

# Meeting Minutes

## Town of Adams Board of Selectmen

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ADAMS, MASS.  
November 22, 2014

### Board of Selectmen Meeting

On the Above date the Board of Selectmen held a meeting at Town Hall at 10:00 a.m.

**Chairman Arthur Harrington** presided. Present were **Members John Duval, Joseph Nowak, Jeffrey Snoonian, and Vice Chairman Richard Blanchard.**

### *Call to order – 10:00 a.m., Select Board Meeting Room*

**Chairman Harrington** welcomed **Town Administrator Candidate Tony Mazzucco**, and explained the interview process. The Select Board members took turns asking questions of Mr. Mazzucco. The questions and answers are as follows:

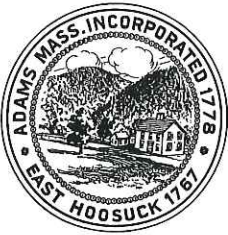
**Q1: Being a Town Administrator, I believe, goes well beyond being just a person who oversees the running of a community. What other attributes do you consider imperative to becoming a successful administrator?**

*A1: Mr. Mazzucco said he felt being involved and invested in the community is important, and living in the community is a great advantage. Being able to communicate townspeople and establishing residence, shopping in the same places and working with them is critical to being a Town Administrator. He said every person is different, and there is a mix of people that exist in the community that come from different socio-economic backgrounds. The Town Administrator needs to be able to relate with everyone in the community and to deal with them professionally. Mr. Mazzucco related two stories to demonstrate how the Town Administrator has to be able to relate to and understand the sensitivities of the different populations in town, and said that being involved is the best way to do that. There needs to be a willingness to understand that the people in the community are not necessarily going to come from the same background as you, and may have different challenges. He said it is important to be part and parcel to the community beyond attending the formal events and functions, which is part of the job. He lives now in a community that he is not originally from and that he feels he has integrated well in the community. He shops where the community citizens shop, and goes to events beyond the ones necessary for his role but gets involved in other organizations that are not part of his official duties because he enjoys being involved in his community. He also shared that having the willingness to be part of the community outside of official duties makes a difference.*

**Q2: Mr. Mazzucco, would you say the City of Caribou, Maine is better off today for hiring you? Please explain your answer.**

*A2: Mr. Mazzucco responded that he felt unequivocally that the City of Caribou was in a better place since he was hired. He explained that when he began in Caribou, the Downtown had a high vacancy rate so they brought in vendors and a band on Thursdays in the Summer to change the economic dynamic. He noted that the City had been in a recession since 1994, when Loring Air Force Base left the area. Mr. Mazzucco said the first year they did it there were a lot of naysayers, but a citizen that lived in town his whole life told Mr. Mazzucco he never thought he would see Caribou like that again and this event, which was critical to getting it going, brought the community together and changed the mood of the people in the community. Mr. Mazzucco*





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*explained to the people that things aren't great and are not expected to be great soon, but he was working on it and the citizens of the community can still be proud to live there and still enjoy it. He said the citizen who changed from a negative viewpoint to being proud of the community he lives in is the high that you chase in this job, and this change is his single best accomplishment. When a person says that their community is better because of his efforts it personally is the most important and the biggest impact he has made on the quality of life in Caribou.*

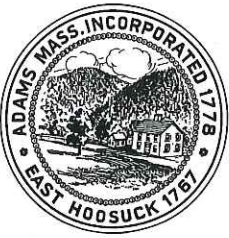
**Q3: In a concise manner, please describe how you would develop and implement a strategic plan for the Town of Adams.**

