

**COMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL  
JULY 13, 2017 AT 6:00 PM  
COMMITTEE ROOM  
WOBURN CITY HALL**

Voting Members:

Attending: Chair Joanne Campbell, Alderman Michael Anderson,  
Alderman Michael Concannon; Alderman Mark Gaffney,  
Alderman Richard Gately, Alderman Lindsay Higgins,  
Alderman Darlene Mercer-Bruen, Alderman Edward Tedesco  
Absent: President Richard Haggerty

Non-Voting Members:

None

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A communication dated July 13, 2017 was received from President Richard M. Haggerty as follows:

Subject: Conflict

I will not be in attendance at the Personnel Committee meeting of the Whole this evening. One of the finalists is an employee at a company owned by members of my family. I became aware of this issue on Tuesday evening when the finalist's names became public.

Due to a conflict of interest I will not be participating in this evenings meeting.

Please accept this email as part of the permanent record this evening.

Richard M. Haggerty, Woburn City Council President, Alderman At Large

Motion made and 2<sup>nd</sup> that the communication be received and made part of the record, all in favor, 9-0.

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Alderman Campbell stated that 189 resumes had been received for the position, the position was advertised with the Massachusetts Municipal Association, the Woburn Daily Times Chronicle, at five area colleges and it appeared on a website for job postings. Appearing was Human Resource Director Elaine Pruyne who was present for assistance and she stated that she contacted the references and received highly favorable responses for each candidate. Alderman Campbell stated that they will go through the questions prepared by the Committee at the last meeting, have a roll call vote on the preferred candidate and the goal is to send a recommendation to the full City Council.

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For the purposes of conducting interviews of candidates for the position of Clerk of Committees. 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. 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?

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The Committee met with Gordon Vincent and he stated in response the above questions as follows: 1. He worked in Woburn at the Woburn Daily Times Chronicle as for 25 years and has been on staff for 30 years, he was a general assignment reporter which includes covering the Woburn City Council, the position seems liked a natural progression from the reporter's seat to the Clerk of Committee's seat, note taking is a skill he has honed, the newspaper is in a weak position, city government is a reliable employer, he gets along with the City Clerk and the office staff, his skill set meshes well with the needs of the office, and that of all the candidates he could step into the position without much of a learning curve. 2. He enjoys interacting with and helping people, in the newspaper industry he helps get stories out, and the City Clerk's office helps people. 3. His note taking skills, he has taken notes for 30 years, he can turn around minutes quickly, there are deadlines in the City Clerk's office as in the newspaper industry, and he can prepare concise reports and turn them around in a timely manner. 4. Until ten years ago he did paste up and layout for the newspaper, the industry went to a computer generated method, he took on the role of learning the process, the obituary page is completely computer generated, he takes over for the managing editor when he is out of the office, the software system is Quark, he has taken a tutorial on mail merge and is confident that he can use the system, note taking is second nature, when he is at a meeting or event he writes down whatever everyone says, he observes people, he uses his own version of shorthand, he is not a lawyer, if he had questions regarding the legality of an issue he would rely on the City Clerk, and he is willing to learn. 5. He has not concerns about learning the duties, people come into the newspaper office who need assistance, working with the obituary page he talks to people with a deceased family member, he handles the issue with care and takes into consideration their needs, and he helps them at the counter in a friendly and compassionate way. 6. Lack of communication at the newspaper was an issue, at times there is an overlap of efforts because of lack of communication, he had a good rapport with the City Clerk and office staff, and communication will not be an issue. 7. In the newspaper industry it takes a team effort to get the newspaper out, it is important to know your role and where you fit in, and the City Clerk's office has to operate as a team. 8. He sees himself

in the same position, he tends to stay when comfortable in a position, he was hired by the newspaper in 1990 as a sports writer, was hired five years later and has stayed with the newspaper. 9. He will hit the ground running, there will not be a lot of lead in time, he knows the board members and the board functions, he already works at night and is used to an off hour schedule, and he would be ready to go on August 1, 2017. The Committee Members had additional questions which elicited the following responses: His wife is from Marblehead and they will likely remain in that community, and he missed one day of work in 30 years due to the weather but the paper was ready and his boss said he could stay home. Alderman Gately stated that Mr. Vincent has done a good job. Alderman Mercer-Bruen stated that politics are part of the job, it is difficult as Clerk to be in every moment and not comment, and she wanted to know if that would be difficult. Alderman Concannon arrived at the meeting. Mr. Vincent stated that this is his role as a reporter but his opinion is not important, he tries to keep opinions out of stories, and he sees this as his role here. Alderman Mercer-Bruen stated that some people do not understand the level of work in the City Clerk's office and for the boards. Mr. Vincent stated that he understands the workload, the Ch. 40B petitions have taken up a lot of time at the Board of Appeals meetings, he understands the amount of work, and he has been in the office and seen the work. Alderman Mercer-Bruen stated that someone she knew was interested in the position and thought it involved light work and a few night meetings. Mr. Vincent stated that he is used to working a lot and enjoys working a lot. Alderman Higgins asked why he sought this change and why now. Mr. Vincent stated that the future of the newspaper is uncertain, no one in the newspaper industry is doing well, a reporter at the newspaper was laid off, the newspaper has gone to part-time editors for some editions, revenues are down throughout the industry, the Clerk of Committees position gives him peace of mind, and his employer said they learned of this opportunity in the last 48 hours and they understood his interest.

