**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING**

**MINUTES OF**

**May 12, 2022**

**Buzzards Bay Water District. 15 Wallace Ave. Buzzards Bay, MA 02532**

**MINUTES**

Present:

Wendy Chapman, Chairperson

Joe Carrara, Commissioner

Mark McMahon, Commissioner

Skip Barlow, Commissioner

Steven Souza, Superintendent

Barry Woods, Admin. Support

Louise Warren, Billing Clerk

Wendy Chapman, Chairman, does roll call and Joe Carrara, Mark McMahon and Skip Barlow are present.

Wendy makes a motion to approve the commitment for April 22.

Joe Carrara makes a motion. Mark seconds.

Wendy declares it’s a unanimous vote. Wendy says we don't have to do the roll calls anymore because we're in person. She needs a motion to approve the meeting minutes for April 22 and asks if everyone has had a chance to read them. They have and Mark makes a motion to approve the minutes. Joe seconds and it is a unanimous vote.

Wendy begins by the discussion regarding updating the job posting and the salary for the Treasurer position. She continues that she wants to inform the Board that Steve has not had that many applications come in. We need to tweak the posting somewhat to receive more applications. She asks Steve how many applications we have and how many are qualified?

Steve answers maybe 2.

Joe asks if anyone has the qualifications.

Steve says there are 2 people that he believes could walk into the position and be able to handle it easily. The other six or seven alone have no experience at all. We're talking anywhere from a carpenter to a car lot attendant.

Barry says he took the liberty to redo the positing based on when Jen was hired and looked at some other more up to date postings on other district websites. That is in your packets. I also readjusted the salary. What I basically did is take the existing not the current fiscal budget coming up but the budget that we're in and I took the starting salary up to the top salary of five steps out of the 10 steps that are available for that position. It gave you a steady range to let people know what it is but also the salary ranges commensurate with the education and experience requirements. It's the range that they would earn if they come on board. If they don't ask for more than the lower flow scale it is still under budget.

Wendy spoke with Maureen Dunn who has an accounting background. She feels that we need to draw a qualified candidate to handle our money. She gave us suggestion for the range for what accountants usually get. We're basing it on is somebody from that field and what they would consider an adequate starting pay. We don't want to just settle for whoever applied if you get one qualified candidate, you don't want to just settle for one, you want to be able to have at least two or three to pick from, not just have one.

Barry adds that in looking at some of the other districts across the state, there are some that are part time, 24 hours, and the salary range for those was $58,000 to $76,000.

Wendy asks for a motion to approve updated job posting and salary.

Mark makes the motion and it is seconded by Skip.

Wendy continues that the next problem we have is with the audit.

Steve explains that we're still waiting for the audit firm to finish our audit from last year. They contacted us about a week and a half ago saying they want to start gathering information for this year's audit. We still haven't received last year’s audit from the same company. I told them we would not start this year’s audit until they finish the current one.

Wendy says that apparently TK signed a three year contract with Powers & Sullivan, which we cannot locate. They are not giving it to us. Her suggestion is the commissioners send a letter asking them to complete the audit as soon as possible prior to us moving forward with them doing the next audit. We can't even certify our free cash until we have a completed audit and they certify the free cash.

Wendy states that if we saw the language on the contract I would think they would be in breach of contract because they have not supplied us with a finished product. Nor have we paid them apparently.

Steve says that since February we've been going back and forth. They said that they were waiting for the review team to review it before they could send it to us. That's three, four months ago.

Wendy feels that taking action as the board would have more weight. Part of the letter should say that we're not going to entertain going into the next year's audit until we receive a completed audit for last year. This way the board itself is taking a formal stand. We want a copy of the contract, we want our audit completed. We're not going to move forward with them at this point until we receive a completed product. Not having an audit does nothing to help us with our free cash, without certification, with bond counsel, any of it. Their quote might have been cheaper but their service is not delivering.

Louise adds that Clifton Larson Allen had become unresponsive as well. The two contacts we had left and the new people were just not responsive. Kind of the same thing.

Wendy asks Steve to work on preparing a letter from the board.

Wendy moves on to the next item which is TK’s exit audit.

