

THE ITEM

Sterling hires Community Paradigm to help with search for the right town administrator

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STERLING - Sterling will get some help looking for its next town administrator.

Members of the Select Board Dec. 8 voted to hire Community Paradigm to help with the town administrator search.

John Petrin, senior associate of Community Paradigm, told selectmen the company principals have decades of municipal experience and they use it to bring candidates to open positions.

Petrin will be the person working with Sterling, which is a return engagement for him. He represented Community Paradigm in the search for Sterling's new DPW superintendent.

Petrin has been with Community Paradigm for six years. Previously, he had over 40 years as a town administrator, including 13 in Harvard He also served a stint as assistant superintendent of schools in Marlborough.

Their experience and connections help Community Paradigm find the person who will be the right fit for the town, Petrin said.

"We don't just advertise; we recruit," he said, adding they send emails to all municipal managers and assistant managers so they can apply, or suggest the position for someone who they are mentoring.

In response to members of the Select Board's desire to have residents work on a search committee, Petrin said that is one model they use, and that screening committee members will see all applications. Community Paradigm will do background checks, including using their own personal information. Then they put applications in three tiers: One with great background, another who are good candidates and a third that may not meet the criteria.

"It is all about fit," Petrin said. "If it is not a good fit, it won't work."

The process should take 14 to 16 weeks, Petrin said, adding, "We will work as quickly as you wish."

Select Board Chairman Maureen Cranson joked that "six weeks would be good, it would be a nice Christmas-New Year present."

Petrin laughed.

"After 40 years, I am used to disappointing Select Board members. I am looking forward to continuing that record," he said about the timetable joke.

Petrin said Community Paradigm has submitted a proposal to Lancaster to be part of that town's search for a town administrator. West Boylston officials also mentioned the company in relation to its upcoming search for a town administrator after Nancy Lucier retires next summer.

"We have done adjoining communities in the past and it brings light to an area," Petrin said.

"If you engage with them, we want to be on the record that we want the better candidate," Cranson said, laughing.

Petrin said if they start now, Sterling will be ahead of the other communities in the process.

In other business

- Interim Town Administrator Fred Aponte said the town has received a \$100,000 IT grant from the state as part of the Community Compact Program. The entire project to change the town building phones will cost \$130,000.

"We never would have gotten it without Guardian," Aponte said. "It is kind of exciting."

- Patty Page, chairman of the Master Plan Committee, said the group needs an additional \$7,500 to complete the plan. Montachusett Regional Planning Commission was doing four chapters, but they have personnel issues and are behind. So the committee wants to pay VHB, which is helping with other chapters, to complete the project by January.

Page said the money will come from the Planning Board revolving account.

- Officials approved a new earth removal application form, which requires additional information from applicants and is clearer on the process.

- The Select Board agreed to a recommendation from the attorney general to sign onto a settlement negotiated with three opioid distributors and manufacturer Johnson and Johnson. The money will be distributed over 18 years to help abate problems of opioid abuse in communities.

- The town's new DPW superintendent, Ryan Mouradian, introduced himself to the Select Board. He began on Oct. 25 after working in Holden, and has been doing studies on road conditions and water plans to develop a capital list.