interim County Administrator Gordon Page** – That brings us to number 4. This allows it to be left up to the Committee to select 1,2 3 or even 4. They decide how many would be appropriate.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – One of the reasons why we are discussing this right now is because we are getting close. We don't want to drag this process on too much longer just because we want to add our two cents it shouldn't go on forever. The reason why we are doing this right now and fairly quickly is so once you are done with your interview you can make that recommendation, and pretty quickly after that we can interview that person. The is another part to this that it talks about in one of them.....number 2. Yes, the Commission ratifies unanimous consent and makes an offer to that candidate. That is the only one that talks about making an offer to a candidate. We need input, and this is where you guys come in, as to what that offer is and what it entails. I don't think we know enough about what the payrates are etc. Almost everybody looks at it as says ok you're hiring a new person who doesn't have the experience of the last Administrator so therefor they should get paid less. We know often times that's not how it works. When you get a new person, they pay goes to what it is supposed to be. There are other parts of the offer in terms of vacation time, moving expenses, and we really don't know what to do. We are going to lean pretty heavily to you (Amber) for guidance.
- **Commissioner Parent** – We can't make an offer in terms of the benefits that would be provided. Nor, can we make an offer based on the amount of money that will be offered. We'll have to have Amber come in and do her things, and then if the candidate says well, I can't work for that. Then we are stuck going through the process all over again.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – There is a little bit of a negotiation that also probably entails the County Attorney where it's a contract.
- **Interim County Administrator Gordon Page** – It is similar to what I went through. Once you made a decision, I worked with Peter Marchesi. There is some president for the Commission making this decision. I my observation over the last several weeks, there is a lot

of rubber stamping. The Commission is ultimately responsible for hiring any department head, perhaps the County Administrator makes a recommendation. It is not uncommon or unheard of that an individual is recommended by the County Administrator, and the Commission doesn't vote unanimously. That happened not too long ago.

- **Commissioner Pohlman** – Given so that everybody has the opportunity to understand who was interviewed, the process and all of that so there are no lingering questions afterward. I think, and heard at some point, if we just bring in 1 & 2 and the Commission can weigh in and make a decision.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – That sounds good. Do we need to make a formal vote on this as a process or do we just all agree and know where we want to take it?
- **Commissioner Pohlman** – Can I add one thing? We need to do this as soon as possible. Time is of the essence. The Board has spent countless hours on this and the interviewees have come in so the sooner we can move this forward and come to a decision the better.
- **Commissioner Parent** – Agreed.
- **Kathy** – amber will check with legal. Not sure why a contract has been put in place for an administrator where they are a county employee. We weren't looking to treat this any differently unless
- **Finance Director Kathy Robinson** – Amber and I were discussing and we were going to check with legal that I'm not sure why a contract has been put in place in the past for a County Administrator where they are a County employee. Why have we treated that differently than others, and is it something we have to do? We will look at what the appropriate salary would be based on what our policy is, and we will start there. Which would then drive how much vacation time will come for that employee. We weren't looking to treat this any differently unless there is a legal reason why we need to.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – There probably isn't a legal reason but I think any employee at that level wants the surety of a contract. Almost everybody at that level of administration wants a contract rather than to be a typical employee.
- **Finance Director Kathy Robinson** – We need to know if that's an option or a requirement for us, and how much leeway we have. We haven't done this in many years, and we just need to revisit it.
- **Interim County Administrator Gordon Page** – At that point, are you empowering the Committee to do the back-and-forth negotiation? Will they parameters? For example, if the pay scale by policy is at \$100,000, and the individual says I want \$125,000 does the Committee have the authority to make that change? Before you answer that, in my opinion, the Commission regardless of policy has the authority to override any policy, and make the decision favorable to the County.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – We don't give up the authority for a lot of reasons, but for budgetary reasons we don't just say hire somebody at that level and pay them, without the whole Commission having some say. We do have a Commissioner on that Committee who has that sense of where it comes from and how it goes. I don't think we give it up. Assuming we sign a contract with this person, at that point we are agreeing to that. As far as negotiating I don't know that it helps to have all 3 of us negotiating.
- **Interim County Administrator Gordon Page** – Did the former Administrator have a contract?
- **Commissioner Glaser** – Yes.
- **Commissioner Parent** – Perhaps that will be....one of things you will be dealing with is pay scale when you interview people. Maybe that will all be done and all we do is say yah we'll hire you. They'll know what they're going to get already and they know what the benefits are.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – Another argument for us interviewing the number 2 person is just in case the number 1 person says oh no I don't like that contract at all. Then we would go to the second person and say ok you're out first choice.

- **Interim County Administrator Gordon Page** – I understand that point Commissioner, but in essence the Committee decides that if they have the option 1, 2 or 3 there may not be a 2 at the same level. The question is does the Commission want to settle on the second candidate choice, or do you want to start all over again?
- **Commissioner Glaser** – There is a certain amount of give and take that's going to happen through the rest of this process. I don't think the fact that they are interviewing 3 people means that one is better. I think at this point they are thinking they all have their pluses.
- **Commissioner Parent** – I would say that if the Board has 2 candidates that stand way above the rest, then we don't need that 3rd candidate.
- **Commissioner Pohlman** – I agree with Rick. I don't think we need to keep throwing people into the mix just to have more.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – I don't disagree with that.
- **Commissioner Pohlman** – The first thing is, the Commission wants to talk with them and interview them so I think we start there. Then we should move forward as appropriate.
- **Interim County Administrator Gordon Page** – Look at bullet point #3 on the last line.
- **HR Manager Amber Christie** – The first thing is to get both candidates scheduled to meet with Commission. Do you want everyone to Zoom in or just Sharyn?
- **Commissioner Glaser** – If we can do it in person, we'd like to do it that way.
- **Interim County Administrator Gordon Page** –To clarify, you want 2 candidates or do you want the Committee to submit 1 or 2 or 3?
- **Commissioner Glaser** – We would like Committee to use their discretion as to what they think.
- **Interim County Administrator Gordon Page** – At this point, I think it's fair to say to report to the Commission that the Committee did a straw vote at the end of the 3 interviews. They decided there is was just one.
- **Commissioner Pohlman** – Yes. At the end we did come to that consensus but there was discussion and some different opinions going into that. Coming out we were united.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – When are you looking at interviewing these people?
- **HR Manager Amber Christie** – We are all done interviewing. We would just be scheduling our recommendation to the Commission hopefully this week. Once that happens, I will work out the terms.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – I will send you my availability times.
- **Commissioner Parent** - I can't be here on the 15th or 18th of May.
- **HR Manager Amber Christie** – We will be doing this sooner.
- **Commissioner Pohlman** – I am flexible. The sooner the better.

2. **Act to Approve and Authorize Gordon V. Page, Interim County Administrator to Sign and Execute all NBRC Documents Including Investment Documents That Bind the Applicant.**

Northern Borders' grants (Electric Charging Stations), requires this resolution to accept Gordon's signature on their paperwork. (See attached Authorized Official Resolution for NBRC). Our Quarterly Report is due Tuesday, April 30, 2024. This resolution and authorization will allow us to file the report timely.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Parent to Act to Approve and Authorize Gordon V. Page, Interim County Administrator to Sign and Execute all NBRC Documents Including Investment Documents That Bind the Applicant. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

IV. Adjourn

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Parent to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with both in favor.*

The special meeting adjourned at 11:42 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Galvin
Administrative Assistant

The Knox County Commission approved these minutes at their regular meeting held on May 14, 2024.