

ROSS VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

November 4, 2013

TO: Ross Valley Fire Board of Directors

FROM: Debra Stutsman, Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Fire Chief Recruitment

For the meeting of November 13, 2013

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board of Directors review and discuss the options for the process of interview and selection of the new Fire Chief and provide direction to staff.

BACKGROUND

At the meeting of Wednesday, July 10, 2013, Fire Chief Roger Meagor announced his intention to retire from the fire service at the end of 2013. At a special meeting on August 26, 2013, the Board authorized the Executive Officer to execute an agreement for executive recruitment services with the consulting firm of Ralph Andersen for \$25,000. The consultant, Robert Burg, conducted interviews with stakeholders, including employees, bargaining unit representatives, volunteers, the Town Managers and Board Members on September 5, 2013. The purpose of the interviews was to give the recruiter insight into the RVFD organization, what attributes are desired in the new Fire Chief, and opportunities/challenges on the horizon for the department. Based on those interviews, a flyer was prepared and distributed for the position and applications solicited. The application period closed November 1, 2013 and approximately 30 applications were received.

DISCUSSION

The next step in the process is for the Board to review the letters and resumes of the most highly qualified candidates (approximately 12). This is scheduled to take place in a **special closed session meeting scheduled for Monday, November 18, at 6:30 p.m. in the San Anselmo Town Hall Conference Room**. At that meeting the Board will review the applications of the most qualified applicants. The consultant will have conducted personal interviews with each of the candidates and will suggest to the Board the five to seven applicants that he recommends be invited back to participate in the interview panel process.

INTERVIEW PANELS

In executive recruitments, it is common to have two or three panels that interview each of the top five to seven candidates on a given day. Candidates cycle through each panel simultaneously throughout the interview day. Examples of interview panels with particular specialties would be an employee panel, a professional panel, a community panel, a Board panel, etc. The consultant recommends a maximum of three

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panels and the non-Board panels are advisory only. The panel interviews would be scheduled in early December, with each panel (except the Board panel) designating a representative to report their insights and recommendations to the full Board at the end of the interview day.

Staff recommends that the Board consider 1) an employee panel, that would include both bargaining unit and non-bargaining unit employees, 2) a professional panel, that would include several Fire Chiefs or other fire professionals from other departments and one or two of our Town Managers and 3) a panel of the full Board. This would be a full day commitment for all participants. The consultant would prepare all the background materials, questions and rating information for the panels.

For the Board, the entire interview panel day would be posted as a closed session meeting for the recruitment of the Fire Chief. At the end of the interview panel day, the Board would hear the recommendations of the other two panels and will have narrowed the choices for Fire Chief to one or two top candidates.

FINAL SELECTION

When the top one or two candidates are identified, the consultant recommends that the Board conduct one on one interviews with the candidate(s). This is typically done on the day following the panel interviews in case the applicants have travelled a distance for the interviews so they don't have to travel twice.

When the Board has decided on the top candidate, the consultant will conduct a thorough background check. This may happen after a conditional job offer is made, or before, depending on the circumstances and the Board's desire.

OTHER INFORMATION

The recruitment for this position has engendered applications from local, regional and national candidates. For that reason, we are going to be faced with additional costs to bring some of the candidates here for the interviews, including possible airfare, hotel costs, rental cars, etc. It is estimated that the costs for these travel related expenses could be up to \$10,000. **Staff requests that the Board approve the expenditure of up to \$10,000 for these costs.**

DATES FOR PANEL INTERVIEWS

The consultant suggests that the panel interviews might best be held on a Monday to give the applicants the weekend to get here. Given the upcoming holidays, **staff suggests that the Board consider setting Monday, December 9, 2013 as the date for the interview panels, with Tuesday, December 10, as the date for the one-on-one interviews for the Board with the top two candidates.** The Tuesday one-on-one interviews would be scheduled back to back at the Board member's convenience for a 30-minute period for each interview. Alternate dates could include December 11, 12 or 13, 2013.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. That the Board direct staff to plan for the interview panel process with an employee panel, professional panel and a full Board panel.
2. That the Board authorize the expenditure of up to \$10,000 for candidate travel expenses, including airfare, hotel, rental car, as needed.
3. That the Board set the dates for the panel interviews the week of December 9, 2013, setting aside one full day for the panel interviews, which includes the Board panel, and time the following day for one-on-one interviews with the individual Board Members for the top candidate(s). Staff recommends Monday, December 9 for the panel interviews and Tuesday, December 10 for the one-on-one interviews, if those dates work for the Board.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Stutsman
Executive Officer