*A3: Mr. Mazzucco informed the Board that he had recently gone through the process of going through the City's comprehensive plan for the City of Caribou over the next 10 years. He explained that a large portion of the Caribou plan was done to meet the requirements for a comprehensive plan in the State of Maine, but the process taken in Caribou would be similar to what he would do in Adams. He said stakeholders need to be involved, but before that you need to let people know what a strategic plan is, and what you want to do. In Caribou he met with church groups, civic groups, businesses and other organizations in Town and let them know he was starting the process and what it was about. Then he would go about getting stakeholders, getting opinions, and getting an idea of where to go before putting a plan together. He said the success that he had was going to these meetings, and explaining the City is not telling you how we are making the comprehensive plan, but we are going to teach you what a comprehensive plan is, why we want to do this, and what we hope to see out of it, before we get to the point of sitting down and planning our future. He said that recently, he noticed in Caribou that they were running out of copies of the plan, which is a dry, relatively boring 122 page document, because people knew about it before they went into the process and are engaged now, want to see it and be part of it.*

**Q4: If selected as the next Town Administrator of Adams what do you consider the three most challenging aspects of the position and how would you handle each?**

*A4: Mr. Mazzucco replied that the first is economic development and growth, with which a Town Administrator has to play a central role. Part of the reason is to try to bring some relief, or slow the increase in property taxes, and economic development is important because if you can't make the pie bigger, nothing will change. You will either see higher taxes or you will lose services, or both. Economic development isn't easy and is always the biggest challenge for most communities. He said it should be in the forefront because communities and economies both grow and shrink. In addition to economic development, working with the public is always a big challenge because you are trying to bring together so many different needs and concerns, and people come from many different walks of life. People have different needs that you are trying to meet with different resources. Mr. Mazzucco gave the example of an elderly couple having very different needs and concerns than a younger couple just starting out. He said the service provision changes based on who your citizen base is, so it is a challenge to get around the differences between people, and to bring around a solution that works for everyone. He noted that it is very difficult to have one solution to a problem that works for everyone, but you have to make decisions that take care of the most people. The third challenge for a Town Administrator is realizing that local government has*





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*the most impact on the average citizen but has the least resources, and is beholden to what the state and federal government is going to do. A Town Administrator's impact on that is very limited, so you have the least resources, the most service provision, and the weakest or smallest legal and fiscal framework to be able to make a difference in people's lives.*

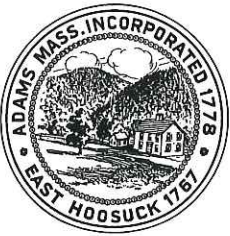
**Q5: Cite a specific example of working directly with your local legislative representatives to obtain state or federal funds that had a direct impact on your community and elaborate on why you think you were successful.**

*A5: Mr. Mazzucco explained that the local legislators in Maine are working closer with the governor than with their local partners. Some state level officials have been told not to work with the municipal officials because they represent a different level of government, so when local government tries to reach out to the legislative delegation, the response level is not always there. One example he gave was working with Senator Collins' office and recently on the Assistance to Firefighters Grant we were able to get a new \$400,000 fire truck for the city, where it was a team effort between the City Manager, Mr. Mazzucco, and the Fire Chief and was due to their own merits than working with the legislative delegation. He said he is a member of the Maine Municipal Association's legislative policy committee, a group of 70 officials elected and appointed throughout the state who work together to craft the State of Maine's Municipal Association's legislative agenda for the following legislative session. He said after working with the planning board on some state law changes regarding building codes, and planning and development regulations, they successfully got a bill that he did through the Maine Municipal Association that will be on the legislative agenda for this year. He said he feels there will be support for it to change the state's application of the building code. He explained that in Maine there is MUBEC, the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code which only applies to communities of a certain size, and they are trying to remove the size restriction so it is more uniform across the board. He said this is an example of what he is doing to trying to work through the means that they have to get items in front of the legislature to change something that is beneficial to the community in Caribou.*

**Q6 An individual's demeanor and temperament are invaluable assets when attempting to deal with a person or a group of people who are skeptical of one's viewpoint. How do you approach such situations? Can you give an example of a time when you brought together factions of opposing viewpoints and crafted a sensible and workable compromise amenable to the parties involved?**

