

NORTH DAKOTA ATMOSPHERIC RESOURCE BOARD  
Subcommittee on Director Position Applicants  
Telephone Conference Call - November 20, 2000

A telephone conference call was held on November 20, 2000, with all subcommittee members participating. Participating were James Haaland, Chairman; Mary Cichos, Jay Sandstrom, and David Sprynczynatyk. Also present were Bruce Boe and LeNor Dollinger.

James Haaland called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Mr. Haaland noted that Alexis Long qualified for further consideration and Darin Langerud did not qualify due to the fact that he did not have the required ten years of experience in operations and research.

Bruce Boe stated Mr. Langerud had spoken to him regarding not having the required ten years experience until next spring. However, when Central Personnel rated the applicants they found breaks in years of service that could also not be considered. Considering this, the end result in 7 years and 9 months experience rather than the ten years required.

For the committee's information, Mr. Boe read the policy on recruitment and hiring practices of the State Water Commission. (Copy attached).

It was noted by Mr. Haaland that as he understand the process, the only action remaining is to discuss moving ahead with plans to interview Dr. Alexis Long.

Dave Sprynczynatyk noted he feels that the next action is to move ahead with arrangements to interview Dr. Long since he meets the qualifications of the position as set forth by the Board.

Mr. Boe stated he has spoken to Dr. Long regarding an internet video network conference with the board for interview purposes. Dr. Long stated he would be happy to look into facilities in Victoria, Australia in order to accomplish this. He plans to contact Mr. Boe by November 21 regarding the arrangements and facilities available in Victoria. Mr. Boe is also working with the Information Technology Division at the capitol for facilities in Bismarck.

Discussion was held on a date to hold a meeting for the purpose of interviewing Dr. Long. Mr. Haaland feels the final decision to hire must be made by the full board and therefore the interview conducted must include the full board.

Following discussion, it was decided to try for the dates of December 5, 6, 7, or 8. Mary Cichos stated she will not be able to participate on December 6. The interview may have to be held in the afternoon or evening given the time differences between Victoria and North Dakota. Bruce or LeNor will continue to work out the logistics for

accomplishing the interview and a board meeting to take care of board business in regard to the contractor's final report and other issues.

Jay Sandstrom asked, "After the interview are we then in a position to make an offer?", and, what is the current salary of the director?

Mr. Boe responded his salary level at this time is just under \$63,876 per year. Mr. Sprynczynatyk stated he envisions the board would hold the interview to get better knowledge of Dr. Long as regarding his knowledge and capabilities, etc., then at that point end the interview and then the board would discuss if they feel the candidate is the best for the position. The purpose of the interview is to satisfy in the minds of the board members if the person is the right individual for the job. If the board decides positively for the candidate, then an offer can be made.

Mr. Sprynczynatyk also stated that if the board decides this is not the right person for the job they can disqualify all applicants and either start over or appoint someone to the position. The standards for this position's qualifications were set pretty high because of the need to have credentials within the agency within the research community. Mr. Sprynczynatyk feels that is important and we have always done that over the years. Another alternative to think about is maybe the research credentials still need to reside within the agency but not necessarily within the position of director. The director is an administrator, a manager, a liaison with the public, and the director doesn't necessarily have to be the one who has the credentials for purposes of research and soliciting grants, etc. It is possible that another person in the division and the agency could have those credentials. Mr. Sprynczynatyk feels it is worth discussing that it may be possible the director may be more of an administrator within the agency and another person within the agency would be the person who has the necessary experience and education to be able to help as we move forward in the area of research and soliciting grants for research, etc. I feel we have several options open to us, with the next step being to visit with Dr. Long.

Jay Sandstrom asked if we have someone in our reach to fill these requirements. Mr. Sprynczynatyk said he does not have anybody in mind but this is another way to structure the positions. In his opinion, the Executive Director is supposed to be more of an agency administrator and responsible for carrying out the program and the authorities and responsibilities that lie within the law and also manage the agency.

Jay Sandstrom asked, "If our candidate doesn't work out, we could then in fact go back and look at the job description, and is Darin Langerud still in the picture?" Mr. Sprynczynatyk stated he feels that is correct.

Mr. Sprynczynatyk stated the interview is an opportunity for us to get to know the candidate and determine if he is the right person for the job. If so, we can continue discussions with him and negotiate and see if he accepts. If not, there are a couple options available to the board. 1) Re-advertise the position with the same

requirements; 2) re-advertise with different requirements; or 3) appoint someone since it is a non-classified position.

Mr. Sandstrom expressed the interview process be well thought out with a specific goal in mind so the board can look as professional that we hope he will be.

Mary Cichos asked, "If we have to reopen the position, does the staff feel we only got two applicants because we did not give enough time to apply?" Mr. Boe feels this definitely may be the case. Another possibility may be that when he went through the criteria for the director's position, it was advertised as what is presently carried out by the director. Mr. Boe sent letters to approximately ten people he felt were qualified for the job. Some of which he knew would not be interested in the job and other he thought would be. Mr. Boe received email and calls from these people stating the list of responsibilities in the position announcement is a lot for one person. Mr. Boe feels if the board re-advertised they would not necessarily get more applicants, and in fact, could lose those they received. They could re-advertise and not require as much.

