BOARD OFSELECTMEN
Monday, August 8, 2022
Nicholas J. DiCorleto, Jr. Meeting Hall

SELECTMEN PRESENT:
Lori Spielman, David Stavens, Melinda Ferry, James Prichard, John Turner, Ronald Stomberg, Michael Madru

OTHERS PRESENT:
Walter Lee, Emergency & Risk Management Director; Tiffany Pignataro, Finance Officer/Treasurer; Brian Greenleaf, Director of Finance and Operations, Ellington Public Schools; James York, Fire Marshal; LouAnn Cannella, Human Resources Coordinator; *Ginger MacHattie, *Mary Cone, *John Cone, *Jim Fay, Tom Paishaw, Jonathan Moser, Mike Swanson, Peg Busse, Betsi Feldman

*Attended via ZOOM

First Selectman Lori Spielman opened the public hearing at 6:00 p.m. and asked Mr. Turner to read the following legal notice:

PUBLIC HEARING

The Town of Ellington will hold a Public Hearing on Monday, August 8, 2022 at 6:00 p.m., prevailing time, at the Ellington Town Hall, Nicholas J. DiCorleto, Jr. Meeting Hall, 55 Main Street, Ellington, CT for the purpose of allowing citizens to comment upon the Board of Selectmen’s approval of the addition of a full-time Town Administrator position and the transition of the First Selectman position to part-time.

All interested parties are encouraged to attend in person or via ZOOM. Individuals will have the opportunity to raise their hand to provide their name, address and comment either in person or via ZOOM.

Dated at Ellington, Connecticut, this 25th day of July, 2022.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Lori L. Spielman, First Selectman

Journal Inquirer: July 28, 2022

Peg Busse, 37 Abbott Road, shared that she was not opposed to the addition of the Town Administrator position but that she had a few concerns about the overall process. She emphasized her belief in the importance of protections for the employee, especially if an employment contract isn’t going to be drawn up. First Selectman Spielman commented that an offer letter will be created and signed off on, which is the same process as hiring other Department Heads. Ms. Busse stated her belief that without a change to the Town Charter or the development of a formal contract, it may be hard to guarantee quality candidates. Mr. Stavens commented that the decision to hire a Town Administrator as opposed to a
Town Manager was made, in part, due to the desire to keep the current form of government, which would not require a change to the Town Charter. Mr. Madru confirmed with Ms. Busse that her concern is over what could be perceived as a lack of job security; Ms. Busse said yes, and that if the BOS years down the road wanted to revert back to the current arrangement, there would be nothing in place to stop that from happening. Mr. Turner commented that the chances of that are very slim with elections taking place every two years, and that he doesn’t view this as being any different from another Department Head.

Tom Paishaw, 120 Pinney Street, asked if this would be a regular employee or a management position; it was clarified that this position would be exempt and managerial in nature, like other Department Heads.

Jon Moser, 31 Frog Hollow Road, expressed his support for the change and stated that as the Town grows, having this position in place will be helpful. He asked about the selection process. First Selectman Spielman stated that it will be the same process that is currently in place for the hiring of Department Heads; a panel including Department Heads, agency representatives and one or more Town Administrators from other municipalities will be put together and interview selected candidates, and the recommendation(s) from that panel will be presented to the BOS. Mr. Moser asked if a citizen would ever be considered for such a panel. Betsy Feldman, who served on the Ad Hoc Government Study Committee, asked if citizens have ever been included in these panels in the past; First Selectman Spielman stated that they have not. Mr. Turner added that the Town has access to resources within the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities and the Capitol Region Council of Governments, as well, which could be very useful in the search for candidates.

Mike Swanson, 27 Stendish Road, supports the changes as well, and shared a few comments. He stated that the transition of the First Selectman to part-time will likely open up the pool of candidates, as individuals would be able to maintain their existing full-time jobs and still perform the duties of the part-time First Selectman. He also shared that he is against the development as an employment contract, as it could cause the Town to be stuck with an individual that isn’t a good fit.

Selectman Michael Madru, 6 Settlers Way, asked what plan would be in place if the Town Administrator leaves or is removed from the position. Mr. Turner commented that the process would be no different than from when Department Heads have left in the past; the BOS will evaluate the situation and decide the best individual to temporarily step into that management role. Ms. Ferry commented that both job descriptions include working closely with the schools; both the First Selectman and Town Administrator will have working relationships with school officials, and the exact split of duties will be determined as those relationships develop.

Mr. Swanson asked when this transition will be taking place. First Selectman answered that the addition of the Town Administrator will be targeted for April 2023, and the First Selectman will remain full-time through the conclusion of the current term, at which point the position will transfer to part-time.

Hearing no further comments, Mr. Turner declared that the Public Hearing was closed at 6:26 pm and thanked everyone for coming and sharing their thoughts.

Submitted by Julia Connor
Recording Secretary

Approved by Lori L. Spielman
First Selectman