

**COMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL
JUNE 28, 2017 AT 6:00 PM
COMMITTEE ROOM
WOBURN CITY HALL**

Voting Members:

Attending: Chair Joanne Campbell, Alderman Michael Anderson,
Alderman Michael Concannon.

Absent: None.

Non-Voting Members:

Attending: None.

Absent: Alderman Mark Gaffney, Alderman Richard Gately,
Alderman Lindsay Higgins, Alderman Darlene Mercer-Bruen,
Alderman Edward Tedesco, President Richard Haggerty

As the Committee on Personnel is acting as a screening committee pursuant to M.G.L. Ch. 30A, §21(a)(8), no non-voting members attended the meeting. Human Resource Director Elaine Pryune was present for assistance.

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For the purposes of conducting initial interviews of candidates for the position of Clerk of Committees. Alderman Campbell stated that an open meeting would have a detrimental effect in obtaining qualified applicants for the position and that the meeting should be held in executive session pursuant to M.G.L. Ch. 30A, §21(a)(8). Motion made and 2nd that the Committee on Personnel meet in executive session pursuant to M.G.L. Ch. 30A, §21(a)(8), ROLL CALL: Anderson – Yes, Concannon – Yes, Campbell – Yes. Alderman Campbell stated that the meeting would not return to open session after this meeting. Motion made and 2nd to adopt the form of questions for the interviews, all in favor, 3-0. The following is the form of questions with numbers corresponding to the question and the answers given by the candidate.

1. Please take a few moments to tell us about yourself and your experience that would be helpful in assessing you for the Clerk of Committee's position and why you are interested in the position.
2. Based on the listed job responsibilities for the Clerk of Committees' position, what is the most appealing aspect of the job?
3. What professional or other experiences do you bring that you think will be beneficial in your role as the Clerk of Committees?
4. What characteristics or traits do you have that would enable you to succeed in this position?
5. What is your approach to performing requested tasks from others that have strict deadlines while managing other daily tasks, such as assisting the public at the counter?
6. Discuss your experience and skills with:
 - a. Using computers and computer programs.
 - b. Taking and transcribing minutes from a meeting.
 - c. Gaining knowledge in and applying legal requirements in a work setting.
7. As you know, although the primary focus of the position is administrative support to the City Council committees, License Commission and Board of Appeals, of equal importance the position also requires you to provide service to the public and other departments in all areas

- of the department. Do you have any concern with becoming knowledgeable of all the duties and systems in the office and performing multiple and varied tasks on any given day?
8. Are you comfortable with a work environment in which what you planned to do in the morning may not be what you are able to accomplish or accomplish in as structured a fashion as you planned as the day progresses?
 9. What is your greatest challenge or fear of this job?
 10. What parts of your past jobs disappointed or frustrated you the most?
 11. How do you determine your highest priorities and describe your approach in performing deadline sensitive tasks?
 12. What challenges do you see in working with other members in a team approach? How do you handle those challenges?
 13. What would your co-workers say are your greatest assets and what skills would they say that you need work on?
 14. Summarize the knowledge, skills and abilities that you have and how you feel they make you the best candidate for this job?
 15. Is there anything else that you feel is important for us to know about you?