Mr. Sandstrom asked, "Between now and the interview, what can the board do to make it turn out the best for Dr. Long and the board?" Mr. Boe complimented Mr. Sandstrom for his concern for doing the interview correctly and that he shares his concern that the board get it right and not rush to judgement. The staff will be circulating questions to the board for their feedback to see if there are other things to include. LeNor has some particulars on the interview process about what can and cannot be asked during the interview which will also be distributed to the board.

Mr. Haaland asked if there will a set amount of time to do the interview. Mr. Boe stated at this time he does not know but thinks it will come down to what else may be scheduled for the IVN (Interactive Vide Network) on that day and what the board wants to pay for. Mr. Boe stated the IVN conference should be much less expensive than travel for Dr. Long to North Dakota from Australia.

LeNor Dollinger expressed concern about changing the job description of the director because this will impact the other two positions of the agency (Chief Meteorologist and Business Manager) and those positions in turn would most likely need to be reviewed in view of this change. When a change in one-third of the staff happens it will affect the other two-thirds.

Concern was expressed, and Mr. Boe was asked his opinion about maintaining the credentials to the scientific community. Mr. Boe stated he has never known anybody to get a grant from the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, the National Science Foundation, or anyplace else without having a least a masters degree.

Mary Cichos stated this has been her concern with lowering the qualifications for this position. She stated she feels the program has been so successful in North Dakota and it is due to the knowledge and experience that Bruce and past directors have had.

Ms. Cichos would not like to see North Dakota relinquish this and go backwards instead of forwards. Ms. Cichos feel we are highly respected in the weather modification community and we need to insure this continues, not only in the scientific community but also the political part. We need to take this into consideration when we decide to lower or change our standards. In all reality, considering what Mr. Sprynczynatyk has suggested, can the board afford another person on the staff? Ms. Cichos feels her vision is that we now have two-in-one in this position, and do we want to get into two separate people?

Mr. Haaland stated these comments by Ms. Cichos contain some very good points.

Ms. Cichos asked Mr. Boe to state how he felt about this consideration.

Mr. Boe stated the ARB staff does a great job and he is sure LeNor and Darin will continue to do great jobs. He commented that as Ms. Dollinger alluded to earlier, when you change one position you have a change affect on all of them. That is because ARB has a very small staff for what they are required to accomplish and they work together very closely. Mr. Boe stated his scientific credentials have helped out the board a lot. This position gives you national and international visibility if you have the credentials. That sort of thing won't happen to your director if he or she doesn't have credentials. Mary Cichos stated that this is her concern and she feels the staff is a whole unit and mesh with each other's abilities to make us what we are today. We need to be aware of this and make it an important part of this process.

Jay Sandstrom stated Ms. Cichos has brought up and stated some extremely important points that need to be brought to the full board prior to the interview.

Ms. Cichos stated she feels it is of the utmost importance that the board understand the goals and give close consideration to: 1) does the person have the credentials; and, 2) does the person have the experience and know-how to go ahead with the program at the same level we are at this time. If we want to reduce that level then that must be discussed.

Jim Haaland noted that two weeks ago Mr. Boe was in Washington, D. C. for a scientific conference by invitation from the National Academy of Sciences. He asked if the director would have had any possibility of being invited to that meeting without the credentials. Mr. Boe responded that people were asked to that meeting based on experience and what they had accomplished in this field and have published regarding that work. He felt there was very little chance that they would have asked anyone without these credentials to this conference.

Ms. Cichos reiterated this is one of the points that concerns her the most. When the director represents the board at conferences, the knowledge that the director offers and acquires at these conferences is of the utmost importance to the staff and board and because of this our staff is stronger and more capable of leading in this technology.

Ms. Cichos stated this is her concern if the position is not kept at this level of credentials. Mr. Haaland agreed with this assessment.

Ms. Cichos feels this discussion needs to be shared with the full board at the next meeting prior to the interview and to recognize their views on what they want for the future of the Atmospheric Resource Board.

LeNor Dollinger briefly reviewed procedures of employment law that must be followed during the interview process and stated she will be forwarding information to the board prior to the interview. Time will also be provided prior to beginning the interview for the board to discuss their vision for the position and the future of the board's programs.

**The Subcommittee recommends to the ND Atmospheric Resource Board that Dr. Alexis Long be interviewed by the full board for further consideration for the position of Executive Director.**

The staff will pursue an available date for the internet video conference interview with Dr. Long, and also give time consideration to other business that must be taken up by the board.

The subcommittee requests that the time allowed for the interview be as open-ended as possible.

Being no further questions or information the conference call was concluded.



James Haaland, Chairman

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Mary Cichos, Secretary

Transcribed by LeNor J. Dollinger