Steve explains that we have a quote for an exit audit from CLA. Their exit audit quote is $5,000 for the to go over everything. But he said that it might be more difficult because we don't have a current audit to work off of.

Diane Flynn states that's a reasonable rate as that is what they paid for BTV and the historical societies.

Wendy continues that going forward she feels that the treasurer needs to have more supervision here. . No one tracked TK’s time. Everyone else has a tracking mechanism. I think if the Treasurer needs time off they need to contract with me as chairman. Steve will report if the Treasurer won't be here. According to the handbook, she is supposed to check with the Board.

Barry explains that when TK was hired he was asked to send the offer letter. TK called me and said she was sorry but she can't accept the job. She stated she had an agreement with a Board member that she would not report to Steve.

Wendy answers that the board member did not ask us as the board. She did not find out about it till afterwards that one of the board members had independently contacted TK to make an alternative arrangement.

Joe says he thinks we gave too much flexibility and he thinks that it was a mistake from the beginning. Now we're paying the price. He thinks what we ought to do is disengage from anything that we can and go in a new direction with a clean slate.

Wendy says going forward even in interviewing we need to make sure that they understand as the treasurer or the clerk of the district, they do have someone to report to whether it's the board members that they need to notify or Steve. It needs to be part of our discussion that they're not going to be an independent force. It wasn't till into the year that we found out TK wasn't working on Fridays because of school.

Joe adds that in the future if somebody wants to take a course, I think the board should be aware of just what the course consists of and how it goes to them helping the district. He doesn’t think we should be giving college education, post grads to people that want to take courses. He never knew what the content of that course she was taking.

Wendy says TK said it was a Treasurer’s course, that she needed it to become a better treasure. Not seeing the description exactly of the course was a whole different matter. We need to be more aware. She thinks that if we are going to supply education for someone that they need to be required to stay a certain amount of time after they obtain that education, or pay the district back. Jen became certified here and left, TK took her course and left. So it's been a pattern that we have supplied education for our workers, because we want them to become more educated, but they are leaving after they received the benefit from the district. I think going forward, we need to put sometimes a caveat saying we'll let you go to school, we'll help you get certified. But in return, you need to stay with the district. We need to decide whether it's three years or two years that there's a timeframe after they receive their certification or their education that they are required to pay the district back, because we've provided the means by which they've gotten another job.

There was further general discussion regarding applicants.

Steve confirms he advertised On Indeed and Ziprecruiter.

Wendy adds that we also posted on the Mass Treasurers and Collectors page which would reach people in this field.

Wendy continues that she was also not aware until this week that when Jen got hired part of her package was that they gave her a full weeks vacation to start. We gave TK one week paid one week unpaid. One of the things that TK was irritated about when she left was she wanted more vacation time. The commissioners need to consider going forward what do they feel is negotiable with the candidate if a qualified candidate comes in. If they say they want three weeks or two weeks vacation. She thinks the standard of one week paid and one week unpaid is part of the negotiation. Everyone needs to figure out on their own what you feel you're willing to work with and what you don't feel would be reasonable so that by the time we start interviewing you have set in your head what you think is somewhere we can give a little and what is somewhere we don't think we should give.

Joe says when Jennifer was hired Rickie did the interviews and he felt she was the best qualified for the position at that particular time. She negotiated some extra vacation time, which, again, it's something sometime you have to be have a little bit of flexibility. But he thinks to start off with a month is way, way too much. He thinks two weeks would be adequate for most new hires.

Barry adds he thinks Rickie offered the additional vacation because she took a low salary, whereas in TK’s place, she'd spoken with one board member and preferred to start with the highest salary and less vacation. So she really set herself up that way.

Wendy reiterates that necessary work is being done such as payroll and bill paying by Maureen Dunn. Money is in confident hands. Vivian may come back as well.

Steve asks if he should go forward with the exit audit.

Wendy asks for a motion to proceed with the exit audit.

Joe makes the motion and it is seconded by Skip. It is a unanimous vote.

Wendy asks if there is a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mark makes a motion to adjourn the meeting and Skip seconds that motion.

Unanimous vote and the meeting is adjourned.

Submitted by Louise Warren