

1. Agenda

Documents:

[2023.04.27 TMSC AGENDA.PDF](#)

2. Meeting Materials

Documents:

[CLS FEEDBACK APRIL 24\\_25\\_26\\_2023.PDF](#)

Town of Hartford

Town Manager Search Committee

Meeting: Thursday, April 27, 2023, 6:00 pm

Hartford Town Hall, 171 Bridge Street, White River Junction

#### AGENDA

1. Call to Order, Chair 6:00
2. Additions or deletions to Agenda
3. Review and determine Committee communication process with Hartford Staff
  - a. Communication flow through TM office
  - b. Committee Liaison
  - c. Access to collect feedback:
    - Meetings
    - Survey: Update CM
4. Members report on Community Listen Session feedback
  - a. Gratitude and acknowledgements
  - b. Virtual Session
  - b. In-person Sessions
5. Town Manager Search Process updates, D. Cloud
6. Announcements
7. Round table individual Committee member closing comment
8. Adjourn

**Hartford Town Manager Search Committee**  
**Community Listening Sessions Priorities and Feedback**  
**April 24-26, 2023**

**4/24 Bugbee Center Session Priorities (Brown/Campbell/Lucke)**

- Listening and following up is key.
- Transparency to the residents Integrity Good listener Person who can pull people together.
- A collaborator who works on solution with Community and Selectboard.
- Experienced at putting a budget together.
- Put the residents and the needs and issues of the town first.
- Conflict Resolutions skills are a must.
- Able to bring groups to consensus.
- People person who knows how to outreach and be present in the community.
- Leadership experience in municipal government
- Noting a villages issue is an issue impacting our town, be all in in solving and addressing village issues.

**4/25 Virtual Session Priorities (Lucke)**

- Collaborative Skills with all Stakeholder: Town, Schools< Local and State Government
- Local Business Leaders see NH as a potential Partner.
- Know and use preferred channel of communication.
- Be media Savvy.
- Highly developed listener Skilled in solving complexed problems.
- Skills to deal with Selectboard disparities to harmonize them into a working body.
- Hire good people and let them do their job.
- Be out and about at some level daily “Inspector General” Don’t micromanage but be aware.
- Support the team AND hold them and yourself accountable.
- Be uplifting and draw people in to participate be visible and build our community, culture and mood Have good energy.
- Be strategic with all our community assets and businesses \_\_\_> Arts and Food
- Energy, vitality be our cheerleader Do the operations work and make it a priority.
- Taking leadership to bring people together.
- Focus on the processes and progress.
- Take the lead on resolving conflict Know how to work with both the press and the State politics.

## 4/25 Wilder Club and Library Session (Melocik/Major)

### MAIN THING

- Can the selectboard say we heard it loud and clear, and we will act like adults and be like who we want to have as a town manager.
- Maybe wait until political situation calms down; don't think we should be recruiting a town manager until the selectboard "gets its s\*\*t together."
- Need to set a high standard.
- If we go recruiting right now, we will get the bottom of the barrel because of the selectboard.
- Need to communicate this to the selectboard.

\*Random Requirement/Like/Want: That the town manager should live in town [several attendees noted this would mean a change to the charter and that Vermont statutes specify no residency requirement for town managers]

### Characteristics Wanted (number of people who marked)

- Prior experience (4)
- Comfortable in complex, ambiguous situations (3)
- Ability to execute on plans/strategy (2)
- Interest in/ability to work with neighboring governments.
- Visionary (0)
- Inspirational (0)
- Quick learner (0)

### Skills Wanted (number of people who marked)

- Team building (3)
- Being able to listen to townspeople (2)
- Interpersonal skills (1)
- Understand VT governance (VLCT, statutes, etc.) (1)
- Problem-solver (0)
- Good communicator (0)
- Ability to build trust (0)

### Experience Wanted (number of people who marked)

- PRIOR EXPERIENCE as town manager EVERYONE MARKED/MENTIONED
- Leadership (5)
- Familiarity with New England (roads, weather), preferably in VT or more specifically this region (1)
- Financial management (1)