*A6: Mr. Mazzucco replied when approaching a situation with different factions, he had background in the private sector, largely in service delivery. He said he spent many days dealing with customers or a corporate office that wasn't always happy. He said he felt the transition to local government was not that challenging because often you deal with citizens and city council that are not happy, and people are more apt to come to you with a complaint than with a compliment. He said he believes in being professional, polite, and his approach is to speak plainly and clearly. He doesn't believe in raising your voice or shouting and instead believes in a certain demeanor in civil discourse. He believes in speaking clearly and plainly, laying the facts out and*





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*not being afraid to let people know what the truth is, what he feels, or what he thinks is going on. He said he thinks it helps get through a lot of the tension, and that it is important for transparency. He said most people talk about transparency as following the Open Meeting Law and posting meeting minutes, but that has to be done because it is the law. He said he believes he is strategic but doesn't like keeping his cards close to the chest. He said he would rather put it on the table and have an open and honest discussion one way or another, because that is how he believes local government should be. Mr. Mazzucco explained that the purchasing laws in Maine are completely different than Massachusetts, and he said there was an ongoing disagreement between city officials and local businesses about whether to buy locally or to bid for the lowest price. In the end, he said he was able to purchase the product locally separate from the bid, and give the local businessman business he otherwise would not have been able to do. They then bid the labor, and the solution worked out for everyone because they were able to ensure the taxpayers got the best value for their dollar. On another example, he told about union negotiations where both sides were in disagreement. He mediated, and was able to help both sides see that compromise meant that they didn't get all that they wanted, but in the end were able to come to a solution that was fiscally better for the city and allowed those points of contention to be negotiated to a reasonable solution for all. He said nobody was completely happy, but everyone accepted the deal. The willingness to talk plainly and openly about what the issues are helps to get to a compromise. He explained that if you approach a compromise but you are not willing to accept anything but what you have on your paper, you aren't really looking to compromise. Maybe the compromise is not in the best interest of the Town and you don't go for it, but you need to be willing to give a little and you probably won't get all of what you want.*

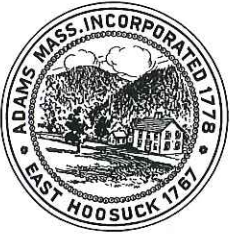
### **Q7: What would you say is your strongest area of expertise and also, what is your weakest?**

*A7: Mr. Mazzucco replied that his strongest area of expertise is in operations and administration with budget and expenditure control. He said he looks at how you can shrink every dollar going out and expand every dollar that comes in. He explained that he recently did an insurance bidding process in Caribou that brought about a \$42,000 savings. He said he puts things out to bid as often as possible in order to get the best value, because dollars and cents add up over time. He said the operations and administration areas are where he shines and most enjoys. Mr. Mazzucco said his weakest area is mostly because he has been out of state for the last few years and adjusting back to the Massachusetts way of doing things would be a challenge early on. Specifically his focus would be on purchasing in particular because Massachusetts has specific purchasing laws.*

### **Q8: How do you resolve conflict? Please provide an example of conflict resolution related to city or town government. Specifically with a Select Board Member, Department Head, Town Resident, or Union Member; please give a specific example.**

*A8: Mr. Mazzucco responded that by applying the same principal of speaking plainly and clearly and having a discussion. He said he is not afraid to invite anyone to the table, even if the person complains about him. He feels this is the person to reach out to. He gave the example of a local Caribou business man that was angry about the way the City of Caribou operates, and that he had*





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*reached out to him by going out to his shop, to look, listen, and empathize with him. In the end, there was nothing they could do, but he was able to get to the root of the issue and by making the effort to go visit the businessman even if he could not resolve the problem, he was able to empathize and commiserate with him. In this case, the problem was that the businessman felt nobody would listen to him, and getting to the issue behind the complaint and seeing things from their perspective is what makes the difference.*

