

Mount Jackson
Town Council Special Meeting
November 30, 2021
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A special meeting of the Mount Jackson Town Council was held November 30, 2021 at 5:30 PM in the council chambers at 5901 Main Street. Roll call was taken with Mayor Pifer, and Councilmembers Rod Shepherd, Whitney Miller, Bonnie Good, Judy Fultz, and Roger Rudy in attendance. Councilmember Dennis Andrick was absent.

Also, in attendance, Neil Showalter, Town Manager; and Debbie Allen, Town Clerk. Visitors were Tommy Keeler with Northern Virginia Daily.

New Business:

1. Consideration of Appointment of an Interim Police Chief.

Mr. Showalter stated when Chief Sterner announced his retirement the Personnel Committee went on a two prong search; 1) primarily to find the new chief who will be named at a later date, and 2) to search for a candidate to present to the Council for the possible appointment of interim chief. Mr. Showalter stated some contacts were made and a person was interviewed by himself and Mr. Rudy. He stated his understanding is there has been some soul searching among the Council to decide whether or not to appoint an interim chief or allow the administrative duties to be handled by the existing staff, whom Chief Sterner has already trained.

Ms. Good asked what the Personnel Committee decided on. Mr. Rudy stated the committee's discussion was regarding who might serve as interim chief, not the possibility of not appointing one. He stated his feeling is an interim chief is important for a couple of reasons. Chief Sterner had offered his services after retirement if there were needs of the department, however, that will not be possible now due to his family tragedy with his parents trip to Pennsylvania. The other reason an interim chief is important is two individuals identified along with those capable of serving as chief, are also active candidates, and having either of them serve as interim chief may send the wrong message of a predetermined decision regarding the chief position.

Mayor Pifer stated he was at the Personnel Committee meetings and agrees with everything Mr. Rudy has said. However, he had not thought about the fact that there are people in the department who are very capable of continuing to run the department without interruption. Mayor Pifer stated his thoughts are those individuals would have to train the interim chief, so rather than add that responsibility, allow existing staff continue with the duties Chief Sterner has already trained them to do. Mayor Pifer stated Mr. Showalter confirmed with Jay Neal today there is nothing in the charter requiring an interim chief be appointed.

Ms. Good asked if the committee feels the situation would be jeopardized if there was not a person at the top, as she would not like for the department to be in the situation where staff is questioning what roles they have in making decisions. Ms. Good also asked if the committee is leaning towards a specific replacement. Mr. Rudy stated the position is closed as of today, but at the committee's last meeting they put aside for consideration 5 out of 30 candidates, with one additional candidate as a second tier individual. Mr. Rudy stated the committee's next meeting is December 8 to review the remaining applications, to make a decision as to who should be considered more thoroughly through an interview.

Ms. Miller and Ms. Fultz both stated they agree with Mr. Rudy that it is important to appoint an interim chief for all the reasons previously mentioned. Ms. Miller stated the person the committee is leaning towards has a lot of experience, and having a neutral third party come in to see how the department is run, and provide feedback may help make the transition to the new chief easier. Mr. Rudy stated it will probably be at least two months before a decision on the permanent Chief of Police is made.

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Mr. Showalter distributed the resume of candidate Steve Crisman to the Councilmembers, who Mr. Rudy stated was interviewed extensively last Tuesday. Mr. Rudy stated the projection is this would be a part time position of approximately 16 hours per week. Mr. Showalter stated it would be approximately 60 hours per month, but that number could vary depending on the department needs. He stated Mr. Crisman, of his choosing, is not working presently at his other position at the community college, and emphasized he would not have trouble meeting a 60 hour per month commitment.

Councilmember Good MOVED, seconded by Councilmember Fultz to APPROVE the Appointment of Steven Crisman as Interim Chief of Police.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

<u>AYE</u>	<u>NAY</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Councilmember Fultz			
Councilmember Miller			
			Councilmember Andrick
Councilmember Shepherd			
Councilmember Rudy			
Councilmember Good			

5 AYES, 1 ABSENT, motion carried

Motion made by Councilmember Rudy seconded by Councilmember Good to adjourn the meeting at 5:45 PM.

Deborah "Debbie" L. Allen, Clerk

Donald "Donnie" I. Pifer, Mayor