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The Committee met with Cynthia Elmore and she stated in response the above questions as follows: 1. Her career has been in customer service in people related businesses; she has performed a lot of record keeping; she recorded minutes for the North Reading School Committee; she does what needs to be done; and every job has been with working with the public. 2. She likes that the position is in a high-paced office; she would like to work with the committees; that she will be able to learn what is going on in the city; and this will be a good environment because of the fast pace. 3. She has good computer skills; she is fluent in Word and Excel; she is not intimidated to learn new systems; she has the ability to get the job done; she professionally has worked with all levels of people she reported to or supported; and that she understands the importance of confidentiality. 4. She has good ability in using the computer; she multitasks very well; she prioritizes well; and she does not buckle under pressure. 5. She does what needs to get done during the day; she focuses on the priority but can focus on the task at hand; being interrupted is not an issue; and she can get back on the task if interrupted. 6. She gets the work done using the computer and taking minutes; she is vaguely familiar with the Massachusetts law relative to executive session, posting meetings and posting documents from meetings; she has no issue learning laws; she transcribed minutes for the North Reading School Committee and the North Reading Housing Authority as well as various boards in the role of executive assistant; and she has an ability to discern what was said and what needs to be in the minutes. 7. She has not concern learning other duties; she multitasks well; and she enjoys different duties. 8. This question was skipped by the Committee and no answer was requested or given. 9. The learning curve of the position is a concern; doing the work within expected times although she does not think that she could not do so; she does not like to disappoint; she will ask for assistance when needed; and she is not timid to ask for help. 10. She does not like slow times during the work day; she likes to stay busy; and most if not all the positions she has held had a slow pace at times which is frustrating. 11. The highest priority is dictated by the person assigning the task; she wants to know of any deadline in advance; and if two assignments are due for each department she would tackle the most difficult assignment first to finish the easier assignment by the deadlines. 12. She is a good team player; consideration must be given to the personalities of the team members; there may be times when she must be more aggressive and she will take on that role; and the team must work together to get the task done. 13. Her greatest asset is being a team player; she will reach out to other departments; she looks ahead for issues that might need to be addressed; that she is willing to go to other department to offer assistance

when needed; and these could be considered good or bad traits depending upon personalities. 14. She is very familiar with Word and using formats as required by the committees; she works with spreadsheets and presentations; she is confident in her Word and Excel capabilities; she has used Quicken, QuickBooks and Act; she is not afraid to use a new system; she has worked with expense systems in the past; and she is adaptable to technology. 15. She likes Woburn; she worked at the Woburn Senior Center; she sees the support the city gives to other departments; and she found this opening on the city's website. The Committee Members had additional questions which elicited the following responses: She can do mail merge; she can put addresses into a spreadsheet and then print labels with the addresses; if a large package arrived on Thursday with a meeting scheduled on the matter for Monday she would read the documents, submit them to the concerned parties, send the documents out when appropriate, and make copies of the documents for the committee; she took minutes for the North Reading School Committee for nine years, the committee meets twice each month with one meeting each month in July and August, she completes minutes within 24 hours if needed but she has more flexibility with them in her position, she makes notes on the agenda; if she has questions on her notes she watches the video of the meeting to get the exact wording when necessary; she uses the agenda item as presented and adds to the item what occurred at the meeting; she does not set up the meeting agenda; if the meeting was not taped and she has a question she would contact one of the members of the committee to be certain she had a correct understanding of the matter; she will also meet with committee members at the end of the meeting if she has questions to obtain the answers; she takes minutes in the margins of the agenda or on another piece of paper; the minutes she takes are not as detailed as the Woburn committee minutes; and she does not use shorthand but rather takes notes.

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The Committee met with Gordon Vincent and he stated in response the above questions as follows: 1. The position is a natural progression from newspaper reporter to Clerk of Committees; he would be able to move to the Clerk of Committee chair at meetings easily; the Committee will not find someone else who could move to the position as quickly and knows what needs to be done; that he wrote for the Woburn Daily Times Chronicle for twenty years; that he has had contact with other departments such as police, fire and others; he performs editing; he took on page layout; that the newspaper office is a small shop where everyone has to do everything; and that his experience has made him adaptable which would be a good fit for the office. 2. The energy in the office is appealing; that he visits the office at least once a week; there is someone always coming and going at the office; he like to work and accommodate people; he takes telephone calls; he interviews people; and the position is suitable for his personal and professional interests. 3. The position requires him to be accurate and turn work around quickly; he will be working with three boards; and he must prepare the agenda and post minutes. 4. He gets along well with people; he knows everyone in the office; he knows most people in the building and the city; he has a good rapport with the Chair of the License Commission; and he has covered City Council and Board of Appeals meetings. 5. One of the issues would be learning about birth and death certificates; the rest of the tasks he is comfortable with such as deadlines; he works on deadline every day; when the newspaper converted from paste up to a computer based system ten years ago he took it on to making himself indispensable in using the system and he enjoyed the process; and he enjoys learning new tasks. 6. He switched to the computer based system at the newspaper; he has used Quark; the newspaper belongs to Associated Press and he culls stories from the website; he uses Word on a daily basis; he has been taking minutes for twenty year; he will be able to take minutes right away; he is not a lawyer; he is familiar with the Open Meeting Law; he knows meetings must be posted no later than 48 hours before the