**Q9: Please describe your management style (specifically your interaction with town employees, the board of selectmen, other community agencies, and the public in general)?**

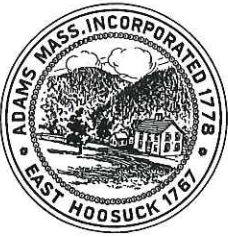
*A9: Mr. Mazzucco advised his management style stems from a commitment to public service and the value of public service shows through words, actions, and accountability. He said he believes in accountability of his Department Heads and staff as well, and this may mean that he finds he is at fault if a Department Head has not been given the tools to get the job done. He said where needed tools should be given to do the tasks, but he doesn't micromanage people, only the process. When he needs to address issues he uses an open communication policy and tells them honestly what he thinks and feels, and though it may not be liked it is honest. He said people appreciate clarity when giving an opinion and it is important to have open communication. In terms of the City Council, he explained that in Caribou executive sessions tend to be lively because everyone feels more able to speak openly with each other. He said they may not like what he has to say, but he is going to tell them the truth and what he thinks and feels, and not just what they want to hear. He said they seem to appreciate that because prior administration had not been very forthcoming. He said the City Manager and he have a good relationship and sometimes don't agree, but City Council appreciates their two different opinions. Without open communication and being able to be honest and put things out on the table, the relationship on a bigger sense isn't going to work. With the public, he said especially with the taxes going up, it is important to be honest with people and tell them the truth about why things are the way they are, and why.*

**Q10: Cite a specific example of streamlining local government services that resulted in budget savings but didn't impact the quality of services performed by the town.**

*A10: Mr. Mazzucco told the Board that in Caribou he combined both the code enforcement and assessment functions and shifted duties to maximize personnel, which worked well for Caribou because they are cognizant of the fact that the City is getting smaller. Doing this allowed for a 1<sup>st</sup> year savings of \$20,000 to \$25,000 and was able to increase levels of service at the same time. He said is now a one-stop-shop for building purposes, and the permit process is being handled from that office as well, and he was able to have more people trained in the code enforcement process and land use so instead of having delays during staff vacations, citizens could get permits 52 weeks out of the year. This won't work for every community, because they are all different, but this is one example where we got something cheaper and got something better out of it.*

**Q11: Talk about the balance between not micro-managing but still being involved enough to be able to catch problems early on.**





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**A11:** *Mr. Mazzucco said the difference between micro-managing and not micro-managing lies between the process and the people. He gave an example of working with the Police Chief and staying involved without trying to tell the Chief how to do his job. He said he likes to chat with the chief and the officers and dispatchers in the office and understand what their challenges are so he knows what the staff is thinking. He also likes to do a ride-along with the police department to understand what their needs are. He likes to have lunch with the Fire Chief and to be involved with the staff through regular communications. He also goes out with the DPW Director to understand the projects and to have regular communication with the DPW staff. Mr. Mazzucco explained that it is important to speak to each person in their own language and how they prefer to communicate, including texting with those who text, emailing, calling or speaking in person to those who prefer to communicate in that manner.*

**Q12: What is your philosophy on keeping the Board of Selectmen informed about town affairs?**

**A12:** *Mr. Mazzucco responded that in his opinion, the more the merrier. There is nothing to be gained by not keeping the Select Board informed of what is going on in Town. Communication should be two ways, and there should be open communication. There are some meetings where we inform the Board in executive sessions of personnel issues. He said one of the worst things that can happen is for the Select Board to hear something from the public and have it be the first they have heard about it. He said he felt for the day to day operations the Board should know what is going on.*

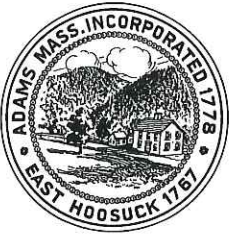
**Q13: In a concise manner, please describe how you would develop and implement an economic development plan for the Town of Adams**

