

Memorial Town Hall, 1 Library Street, Georgetown, MA 01833
Ph. (978) 352-5755 □ Fax (978) 352-5727
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
Memorial Town Hall
7/27/15
6:00PM-General Meeting~3rd floor meeting room, Town Hall

Selectmen Present: Philip Trapani, Chairman; Gary C. Fowler, C. David Surface,
Stuart M. Egenberg, Douglas W. Dawes, Clerk

Others Present: Michael Farrell, Town Administrator; Janet Pantano,
Administrative Assistant

Absent:

Call to order

Invocation-Douglas W. Dawes
Pledge of Allegiance

Warrant & Minutes

Warrant to be signed

CORRESPONDENCE

NEW BUSINESS

Fire Chief Interviews

1. Fred Mitchell

Mr. Trapani welcomed Mr. Mitchell and explained the process that the board would be following. He read items from his resume.

Mr. Mitchell stated he is a Deputy Chief in Cumberland, he was born in 1967 grew up in Cumberland, RI and gave some background information. He stated that he has his Bachelor's Degree and has applied for and accepted for Master's Degree program in Public Administration and EMS for fall. He is looking to grow in his career in a small community. He stated that he has 3 children, and his hobbies is a sports guy and a Nascar fan. He stated a lifelong dream to be a Fire Chief.

Mr. Fowler stated that he feels the board need to finish negotiations, work with the ambulance and find out where the department is going and to ask the volunteers where they see Georgetown Fire Departments future. He stated that he is not ready to hire a Fire Chief at this time. He asked him if he can convince him why he should hire him as a Chief. Mr. Mitchell explained that he has 30 years' experience with a call department you do not have full time staff but if you privatize get employee, EMS is a part of department and staff are community members and a call may be your neighbor. He stated that firefighters are unique that we go in when others are leaving. Mr. Fowler stated as more career then call firefighters how do you attract more staff.

Mr. Mitchell stated different ways to go about to get others to join. He stated grants to pay salaries while training, paying for turnout gear, online training. He stated that there are different ways to meet the needs of families and needs of the department. He stated that you have to think outside of the box now.

Mr. Surface asked how he will organize what he will do the first few days, weeks, etc. Mr. Mitchell stated that he would meet everyone, read manual, see how the calls go, see how town government works, look at operational procedures, and get feedback from staff. Mr. Surface go to the community? Mr. Mitchell stated yes and see what short and long term goals.

Mr. Dawes stated live in Cumberland would he be moving to the area and does he see strength or weaknesses, characteristic of Georgetown. Mr. Mitchell stated that he would be moving and has driven around the town. He stated that he sees the new School, 8,600 residents, build up relationships with businesses and residents. Mr. Dawes asked if he was aware of Erie 4 and how he would integrate. Mr. Mitchell stated that he was aware and considers them a resource and would integrate into the department still a part of the department. Mr. Dawes stated would they be equal. Mr. Mitchell stated that they had a similar situation in Cumberland and went to calls together function as one.

Mr. Trapani asked how he would work with the BoS. Mr. Mitchell stated a partnership and they will get to know him from his resume, interview. He stated that they are all partners, Town Administrator and Fire Department and will build on that and always have questions. Mr. Trapani asked what he would need from the BoS to succeed. Mr. Mitchell stated he would need the full support of the board so that we are all on the same page with short and long time goals.

Mr. Egenberg asked to discuss budgeting experience in the fire department. Mr. Mitchell stated in N. Cumberland assisted the Fire Chief and he assisted with apparatus log, and did payroll, and assisted the Fire Chief present their budget to the board. He stated he worked on getting quotes for budget items, pricing for fire gear which is very expensive. Mr. Egenberg asked what the single most important form of communication is. Mr. Mitchell stated different ways to communicate with staff but treat staff the same and deal with all fairly, and be consistent.

Mr. Fowler asked about working with other neighboring departments for staff and equipment. Mr. Mitchell stated that he is in favor of working with other mutual aid departments. He explained how they shared services and staff before two companies combined. Mr. Fowler asked how large an area can a shared department cover. Mr. Mitchell stated that you have to meet national standards.

Mr. Surface asked his management style. Mr. Mitchell stated in a small community likes to be part of the staff but use the resources of his staff to make the department better. He stated that he likes to give his staff a sense of ownership and a team effort.

Mr. Trapani asked if Mr. Mitchell had questions for the board.

Mr. Mitchell stated that this is a big decision and how does the community feel about someone coming in from the outside. Mr. Trapani stated that the town is open to new and they want to do

the right thing and did not want to just bring someone up. He stated that the board wants to get the best candidate. Mr. Dawes stated that this is a transition time in the department. Mr. Mitchell asked if there is friction with the Fire Department and Erie 4. Mr. Surface stated that there were some issues in the past but have not heard any complaints recently. He stated that communication has gotten a lot better and Chief Beardsley has done a great job working with Erie 4. Mr. Egenberg stated that there are 5 active members at Erie 4. Mr. Mitchell asked about growth any large projects coming forward. Mr. Trapani stated maybe 40 to 50 homes to be built and 25% growth could still happen. He stated that the board is looking at a plan to see where we are going. Mr. Fowler stated that what is going on with Fire Department has to be addressed. Mr. Mitchell stated looking at the future you will need the chief to see where the department is going. He stated that he has learned that you want to leave the department better then when you went into the department.

