

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING JULY 23, 2012

Chairman Petraitis called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM in the Selectmen's office at 215 North Main Street with Mrs. Walter and Mr. Chabot present. Also present were VFW Commander Chad Cheras and American Legion Post #41 Commander Michael Maxson.

David Reniere of Spencer came in to be interviewed for the Veterans' Agent position. Mr. Petraitis asked Mr. Reniere about his work schedule and availability to hold office hours during the day and on Tuesday evenings. Mr. Reniere stated that he works a 3 – 11 shift Thursday thru Sunday. He has Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday off, so he would have no problem with those hours.

Mr. Petraitis asked Mr. Reniere for his thoughts on the need for outreach. Mr. Reniere stated that he has done a lot of outreach informally, making sure that other veterans at his job are aware of their benefits and rights. He also works with a military support committee at his place of employment. He said that he would have no problem making contacts outside of the job.

Mrs. Walter asked Mr. Reniere what he thinks about the need for a VSO, and Mr. Reniere said that he believes that it is very important that the veterans know what is available to them. He noted that he would like to see the "younger vets" join organizations such as the VFW or American Legion.

Mr. Cheras said that in his opinion outreach is very important, the veterans need to know what is out there, and what state and federal benefits are available.

Mr. Reniere noted that he is fairly computer savvy, and perhaps using social media to reach the younger veterans would be a possibility.

Mr. Cheras asked if Mr. Reniere would have any problem attending the state's mandatory training, and Mr. Reniere said that he would welcome the training.

Mrs. Walter noted that Mr. Reniere mentioned that during the debriefing process when leaving the military veterans are told to check in with their local VFW or Legion post. She believes that there is an obligation there for the VFW or Legion to refer people to the Town's Veterans' Agent.

Mr. Reniere left the meeting at 1:40 PM. The meeting was recessed, and reconvened at 2:30 PM.

Mort Triggs was present to be interviewed for the position. Mr. Petraitis informed him about the required hours, Tuesday evenings from 6 PM to 8 PM and three hours during the day on either Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday. Mr. Triggs said that he would not have a problem with those hours.

Mr. Petraitis asked about outreach, and Mr. Triggs stated that he has done a lot of that over the years, and he wants to make sure that the Town gets someone more active. He said that he is not looking for a job; he just wants to make sure the Town gets a good candidate.

Mr. Triggs stated that he heard that Holly Kularski might be a candidate, and he believes that she would be a good fit for the job. He would accept the job only if there is no one interested. He would support Mrs. Kularski for the job.

Mrs. Walter asked how he thinks that the VFW and Legion can work together to stimulate interest in joining? Mr. Triggs said that he didn't know, perhaps regular meetings with the Selectmen would be helpful.

Mr. Chabot said that perhaps it is an "age" thing, when people reach a certain age they seek out the camaraderie. Mr. Triggs said that the VFW and Legion have tried to reach out to the younger veterans to make sure that they aren't treated like the Viet Nam vets were.

Mr. Triggs left at 2:40 PM. The meeting was recessed until 3:30 PM.

Mrs. Holly Kularski came in at 3:30 PM to be interviewed for the position. Mr. Petraitis told her the expected hours for the job; three hours during the day and Tuesday evenings. Mrs. Kularski stated that she is working full-time right now, but expects to retire by the end of the year.

Mrs. Walter stated that the new Veterans' Agent will need to work with the American Legion and the VFW to make younger vets aware of the benefits they are eligible for. Mrs. Kularski said that the college where she works had held forums to try to find out why the younger vets don't seem to get involved.

Mr. Chabot said that Mrs. Kularski is more than qualified, and asked when she will be retiring to Alabama? Mrs. Kularski stated that it won't be this year, and even when she and her husband do retire there, it will only be for a few months during the winter. She asked if there is a possibility of having an assistant VSO.

Mr. Cheras noted that working closely with the VFW and the American Legion is paramount, and the need for outreach is critical. He spoke about the possibility of a "Veterans Council" made up of the Town's VSO and the VSOs from the VFW and Legion meeting on a quarterly basis

Mrs. Kularski left the meeting at 3:45 PM.

Mr. Petraitis asked Mr. Maxson and Mr. Cheras their thoughts on the three candidates. Both men stated that Mrs. Kularski was the best candidate.

Mrs. Walter noted that Mr. Reniere was young and enthusiastic, and would be available for the times required.

Mr. Chabot stated that he agreed, but he believes that Mrs. Kularski and Mr. Triggs could work well together, with Mr. Triggs perhaps serving as an assistant.

Mr. Petraitis stated that both Mr. Reniere and Mrs. Kularski are very well qualified; the drawback to Mrs. Kularski is her retirement schedule.

Mr. Chabot stated that he wants to hire the most qualified person. He made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Walter, to appoint Mrs. Kularski. So voted.

Mr. Cheras noted that he will be retiring soon, and would be available to help out as needed.

There being no further business, Mr. Chabot moved, and Mrs. Walter seconded, a motion to adjourn at 4 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Scott Burton
Administrative Assistant