**A13:** *Mr. Mazzucco responded that he would focus on the Downtown development, site amenities and to clear the gateways in town. He noted that a lot of the slum and blight removal has been taken care of, and this is important because you have to look at the community like an investor who would want to buy property or run a business here. He said he would focus now on the Downtown development, and expand on the work that has already been done so people will want to be here. In a larger sense, he said the Greylock Glen is a good thing but the focus has to be on jobs, with will make the tax rate better. He said he would focus on bringing businesses here to Adams, to get the Downtown area as full as the Town can get it and to create the best quality place which would also build jobs. He also would reach out to businesses both in town and outside of town because there is room for businesses already here to expand and invest in the community. He said he felt it was important to promote and market the community as well, as a place to invest.*

**Q14: Is there anything that we (the board) should know about you that we either have not asked or that you have not already told us?**

**A14:** *Mr. Mazzucco answered that he was interested in this position and in local government in general because he grew up in Randolph, Massachusetts, which was a community that changed significantly from the time he was young. He said people moved out because the community had*





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*changed and was no longer going in a good direction. People were leaving because they no longer liked the community, they felt it was no longer a good place to raise a family, and it no longer provided the resources they needed. He said it bothered him that people were leaving because they didn't feel it was a good community to live in anymore, and this drew him to want to make a change in this attitude. He went to Town Meeting before he turned 18 years old, and became a Town Meeting Member when he turned 18. He said he wanted to get into local government management from a young age because his passion stems from the desire to keep small towns and communities from having people leave their communities for those reasons.*

### **15: Do you have any questions of the Board?**

*A: Mr. Mazzucco asked the Select Board what their expectations are for the Town Administrator because the Town Administrator position is part of that.*

**Member Snoonian:** A willingness to sit down and speak with people, and not be afraid to be disliked in certain instances. Also, having a willingness to fight for every available dollar for the benefit of the Town. Sometimes this will mean making an uncomfortable phone call, and not stopping at "no". He also said the Town Administrator should understand that this is a blue collar position, and should not be afraid to ask or involve people who are not intuitive to use initially to help in the process. A Town Administrator should have good critical thinking skills and to be the ultimate champion for the Town of Adams.

**Member Nowak:** A hardworking, dedicated person who looks out for those who have higher needs. Someone who believes the government works best when everyone is involved, and is humble, understanding and works with the talents that the Lord gave him.

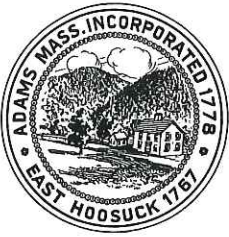
**Vice Chairman Blanchard:** A person that furthers Adams and help Adams to be a better place. I am an information guy, and the community and I like to know what is going on so there isn't a mistrust between the locals and government.

**Member Duval:** A person that knows the accomplishments but also understands the problems that Adams has, and gets the job done. A person that will take the strategic and economic plan needs to be redone and brings it forward.

**Chairman Harrington** advised that beyond what the other Board Members had said, a person that is dedicated, determined, and dependable, honest with the board and the community. He said he was impressed with Mr. Mazzucco's answers.

**Chairman Harrington** thanked Mr. Mazzucco and advised him of the final decision process, and that the session was open for Board discussion about the candidates. Mr. Mazzucco was asked to stay within the building in case the Board had further questions, and that if they needed to the Board would go into executive session to discuss contracting strategy.

*Mr. Mazzucco left the room to allow the Select Board the comfort of open discussion.*



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*10:54 a.m. a 5 minute recess took place*

*10:59 a.m. the meeting commenced.*

**Chairman Harrington** noted that there were 3 excellent candidates, all of high quality and caliber. He pointed out that the Search Committee had done a great job, and opened the floor to the Board Members for open discussion about the candidates. He explained that if the Board felt appropriate they could vote to offer the position to one of the candidates.

**Vice Chairman Blanchard** inquired if the Search Committee would be willing to share their thoughts on which candidate was their first choice.