meeting; that he turns matters around quickly; he is adaptable and a quick study; and he see no issues. 7. He knows the duties already; he will require little instruction; and it will be a seamless move from reporter to clerk. 8. This question was skipped by the Committee and no answer was requested or given. 9. There is an element of unknown to everything; there are issues he believes he knows but does not; he has a good rapport with the staff; and he will be able to ask the staff for assistance when needed. 10. Lack of communication is an issue; that he placed on obituary in the newspaper today without knowing another staff member has placed the same obituary in the newspaper the previous day; and good communication with the office staff would resolve this. 11. He puts first things first; and from newspaper training works in an inverted pyramid process. 12. Communication is a part of teamwork; he has an ability to get along with people; he has known the office staff for many years; and he has worked well with them in the past. 13. His ability to think on his feet and adapt are his greatest skills; he has a willingness to help people; the Clerk's office is there to help people; in the newspaper business he is also there to help people by getting their stories out or helping them be informed; and there will be a crossover by helping people in the office. 14. The position does not require a lot of transition; he is accustomed to taking notes, turning work around, helping people, working with people in a cooperative way, and gets along with people; and he is exciting to look into a new venture like this. 15. The most important issue is the ability to transition to the job; he has working knowledge and a good rapport with most people in the city; one reference is the Police Chief; this will be a seamless transition; and he will be helping the City Clerk. The Committee Members had additional questions which elicited the following responses: If a large package arrived on Thursday with a meeting scheduled on the matter for Monday he would get what needs to be done, the meeting must be posted, he would notify the Aldermen, he would notify the party that filed the documents, he would get the documents out as soon as possible; he does not have experience in mail merge; he can learn mail merge; he takes notes full hand and not by shorthand; when he started working in the newspaper industry he was taught to write everything down that people say; he will not get everything but he will get most of what was said; he can read his own writing; he has been a reporter since 1996; the transition will not be that significant; this is a new venture; the newspaper's solvency is an issue; the department staff has become smaller; he has been thinking about transitioning to another position for six months; he did not apply when the position opened several months ago due to the candidates at the time; the position has opened again and the newspaper business has not improved; he has worked nights as a reporter; that his son will be leaving for college soon; and his wife is used to him not being home one or two nights each week. Alderman Anderson stated that the board members work part-time, and he must know how to make everything work. Mr. Vincent stated that he knows who he works for. Alderman Anderson stated that there is some independence in the position. Mr. Vincent stated that he is used to doing more with less. Alderman Anderson stated that the boards will be relying heavily on the position. Mr. Vincent said that he saw how hard Clerk of Committees Patricia Bergeron-George worked in the position, and that they relied on each other for names of parties and other clarifications, that he learned the Quark software in approximately one day, and that once a matter get into his long-term memory he retains the information.

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The Committee met with Joseph Sciabica and he stated in response the above questions as follows: 1. He has legal experience at a non-profit in Virginia dealing with constitutional rights; he engaged in client intake; this was a high stress office; people had difficult issues and he had to extract information from them to assist them; the position involved a lot of legal research; he worked on a land use case; he had an internship with the Department of Public Health; he worked with an attorney in Denver, Colorado in the area of cannabis law; the issues involved land use, zoning and regulations; the cannabis regulations are similar to the liquor regulations; he

