



Programs & Services Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, August 25, 2021

Present: Councilors Krintzman (Chair), Noel, Albright, Ryan, Humphrey, Wright, Greenberg, and Baker

Also Present: Councilors Oliver, Downs, Malakie, Markiewicz, Kalis, Norton, Gentile, Leary Crossley, and Lucas

City Staff: Michelle Pizzi O'Brien, Director of Human Resources

#312-21 Appointment of Rakashi Chand to the Human Rights Commission
HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing RAKASHI CHAND, 80 Wade Street, Newton, as a member of the HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION for a term to expire on September 30, 2024 (60 Days: 10/08/21).

Action: Programs & Services Approved 7-0 (Councilor Greenberg not voting)

Note: Rakashi Chand joined the committee to discuss her appointment to the Human Rights Commission. Ms. Chand explained that she is a member of the Attorney General's Advisory Committee for new Americans who represent different minority groups that do not always have their voice heard. She further explained that she works at the Massachusetts Historical Society and serves on Historic Newton. Additionally, her goal is to share and promote different cultures in the community.

Councilors asked the following questions:

Q: How will you navigate celebrating different cultures while dealing with issues inside of the community?

A: Ms. Chand explained that she is a large part of the Indian community in Newton and there have been tensions regarding what is happening in India. She explained that she will continue to promote all aspects of Indian culture and continue to welcome all opinions to make sure that everyone feels heard.

Q: Have you worked with other groups including the LGBTQ+ community?

A: Ms. Chand explained that she also services on the Diversity, Inclusion and Equity committee at the Massachusetts Historical Society. She is committed to making sure that Newton is inclusive to all minority groups and the LGBTQ+ community. Additionally, Ms. Chand is currently working on the events for Indigenous People's Day.

Councilors thanked Ms. Chand for her willingness to serve.

Councilor Humphrey motioned to approve which passed 7-0 with Councilor Greenberg not voting.

#137-21 Public Meeting with City Clerk/Clerk for the Council candidates

CITY CLERK PRELIMINARY SCREENING COMMITTEE submitting recommended candidates for the City Clerk/Clerk of the Council position for review by the Programs & Services Committee and recommendation to the City Council.

Action: Programs & Services voted to recommend Carol Moore as the City Clerk/Clerk of the Council 6-2 (Councilors Greenberg and Ryan opposed)

Note: The Chair noted that he will start the discussion by calling on each of the Programs & Services committee members to give their thoughts on each of the three candidates for the job of City Clerk/ Clerk of the Council. He also noted that he will open the conversation to other councilors that are present. Michelle Pizzi O'Brien, Human Resources Director joined the committee to discuss the procedure portion of this item.

Councilors felt that the pros to hiring Ms. Khan included she has been mentored under David Olson, former City Clerk which would assist her in this role. But it was also noted that she knows what areas need to be approved upon and is willing to make those changes. She has also been working with not only the staff in the City Clerk's office but also the City Council and other departments for several years. It is also important that the Clerk of the Council makes all the new councilors feel comfortable being able to ask questions and adjust to the new role. Ms. Khan has the ability to do this and can develop her skills in the areas she is lacking experience. There is a concern that the morale in the City Clerk's office is low based on the events of the past year and not choosing Ms. Khan could add to that. There is also a possibility of Ms. Khan leaving if she isn't offered this job which would be a disservice to the department. Ms. Khan has worked tirelessly as the Acting Clerk of the Council and deserves to be rewarded for all her hard work.

Councilors felt that the cons of hiring Ms. Khan included that she does not have a great deal of experience supervising a staff. The experience she has had as the Acting Clerk of the Council could be used to develop these skills overtime and she could be a clerk in the future. It was noted that Ms. Khan is also early in her career and the hope would be that if Ms. Khan is not the choice then she can still help with the growth of the office. The hiring of Ms. Khan will also leave openings in the department.

Councilors felt that the pros of hiring Mr. Abdul- Matin included his experience with supervising staff. He is also is a quick-study and would be able to learn all the aspects of this job. Additionally, Mr. Abdul-Matin does have an IT background which could be used to upgrade the technology used in the department. This could include assisting with making the City's website more user friendly. He may also be able to bring a different perspective to the job.

Councilors felt that the cons of hiring Mr. Abdul- Matin included his lack of experience in a City Clerk's Office. There were also concerns raised about his interview and if he would be able to adjust to this role.

Councilors felt that the pros to hiring Ms. Moore included that she is energetic and does have City Clerk experience. She has also had experience supervising staff from number of different aspects in her career. It was noted that the supervising of staff will be an important part of this role. Councilors explained that the City Clerk/ Clerk of the Council is the face of the office and Ms. Moore would do well at making the public feel comfortable and welcome. Ms. Moore was also well-prepared and gave an excellent interview. It was also noted that Ms. Moore can bring a new perspective to the job.

Councilors felt the cons to hiring Ms. Moore included that she has less experience in the election side of the office. There was also a concern that her experience with City Clerk work has been in smaller communities and it was questioned how long she will stay in this role. Additionally, there were concerns raised about the way Ms. Moore answered questions about diversity in her interview.

Overall, the committee expressed the importance of the new City Clerk/Clerk of the Council being able to work well with the existing staff, the public, other city departments and the City Council. There is also the goal of investing more into this department to develop the staff. Councilors agreed that it is also important for the City Clerk/ Clerk of the Council to have a good temperament.

The Chair noted that tonight the Committee will recommend a candidate to the full City Council and choose a liaison from Programs & Services to work with the Human Resources Department on what the appropriate salary will be for the candidate. The committee did vote unanimously to make Chair Krintzman the liaison. Human Resources will need to do further background checks on the selected candidate before a compensation can be set. The compensation will also need to be voted on by the full City Council.

Committee members went on to state who their first or last choice were out of the three candidates. This led to the committee focusing on and further discussing Ms. Khan and Ms. Moore. Councilors emphasized that Ms. Moore and Ms. Khan would work well together as a team.

President Albright motioned to recommend that the City Council appoint Carol Moore to the position of City Clerk/Clerk of the Council, for a two-year term, to commence at the date to be determined by the Department of Human Resources, at the annual compensation determined on the conditional offer of employment process, which passed 6-2 (Councilors Greenberg and Ryan opposed).

#313-21 Reappointment of Barbara Lischinsky to the Commission on Disability

HER HONOR THE MAYOR reappointing BARBARA LISCHINSKY, 1942 Washington Street, #424, Newton, as a member of the COMMISSION ON DISABILITY for a term to expire on July 31, 2024 (60 Days: 10/08/21).

Action: Programs & Services Approved 8-0

Note: With no questions or concerns from the committee, Councilor Krintzman motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

#314-21 Reappointment of Lakshmi Kadambi to the Commission on Disability

HER HONOR THE MAYOR reappointing LAKSHMI KADAMBI, 55 Staniford Street, Newton, as a member of the COMMISSION ON DISABILITY for a term to expire on September 30, 2024 (60 Days: 10/08/21).

Action: Programs & Services Approved 8-0

Note: With no questions or concerns from the committee, Councilor Noel motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Josh Krintzman, Chair