**Search Committee Member Tarsa** responded that in all fairness to the candidates through the experience of the Board in the interviews it will probably be clear to them who the choice would be.

Discussion ensued and Board Members noted that Mr. Foley had incredible experience but was a risk to hire for the Town Administrator position. All three candidates did a good job, and any one would do a good job but one was considered outstanding.

It weighed heavily that Mr. Kerwood knows the local area and had real Berkshire County experience which is hard to look past, and also that Mr. Mazzucco has had a shorter but very involved career. Each candidate brought similarities and differences that were individual, and having a person come in from out of the area may bring a new perspective.

The Town Charter is important, and it says the Town Administrator shall become a resident of the town within a year. On July 22<sup>nd</sup> the Select Board had discussed this issue, and some members felt very strongly that the Town Administrator should live in the community.

Mr. Mazzucco was noted as having good budget knowledge, a great way of looking at things in similarity between Caribou and Adams. He was described as understanding the townspeople in Adams, and having good responses regarding strategic plan and economic development. One member particularly liked Mr. Mazzucco's communication answers and the way he talks to people. Members were impressed with how Mr. Mazzucco handled and de-escalated problems, keeps up with the community, staff and department heads, as well as having other community involvement. Mr. Mazzucco's involvement in politics seems to come from within; his youth and enthusiasm was commended, and several Members said that they felt he would be comfortable to work with.

*Consensus was reached individually by all members that their choice for the Town Administrator position was Mr. Mazzucco.*

**Member Duval made a motion to offer the position of Town Administrator to Tony Mazzucco.**  
**Second by Vice Chairman Blanchard**

**Unanimous vote**

**Motion passed.**





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Mr. Mazzucco was asked to come back into the meeting, where he was offered and accepted the position of Town Administrator.

The Select Board discussed going into executive session to talk about contract negotiations, and Mr. Mazzucco was invited to attend as he had some items he wished to include in the contract. The Board will come out of executive session only to adjourn from the meeting.

### Executive Session

*#2. To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with non-union personnel;*

***11:14 a.m. Motion made by Member Snoonian to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of contract negotiations***

***Second by Member Duval***

***Roll Call Vote: Chairman Harrington, Vice Chairman Blanchard, Members Nowak, Duval and Snoonian***

***Motion passed.***

***11:52 a.m. Motion made by Member Snoonian to exit Executive Session***

***Second by Vice Chairman Blanchard***

***Roll Call Vote: Chairman Harrington, Vice Chairman Blanchard, Members Nowak, Duval, and Snoonian***

***Motion passed***

***11:53 a.m. Motion made by Member Snoonian to adjourn the meeting***

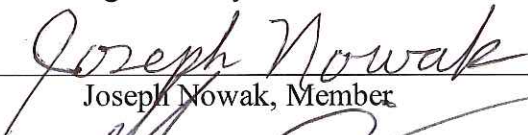
***Second by Vice Chairman Blanchard***

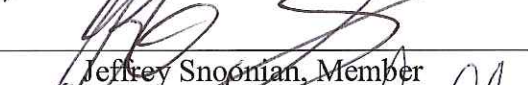
***Unanimous vote***

***Motion passed***

**Meeting adjourned at 11:53 a.m.**

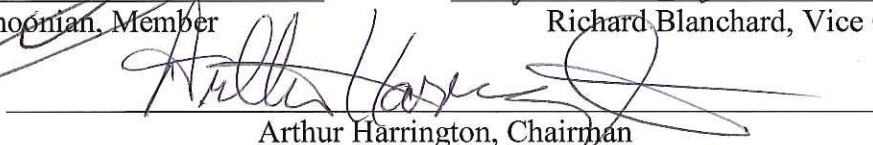
Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,  
Recording Secretary

  
Joseph Nowak, Member

  
Jeffrey Snoonian, Member

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John Duval, Member

  
Richard Blanchard, Vice Chairman

  
Arthur Harrington, Chairman