was sworn in as a Massachusetts attorney two weeks ago; he is doing consulting work with a cannabis company; he has dealt with public records and documents; that he has a great interest in government law and regulations; he is interested in the opportunity to be involved with the various boards; this would provide a big picture of the city operations; and he enjoys history and noted the age of the city. 2. Keeping up to date with legal knowledge and assisting people who come into the office; and doing research and conveying information. 3. All legal experience has prepared him for the position; he has a land use background; cannabis research is similar to liquor laws in Massachusetts; he had engaged in client intake with people who do not have a lot of legal options; he was editor-in-chief of his law school newspaper; and he took notes at meetings. 4. He is adaptable; that a lot happens at the same time; work needs to be done and people come into the office with needs; he deals with deadlines; and he switches priorities when needed. 5. Meeting deadlines is critical; and being attentive to people coming into city hall is also important. 6. All his legal experience has required using word processing to write; he currently works with Excel and Airtable which is a spreadsheet similar to Excel but easier to share; he taught himself Java script coding; he is confident in his ability to learn programs; he has not taken formal minutes but served on student committees in law school and would take minutes during the meetings; he has legal experience; and would do research when needed to help clients with personal and business matters. 7. He spends a lot of time researching administrative procedure. 8. This question was skipped by the Committee and no answer was requested or given. 9. The challenge is conveying what a law requires to people without legal training; and with his legal training he has lost perspective on how complicated the law can be to lay people. 10. Speaking with clients who did not understand the importance of deadlines; trying to explain procedures and due diligence; and keeping people patient with the legal process. 11. Organization and computer programs are the best method to track deadlines; and people coming into city hall would receive priority. 12. The biggest challenge is miscommunication in a team which can lead to larger issues; it must be clear what the duties are and what needs to be done; he will be upfront about what he needs to learn; and it is necessary to help each other on the team. 13. His biggest asset is research; he can find information on the internet; and he can explain the law to people. 14. He referenced the three skills in answer to Question 13; he has minute taking experience; he has engaged in client intake in stressful situations; he must make sure documents are compact and detailed; he interviewed judges and the Lt. Governor; he has organizational and recordkeeping skills; he has experience with computer programs and maintaining databases of information for clients; that he manages records for the northeast states in the cannabis industry; he can coordinate between agencies; and not missing details between the moving parts of departments is important. 15. He has experience in cannabis law; he understands that Woburn will be voting on the cannabis issue in the fall election; if the issue goes forward he has familiarity with the cannabis law; and if the city does not follow the regulations there could be issues. The Committee Members had additional questions which elicited the following responses: If a large package arrived on Thursday with a meeting scheduled on the matter for Monday he would be aware of the legal procedures, he will do what he can to get the matter into the committee agenda if allowed, he will do what he can to assist the person who filed the documents; he does not do mail merge; he takes notes by hand; he has a laptop for minutes with some shorthand; he would record the interviews for the student paper to avoid missing anything; and in five years he wants to be involved in State or local government such as a City Solicitor position and be involved in government law.

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Alderman Campbell stated that she liked all three candidates. Alderman Anderson stated that he liked all three candidates. Alderman Concannon stated that Ms. Elmore had experience taking minutes, has worked for a government entity, had been in the position for nine years so does a

