

AD HOC REPORT
Appointment of Economic Development Director
Ref. 2/09 - #2

Chairman Joe Cavo called the meeting to order at 6:24 p.m on February 10, 2009. In attendance were committee members Councilmen Gregg Seabury and John Esposito, ex-officio Tom Saadi, Jane Diggs, Mary Teicholz, Paul Rotello, Phil Curran and Ben Chianese, Mayor Mark Boughton, Director of Finance David St. Hilaire, Deputy Corporation Counsel Les Pinter, State Senator Michael McLachlan, Administrative Assistant to the Mayor Wayne Shepperd, and members of the public.

Chairman Cavo opened the meeting by asking the Mayor to speak. Mayor Boughton stated the reason for the meeting was to discuss the position of Economic Development Director. Prior to 2004, economic development was done by the Mayor and his assistant. Mayor Boughton created the full-time position of Economic Development Director in 2004. The Mayor announced the merger of the position this past year which would result in a total savings to the City of \$67,000.00. The merger would involve shifting some duties to the Administrative assistant and the Mayor's aide. The Director would get paid for up to 15 hours per week and would report to the Mayor's Administrative assistant. Previously this position was full-time with full benefits.

Chairman Cavo asked Mr. St. Hilaire his opinion. Mr. St Hilaire said that the numbers make sense in a tight budget year and thinks the appointment is positive.

Mr. Pinter's formal opinion is that he concurs with the findings of the State Board of Ethics, that there is no ethical conflict, and he is comfortable with the decision. Combining offices makes practical sense, he said.

Chairman Cavo asked the committee members if they had any questions. Mr. Seabury asked when the appointment would go into effect. Mayor Boughton said that Mr. McLachlan is already working in the interim. Mr. Seabury said he likes the combination of the two working and the savings to the City. Mr. Esposito said that during these economic times the savings is a credit to this administration, and has no question as to Mr. McLachlan's qualifications, but wanted to know if it would work. The Mayor said that the Director would provide monthly status reports to the Council.

Chairman Cavo asked if anyone else had any questions. Ms. Teicholz said beside the savings, she's concerned about businesses considering Danbury and it will be good to have someone who's up to speed.

Mr. Rotello said that Mr. McLachlan was elected to serve four communities, but would be asked to bring economic development to Danbury as Director. He finds a conflict in that way. The Mayor said the First Selectmen of Bethel, New Fairfield and Sherman have been contacted and they see no conflict of interest. Mr. Shepperd added that during the time he was Director not one business was choosing Danbury over another local town. They were looking at North Carolina, or New York State to relocate. Chairman Cavo said that by having Mr. Shepperd in the Mayor's office, we can rely on him if there ever was a conflict for Mr. McLachlan.

Mr. Chianese asked Mr. Shepperd if he could break down the 35 hours per week he worked as Director. Mr. Shepperd answered that every week was different depending on season, numbers of clients, number of projects, scheduled meetings, etc. Mayor Boughton said we've asked our people to do more with less to save taxpayers money, and that there are duties that Mr. Shepperd is still going to do that make it possible for Mr. McLachlan to do a 15 hour per week job. Mr. Cutsumpas is taking up some of Mr. McLachlan's old duties as well. Mr. Chianese asked if anyone is going to question the number of hours Mr. McLachlan is working. Mayor Boughton said that he cannot bill the city for extra hours worked

above and beyond the 15 hours maximum per week. Mr. Pinter stated that the position is exempt from that type of labor law. Mr. Curran said that every administrator puts in far more time than the hours they get paid for, and it's ridiculous to think he wouldn't put in his time. Mike McLachlan will go above and beyond.

Mr. Saadi stated the Council vote is a stamp of approval and not binding on the Mayor. He feels it's the Mayor's prerogative to structure his office the way he wishes. Mr. Saadi agrees with the benefit of the cost savings, the accountability and the structure up to 15 hours. He further hopes adjustments will be made for a full time director in the future.

Mr. Seabury moved to recommend the Council as a whole approve the appointment of Michael McLachlan to the position of Director of Economic Development for the City of Danbury. Seconded by Mr. Esposito. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Seabury moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:16 p.m., seconded by Mr. Esposito. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Cavo, Chairman

Gregg Seabury

John Esposito