- Union-negotiating (0)

**Other Characteristics/Skills/Experience Noted, in no particular order.**

- Someone who has been a town manager in a community of a similar population for at least 10 years.
- Seasoned
- People person
- Good at delegating to departments
- One who uses the resources of the town staff/relies on them/respects them.
- Someone who can develop staff.
- Team leader, an inspiration
- Listening skills
- Be able to listen to the townspeople.
- Working knowledge of finance (some specified more than a working knowledge is needed)
- Be able to demonstrate/prepare/understand/and communicate budgets to the selectboard AND so they will approve it.
- Open-mindedness
- Transparent
- Ability to deal well with conflict.
- Ability to say no.
- Can inform the selectboard about things outside of the scope of the budget/board, protect the selectboard from political pressure.

**Miscellaneous Comments**

- Don't need a visionary as town manager—that's the job of the selectboard and planning department
- Will the town want someone looking to progress with skills/experiences as part of their career or someone wanting to put a capstone on their career/looking to come back home (to family, previous life in Vermont, etc.)

**4/26 West Hartford Library Session Priorities (Brown/Lucke)**

- Transparent Communication
- Conflict Management Resolution and Mediation Skills
- Experienced in Municipal Leadership
- Understands Northern New England
- Emergency Management skills, experience, and knowledge
- Long term vision and planning
- Experience with budget planning, coordination, and packaging
- If they don't know say it and do the follow through and follow up.
- Solid organizational and time management skills

- Positive and productive relationship working with police.
- Approachable
- Accessible and visible around town
- Willing to listen and not judge.
- Be a team builder.
- Grant writing experience
- Flexible and able to work on and through competing priorities.
- Consensus builder
- Collaborative with the State government
- Know the role and do the job.
- Be respectful and honest to a fault.

#### **4/26 Quechee Library Session (Ottmann/Fariel)**

##### **Concern – Characteristic need to avoid?**

- Why did our last one fail – lessons learned?
- Finding a good fit
- Interesting comment regarding hiring of a women – given the last failure – confidence (gender bias)
- Broad Management Experience (specifically municipal)
- Ability to mesh the 5 villages – Unify the community(town) at-large.
- Collaborative style
- Knowledge of budgets and finance
- Ability to communicate the budget to the public.
- Open/Honest communication – respect and trust
- Accessible – no barriers or gatekeeper to limit reachability.
- Delegation important
- Relationship with Department Heads
- Transparency
- Get things done while still genuine listening.
- Mature and seasoned can manage/handle the day-to-day stress.
- Set priorities with the selectboard – Limited capacity and resources so need to choose and deliver.

Broader discussion regarding the Selectboard/Town Manager dynamic and room for improvement

Noted concern of several seasoned Department heads close to retirement - institutional loss?

### **Town Manager – Actions to succeed.**

- Be visible.
- Manage a variety of people.
- Repeat of clarification of capacity and priority year to year
- Not just say no to request but have an explanation.
- Create a supportive environment not a 'blame' game culture.
- Discussion of Community-Selectboard-Town Manager model for optimal functionality
- Open door to public – possible Coffee with scenario like Joe does at UVAC.
- Immersion and involvement in the community – integration and learn to know Hartford (i.e., Bugbee visits)
- Understand the local culture.
- Ability to plan longer term and follow the vision – formulate and agree upon
- Infrastructure – specific example of a plan that goes out 5-10 years and it is adhered to.
- Understand the community at large and the needs throughout.
- Suggestion to look at towns where the town manager IS working and establish a work environment like it to achieve longevity and better operations.
- Migrate the climate of the Upper Valley and the current divisive/political climate.
- Opportunities for Tr-town collaboration?
- Hartford has changed and has new management demands to work thru = poverty, addiction, etc.
- The idea of a town wide bring people together event – picnic.

### **Experience required.**

- Project management skills
- Knowledge of local government
- Education level necessary – BA, MBA, specific MPA certification?
- Concern as to where this person will live – affordability and options not in-town requirement.