good job, that a lot will be about fit and picking up what needs to be done, and the downside compared to the other two candidates is that the other two seemed more knowledgeable and eager. Alderman Anderson stated that Ms. Elmore would be fine, there is more to the position than taking notes, that understanding time and deadlines is an issue, that the other two candidates are stronger candidates, that she does not like to disappoint, will ask for assistance, likes Woburn and seems like a good team player but the other two candidates are a little bit better. Alderman Campbell stated that each candidate had exceptional qualities, that Ms. Elmore seems like she would get along with the other staff members and get her job done, that she is confident in her computer skills, that Mr. Vincent seemed as if he could move right into the position and knows exactly what to do; Mr. Sciabica is looking for a start and had applicable skills. Alderman Concannon stated that he appreciated the honesty of Mr. Sciabica that he would look for other opportunities; he may not be willing to do the lower tasks of the position; he wants to do research and educate but he will have to give out dog licenses; and he seemed sincere but a couple of months in he will be wondering why he is in the position with his law school background. Alderman Anderson stated that there is more to it than that, if Mr. Sciabica does a good job for two or three years then the city benefits, the city wants the most acceptable candidate, and he would not count his legal degree against him. Alderman Concannon stated that he could see Mr. Sciabica in three years deciding what opportunity does he have. Alderman Anderson stated there has to be a learning curve in the position. Alderman Campbell stated that people are now looking for a job every two years. Human Resources Director Elaine Pruyne stated that she has attended a seminar on the issue of people taking positions for the short term. Alderman Campbell stated that it is not good to have a lot of change in the office. Alderman Concannon stated that he received the strongest positive vibe from Mr. Vincent, he has a willingness to do the work, he is at a place in his life to do this job, he will turn off being a journalist, he has his mind wrapped around the next step, and he could see him being comfortable and accept the tasks more than Mr. Sciabica. Alderman Anderson stated that he underestimated the legal requirements the Clerk of Committees need to know, and guidance must be given to the person in what is needed to be known. Alderman Concannon stated that he thought the skill set of a lawyer would transfer better than it did, he is disappointed that the skill set would not transfer, the legal requirements and process must be understood, and Mr. Vincent would transition nicely. Alderman Campbell stated that Mr. Vincent understands the 48 hour rule, and also knows what he needs to know. Alderman Concannon stated that Mr. Vincent understands the value of the legal aspects, the last time he thought he listened to the City Clerk and gave his position consideration but now he does not think so, the fit and skill set is important, and the appointment will only work if fit is there. Alderman Anderson stated that his only hesitation is in Mr. Vincent taking instruction, and he seems independent. Alderman Campbell stated that Mr. Vincent may take instruction well because of all the matter that will be on him. Alderman Anderson stated he would move Mr. Sciabica and Mr. Vincent along. Alderman Campbell stated that Mr. Sciabica is interested in teaching people the law. Alderman Concannon stated that motivation is a consideration, he is not certain about the motivation of Ms. Elmore, Mr. Sciabica is motivated to work in government but may look beyond, Mr. Vincent has motivation, will have to succeed, can transition to new a new career, he had a good feeling about his responses to the questions, and he is thinking and ready to make a move and succeed. Alderman Anderson stated that Ms. Elmore would do a fine job but is not in his top two choices, Mr. Sciabica has his eyes on the horizon, and that Mr. Vincent is his first pick although he questions if he fits. Clerk Campbell stated that Mr. Vincent indicated that he loves to write, there is no question that he would be able to take minutes, he feels that he will stay in the position, and that it may take him time to learn tasks but he will catch on. Motion made and 2nd to have Gordon Vincent and Joseph Sciabica return for a final interview before the Committee on Personnel, sitting as a Committee of the Whole, ROLL CALL: Anderson – Yes, Concannon – Yes, Campbell – Yes, Motion Passes. Alderman Campbell asked Director Pruyne

to send a letter to Ms. Elmore about the decision. Director Pruyne stated that she will follow up with the references. Alderman Campbell stated that the next meeting will be on July 13, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. Motion made and 2nd that the following questions will be used for the next round of interviews, ROLL CALL: Anderson – Yes, Concannon – Yes, Campbell – Yes, Motion Passes.

1. Please take a few moments to tell us about yourself and your experience that would be helpful in assessing you for the Clerk of Committee's position and why you are interested in the position.
2. Based on the listed job responsibilities for the Clerk of Committees' position, what is the most appealing aspect of the job?
3. What professional or other experiences do you bring that you think will be beneficial in your role as the Clerk of Committees?
4. Discuss your experience and skills with:
 - a. Using computers and computer programs.
 - b. Taking and transcribing minutes from a meeting.
 - c. Gaining knowledge in and applying legal requirements in a work setting.
5. As you know, although the primary focus of the position is administrative support to the City Council committees, License Commission and Board of Appeals, of equal importance the position also requires you to provide service to the public and other departments in all areas of the department. Do you have any concern with becoming knowledgeable of all the duties and systems in the office and performing multiple and varied tasks on any given day?
6. What parts of your past jobs disappointed or frustrated you the most?
7. What challenges do you see in working with other members in a team approach? How do you handle those challenges?
8. Where do you see yourself professionally in five years?
9. Is there anything else that you feel is important for us to know about you?

5Motion made and 2nd that the executive session be concluded and the matter be returned to open session, ROLL CALL: Anderson – Yes, Concannon – Yes, Campbell – Yes, Motion Passes. Alderman Campbell stated that the Committee on Personnel is recommending to the Committee on Personnel, sitting as a Committee of the Whole that Gordon Vincent and Joseph Sciabica be considered for the position of Clerk of Committees.

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Motion made and 2nd to adjourn, all in favor, 3-0. Adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Attest: _____
William C. Campbell
Clerk of Committees, Pro Tem