

## **Section 15 Procedure for Appointment of Fire Chief**

### **15.1 Applicability**

This by law shall apply to the selection of a candidate to fill the position of Fire Chief when such position is not subject to the provisions of Chapter 31 of the Massachusetts General Laws. Pursuant to Article 24, Section 3.6 of the Town of Natick Bylaws, a current job description shall be maintained for this position. A Fire Chief appointed by the Board of Selectmen pursuant to this Bylaw will meet the minimum entrance requirements set forth in said job description.

### **15.2 Procedure for Appointment of Fire Chief**

- a. Within one year of the time when it is known that the position of Fire Chief shall become vacant, the Board of Selectmen, may initiate the selection process. Within six months of the time the position of Fire Chief is to become vacated, the Board of Selectmen shall initiate the selection process if it has not already done so. In the event that less than six months notice is provided to the Selectmen that the position of Fire Chief shall become vacant, the selection process shall begin forthwith after receipt by the Board of Selectmen of such notice.
- b. The Board of Selectmen shall initiate the selection process by giving notice of its intention to establish a screening committee to review applications for the position of Fire Chief and shall send a copy of such notice to each town agency or officer responsible for designating persons to serve on the committee. The Board of Selectmen shall appoint to the screening committee all such persons designated pursuant to the provisions of section 15.2 c. herein, provided that their names have been received in writing the day before the screening committee is to be appointed. The Board of Selectmen shall appoint the screening committee not earlier than twenty-one days nor later than twenty-eight days after such notice is sent.
- c. For the position of Fire Chief, a screening committee shall consist of nine voting members and one non-voting member. The School Committee, Finance Committee and Personnel Board shall each designate one person to serve on the screening committee. Persons chosen by said agencies may, but need not, be members of the agency by which they are chosen. The Town Administrator and Police Chief shall serve as members of the screening committee. The Board of Selectmen shall designate one resident of Natick to the screening committee. This designee may not be a member of the Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Finance Committee or Personnel Board. The most senior member of the Fire Department in the second-highest non-chief rank who is able to serve and is not a candidate for the position of Fire Chief shall serve on the screening committee. In the event that no member of that rank is able to serve, the most senior member of the next lowest rank who is able to serve and is not a candidate for the position of Fire Chief shall serve on the screening committee. This individual may not be a member of the Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Finance Committee or Personnel Board. The Town Moderator shall designate one member of Town Meeting. This designee may not be a member the Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Finance Committee or Personnel Board. The Town Administrator shall designate to the screening committee one fire chief from another community. The Personnel Director shall serve as the non-voting member of the committee. Designees of the Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Finance Committee, Personnel Board and Town Moderator

shall be residents of Natick. No member of the screening committee other than the Town Administrator, Police Chief, Personnel Director and the specified member of the Fire Department may be a paid employee of the Town.

- d. Not more than thirty days following the appointment of the screening committee by the Board of Selectmen, the persons chosen shall meet to organize and plan a process for solicitation by advertisement, including, without limitation, in appropriate professional journals, and by other means, to receive applications for the position of Fire Chief. The screening committee shall conduct its work in an expeditious manner; employees of the Town shall provide all reasonable assistance to the committee in the conduct of its work.
- e. The screening committee shall review all applications received and shall provide for interviews to be conducted with such number of candidates for the position as it may decide. Such interview(s) may be conducted before and/or after the assessment center described in paragraph f. below, as the committee may determine best suits its needs.
- f. The screening committee shall also use as an evaluative tool an assessment center specifically designed to examine candidates' knowledge, skills and abilities, including without limitation, their technical, tactical, professional, managerial and strategic skills. The assessment center shall be designed and conducted by a consultant specifically hired for this purpose by the Town. Said consultant shall be selected by the Town through competitive procurement in accordance with applicable law and procedures and shall have significant experience conducting assessment centers in the relevant public safety department.
- g. The results of the assessment center conducted pursuant to paragraph (f) shall be made available to the screening committee.
- h. Not more than one hundred eighty days following the date the screening committee meets to organize, the screening committee shall submit to the Board of Selectmen the names of not less than three but not more than five candidates whom it believes to be best suited to perform the duties of Fire Chief.
- i. If the screening committee determines that there are not at least three candidates qualified to perform the duties of the Fire Chief, the screening committee shall report to the Board of Selectmen that it is unable to complete its assigned task. In that event, the Board of Selectmen shall direct the screening committee to reopen the search process and the foregoing procedure shall apply.
- j. Within sixty days following the date that a list of nominees is submitted to it, the Board of Selectmen shall:
  - 1. interview candidates referred to it by the screening committee, and
  - 2. determine if it will select one of the candidates to serve as Fire Chief, and
  - 3. choose a nominee to be appointed as Fire Chief; or
  - 4. if the Board of Selectmen decides not to appoint any of the nominees as Fire Chief, it shall direct the screening committee to reopen the search process, and the foregoing procedure shall apply.

k. Upon the appointment of the Fire Chief, the screening committee established pursuant to this Article shall be considered discharged.

### 15.3 **Appointment, Review, Other Activities**

- a. **Appointment, Term** The Board of Selectmen shall appoint the Fire Chief to serve for a term of up to three year provided, however, that the first six months of any individual's first appointment to the office shall be considered a probationary period. The Fire Chief shall be appointed solely on the basis of his or her technical, tactical, professional, managerial and executive qualifications and shall be especially fitted by previous experience, training and education to perform the duties of the position.
- b. **Review of Performance** The Town Administrator shall annually provide to the Board of Selectmen a review of the job performance of the Fire Chief which shall, at least in summary form, be a public record.
- c. **Restriction on Other Activities** The Fire Chief shall devote his or her full time to the duties of the position of Fire Chief and shall not hold any other public office, elective or appointive, nor shall he or she engage in other business, occupation or profession during his or her term, unless such action or appointment is approved, in advance, in writing, by the Board of Selectmen.