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The Committee met with Joseph Sciabica and he stated in response the above questions as follows: 1. He graduated law school a year ago, he was sworn in as a member of the Massachusetts Bar two weeks ago, he works on contract for a cannabis company, he researches documents and regulations, he uses AirTable which is a shareable Excel-style program, he worked in Virginia on constitutional rights issues, he has a lot of client intake experience, he conducts research and writes memorandums, he assisted an attorney with land use dispute litigation, he worked at a legal clinic and the Massachusetts Department of Health relative to licenses and adjudication, he worked on licensing regulation issues, he worked in Denver, Colorado for a small cannabis law firm relative to licensing, the Department of Revenue handled the regulation of cannabis in Denver, handled some criminal defense work, he worked for the law school newspaper and served as editor-in-chief in his third year, he took minutes in a sense during interviews, and he served on the by-law committee at law school and took minutes for their records. 2. He is interested in the amount of exposure he will have with issues working with the Board of Appeals, License Commission and City Council committees, researching the law for committees and taking minutes, and assisting people with the process. 3. He brings legal experience, administrative minute taking, coordinating file and keeping track of and managing data, he has customer service skills working for a nonprofit in Virginia and assisted people in difficult situations communicating the law to them, he walked business people in Colorado through the process, he manages data, he can learn software programs, and he taught himself Java script at a basic level. 4. He uses a program called AirTable which is a shareable Excel-style program, he has good skills for organization which is important for dates and deadlines, and he used Word his entire career. 5. He will have no issue becoming knowledgeable in the issues, and studying for and passing the bar examination was a large task which leads him to believe he can take on large tasks. 6. It was difficult when people did not understand the law in their situation,

and he had to work with them to help them understand the impact of the law. 7. Communication is a challenge, people being clear and explicit is important, and it is important to be explicit with the team. 8. He wants to be involved in government law in a higher clerk position, as city solicitor or town counsel, and be involved in government or municipal law. 9. He appreciates this opportunity, he understands that this is a rare opportunity, that he is grateful for having progressed this far, in law school he would not be a law review student but he put his effort into the student newspaper, and he looks forward to the opportunity to learn from the City Council and Aldermen. The Committee Members had additional questions which elicited the following responses: He took a year off and worked in retail in order to have time to study for the LSAT, he worked an internship in Japan, he worked for a company that dealt with lighting, he was exposed to business methods, and he realized he wanted to pursue law school rather than pursue business. Alderman Gately asked if he would go to school further. Mr. Sciabica stated that he has no plans to attend school further at this time, most classes he took were on regulations, land use and local government, and he took criminal advocacy and criminal law as required.

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Alderman Gately stated that Mr. Vincent would make a great Clerk of Committees, he knows the committees and the players, he has time, he will do an excellent job, he has treated the City Council fairly, he has been there for the City Council, and he was made for the position. Alderman Anderson stated that both candidates would do an excellent job, the position was almost made for Mr. Vincent, Mr. Sciabica would do an excellent job as well but he is concerned about his longevity, he appreciates his ambition but the City Council does not want to be hiring again in 18 months, Mr. Vincent is not a lawyer but once he learnt an issue he will have it, he got information to the City Council when he needed to, the City Council can rely on him to provide information, Mr. Vincent is hungry, he feels badly as he know Mr. Sciabica would do a good job as well, and the Mr. Vincent would be loyal. Alderman Gaffney stated that a lawyer was hired for the position but was not suited to coordinate the work, this is a difficult job, and Mr. Sciabica is looking to learn about government. Alderman Gately stated that Mr. Vincent is a steady and loyal employee with a good rapport with the staff, and if Mr. Sciabica gets a higher paying job he will likely move on. Alderman Higgins stated that Mr. Sciabica has not held a long-term job, and he stated that this was a stepping stone position for him. Alderman Mercer-Bruen stated that Mr. Sciabica wants to get a job and move on to the next place, that she does not disagree with this but for City Council purposes this is not sufficient, and she was leaning towards Mr. Sciabica based on the resumes but after the interview she saw the stability of Mr. Vincent as favorable. Alderman Tedesco stated that managing data in computer systems is a very important strength, and that a lot of information must be managed. Alderman Anderson stated that Mr. Vincent uses Word and understands Excel, Mr. Vincent stated that he did not know how to use mail merge, and Mr. Sciabica stated that he did not know what mail merge is. Alderman Tedesco stated that moving on is not a consideration as the prior clerk moved on. Alderman Campbell stated that Mr. Sciabica interviewed well and presented well, he is interested in another position, she is concerned the position may not be interesting for him once he learns the tasks, she does not want to have to do this again in a couple of years, Mr. Vincent presented well, he has learned computer programs when needed, he is stable in his positions, he has reasons for committing to the position, and Mr. Sciabica is early in his career and likely will move on. Alderman Gaffney stated that there will likely be a ten year minimum term with Mr. Vincent. Alderman Concannon stated he agrees with the consensus, Mr. Vincent knows the players and significant parts of the job, Mr. Sciabica would dive right in and know the job but he would likely be short-term, other opportunities are on his horizon, his opinion is Mr. Vincent could assimilate well in a small office, he relies on the opinion of the City Clerk, and Mr. Vincent would be a good fit and his choice. Alderman Anderson stated that the Human Resources Director agrees, and Mr. Vincent

has moved the scale to his side. Motion made and 2<sup>nd</sup> to send a committee report recommending Gordon Vincent be appointed Clerk of Committees, ROLL CALL: Anderson – Vincent, Concannon – Vincent, Gaffney – Vincent, Gately – Vincent, Haggerty – absent, Higgins – Vincent, Mercer-Bruen – Vincent, Tedesco – Vincent, Campbell – Vincent.

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Motion made and 2<sup>nd</sup> to adjourn, all in favor, 3-0. Adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

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