

**NEWBURYPORT RETIREMENT BOARD**

16 Unicorn Street  
Newburyport, MA 01950  
July 16, 2024  
Special Meeting Minutes

**1. Call to order**

A special meeting of the Newburyport Retirement Board was held on Tuesday, July 16, 2024. In attendance were Chairman Jeff Cutter, Board Members Joseph Spaulding, Larry Giunta, and Ethan Manning. Board Member John Moak participated remotely, and left the meeting part way through. Executive Director Laurie Burton and Assistant to the Executive Director Derek Minervini were also present. Chairman Cutter called the meeting to order at 8:30am, noting the hybrid attendance and the fact that the meeting was being recorded.

**2. Public comment**

There was no public comment.

**3. Chairman's comment and Board Member comments**

Mr. Cutter thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

**4. Appointment of hiring committee for Executive Director**

Mr. Cutter appointed himself, Mr. Moak & Mr. Giunta to the hiring committee.

**5. Approval of job posting for Executive Director**

Mr. Spaulding motioned to approve the posting as written. Mr. Giunta seconded. Mr. Cutter thanked Ms. Burton for helping to create the job posting. Mr. Cutter informed the Retirement Board that Ms. Burton's last day in the office would be Thursday, September 26<sup>th</sup>, and that her retirement date had yet to be determined.

Mr. Cutter stated that the job posting sums up the Executive Director's position, and reflects the work that Ms. Burton has been doing over the years. Mr. Cutter stated that he will miss working with Ms. Burton, and that he would like the position to be posted by the end of the day.

Mr. Spaulding questioned whether the Retirement Board should include a statement that a six-month performance review would be performed, with potential for a raise. Ms. Burton stated that would be something that could be negotiated.

Mr. Cutter stated that the salary range of \$95,000 to \$125,000 annually was determined by looking at what a similarly sized community had recently posted. Mr. Manning stated that he would be in favor of a tighter range, and stated that the City typically posts positions with a \$10,000 range.

Ms. Burton stated that she believed the Board would need to offer at least \$115,000 annually to draw a qualified experienced executive director, and that the lower end of the salary range would

be for candidates who do not have experience as a director. Ms. Burton also stated that the Board could come up with a salary schedule, as was done for Mr. Minervini.

Mr. Giunta asked how many Retirement Board's within a fifty-mile radius currently are looking for executive directors. Mr. Cutter responded that five directors had retired within the past year, and that he knew of a director in a neighboring community who would be retiring in the near future.

Mr. Giunta stated that he agreed with Ms. Burton about advertising a wide salary range. Mr. Giunta stated that there may be candidates who apply who have not previously held an Executive Director role who the Board may want to hire at the low end of the range, or there may be applicants with twenty-five years of experience as an executive director who would not accept the job for anything less than \$125,000. Mr. Spaulding stated that he would like to see a smaller range, with the opportunity to increase the salary after a satisfactory performance review.

Mr. Manning stated that he would prefer to hire someone at what the Retirement Board is willing to pay, and if the Board is willing to pay \$125,000 the Board should agree on that. Mr. Manning asked if attracting a highly experienced retirement director was a huge need for the City, and stated that was not necessarily his priority, so he would be in favor of a salary range of \$95,000 to \$105,000. Mr. Manning also stated that the Massachusetts Teacher's Retirement System currently had an opening for an executive director, and that that posting had a tighter salary range. Ms. Burton stated that the Retirement Board was not likely to have qualified candidates at that salary range.

Mr. Moak motioned to amend the salary range to \$105,000 to \$120,000. Mr. Spaulding seconded. Mr. Moak stated that if qualified candidates will not be found for \$95,000 then the posting should have a higher minimum. Ms. Burton stated that it was possible that no one with experience as a director would apply, and the current low end of the salary range may be appropriate for candidates who only have experience as an assistant.

Mr. Moak expressed concern that the Board may hire someone at the top end of the salary range, and that person may want to negotiate a higher salary in the future. Mr. Manning expressed concern that candidates may see the top end of the salary range as a starting point for negotiations.

Mr. Manning offered a friendly amendment to Mr. Moak's amended salary range, requesting a new range of \$100,000 to \$120,000. Mr. Moak and Mr. Spaulding accepted Mr. Manning's friendly amendment.

Mr. Giunta stated that he would vote against the amendment to the salary range, explaining that he believes the current range of \$95,000 to \$125,000 would attract both candidates who do not yet have experience as a director, and those who have years of experience as a director. This would allow the Board to keep its options open. Mr. Giunta then stated that the posting was an advertisement meant to attract people to apply.

Mr. Manning stated that he did not want to waste the Board's time or that of any applicants by stating that the Board was willing to pay up to \$125,000 for an executive director if the Board is not willing to pay that. Mr. Giunta stated that the Board is willing to pay the right person that salary.

Mr. Moak stated that he had to leave the meeting, and expressed that he was happy with the posting as a whole, approved of the Board's discussion of the salary range thus far, and would be happy with whatever salary range the rest of the Board would agree on. Mr. Moak left the meeting at 9:05 am.

Mr. Cutter called a vote on the motion to amend the salary range from \$95,000 to \$125,000 to \$100,000 to \$120,000. The motion failed on a roll call vote. Mr. Spaulding, no, Mr. Manning, yes, Mr. Cutter, yes, Mr. Giunta, no.

Mr. Spaulding motioned to amend the salary range from \$95,000 to \$125,000 to \$100,000 to \$125,000 and to add wording clarifying that this is a starting salary. Mr. Giunta seconded. Mr. Spaulding stated that just because the range goes up to \$125,000 doesn't mean the Board needs to hire someone at \$125,000. Mr. Manning stated that a range of \$95,000 to \$120,000 would be a better strategy for negotiating. The motion failed on a roll call vote, Mr. Spaulding, yes, Mr. Manning, no, Mr. Giunta, no, Mr. Cutter, no.

Mr. Giunta stated that he likes the range as is, as it gives more flexibility to the Board. Mr. Manning stated that he is of the mindset that if the top of the range is \$125,000 the Board needs to be comfortable offering \$125,000 or even slightly more, and that he was not personally comfortable with that. Mr. Cutter called a vote on the motion to approve the posting as presented. The motion was approved via a roll call vote. Mr. Spaulding, yes, Mr. Manning, no, Mr. Giunta, yes, Mr. Cutter, yes.

Mr. Manning stated that the timeframe for having the position posted was tight. Mr. Cutter agreed. Ms. Burton stated that anyone already in an executive director position will want to give at least a two- or three-week notice.

Mr. Spaulding asked where the position would be posted. Ms. Burton stated it should be posted on the Board's website, the City's website and PERAC's website at a minimum. Mr. Manning stated that the MMA website typically also posts municipal positions, and that he could ensure it is posted there as well.

Mr. Spaulding noted that it was too late to change the posting now, but regretted that the posting did not state hours beyond 35 per week may be necessary on occasion. Mr. Cutter stated that Ms. Burton's current contract addresses this, and that any candidate could be offered a similar contract.

## **6. Motion to adjourn**

Mr. Manning motioned to adjourn. Mr. Spaulding seconded. The motion was approved via unanimous roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 9:22am.

Respectfully Submitted, \_\_\_\_\_

Derek Minervini, Assistant to the Executive Director

APPROVED - BOARD OF RETIREMENT

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Jeff Cutter, Elected Member, Chairman

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John Moak, Mayor's Appointee, Vice-Chairman

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Ethan Manning, Ex-Officio Member

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Joseph Spaulding, Elected Member

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Larry Giunta, Board Appointee