Mr. Mitchell thanked the board for letting him be here tonight and asked them to feel free to reach out to his references. He stated that he looks forward to hearing from the board.

5- Minute recess

2. Rusty Ricker

Mr. Trapani welcomed Mr. Ricker and explained the process that the board would be following. He read items from his resume.

Mr. Ricker thanked the board for letting him be here and gave his background. He stated he lives in Georgetown and a lifelong resident and raised his 3 sons here. He stated that he is the Fire Prevention officer and does the student awareness, explorer program, Santa tours, Scout Leader, coach, Horrible Parade, etc. He stated that he work with the department to inspect all businesses and multifamily units in town and it was a daunting task. He stated involved with the Explorer program in town. He stated that he has aspired to be a Fire Chief. Mr. Trapani stated that he hoped the process has been enjoyable and stated that the board has gone outside and inside using a dual approach for candidates.

Mr. Dawes stated that this is a full time position and has a full time position in Wakefield would he give up that position. Mr. Ricker stated he would do what he would have to do to fill this position. Mr. Dawes asked if there would be a conflict and where he would go first. Mr. Ricker stated it would depend where he is at the time. Mr. Dawes asked where the Wakefield Chief is on this issue. Mr. Ricker stated that he is in support of this.

Mr. Trapani asked where he sees the department going the biggest challenges. Mr. Ricker stated looking at Union Negotiations and moving to a 3-5 year plan. He stated that they have 9 applications for call and per diem staff. He stated that have the potential at Fall Town Meeting look to add full time position and equipment. Mr. Trapani asked how he would sell the town to invest in the department. Mr. Ricker stated that the town has always given the department what they have asked for. He stated that the department needs to be full time over the 5-7 day week. He stated that the department keeps the town safe and full time allows consistency of staff.

Mr. Egenberg asked his budgeting experience. Mr. Ricker stated that he has worked with the Chief, has been on CIP, and will work with current staff. He stated that monthly he will look at levels to see that they are on track. He stated that he will keep tabs on preventative maintenance. Mr. Egenberg asked his single most important characteristic of an effective Chief. Mr. Ricker stated leadership.

Mr. Fowler stated that he has the same question as for other candidates. He stated that he does not want to pick a chief at this time should finish negotiations. He stated that he feels they need to ask the volunteers where they see the future of the department. He asked why should the board hire a Chief and can he convince him why you. Mr. Ricker stated because of the ambulance as it is the single most important thing they have done and proven it by the numbers as it is successful. He stated that the ambulance brings in over \$300K and have been able to increase staff for ambulance. He stated that to do away with that would be irresponsible. He stated that the ambulance has allowed them to move forward to the next step for the department. Mr. Fowler stated that the department is getting away from volunteers and looking at professional staff and looking to go to permanent staff. He stated will the ambulance still be profitable. Mr. Ricker stated that he himself does not think the union will take a huge amount of funds from the ambulance budget. He stated that what he knows the union is looking for consistency with everything and a fair pay structure.

Mr. Surface stated his commitment to the community has been commendable. He stated that his cover letter leads that there is not respect with departments. Mr. Ricker stated that was not what he meant just that they need to renew the commitment to the department. He stated that the cooperation is there. Mr. Surface stated that the volunteer department almost deterred him from buying a home in town. Mr. Ricker stated that he wants to take the department to the next level. Mr. Surface asked for a sense of the balance of Wakefield position and Georgetown position. He stated that with the union negotiations and all that goes on need a full time chief here during negotiations. He stated important to have a Chief present. Mr. Ricker stated that he works 2 24 hour shifts and would have 5 days in Georgetown. Mr. Surface stated that Georgetown should come first.

Mr. Trapani asked to confirm schedule and that other officers would cover when he is not in. Mr. Ricker explained his schedule in Wakefield. Mr. Ricker stated that need to train officers to do the job so if he is not present.

Mr. Dawes asked about the integration of Erie 4. Mr. Ricker stated that since 2004 they have been fully integrated and always have been Georgetown firefighters. He stated that they have done a soft recruitment and will do a hard recruitment in the north area of Georgetown.

Mr. Egenberg asked about strategic planning and his thoughts. Mr. Ricker stated he would review what there is and he has a plan sees the improving the workplace environment, increase staffing level, training on Fire and EMS, accreditation on ambulance service, evaluate equipment, look for alternative funding, grants, look at SOGS that are current, look that programs are up to date, and that staffing is up to date. He stated that he would like to look at accreditation on Fire Service side. He stated that they need full time staff for inspections, for keeping records. He stated that they need to review effectiveness of fire prevention, increase

student and senior staffing. He stated improve community involvement. He stated they will be putting AED's in town buildings. He stated that he will examine the department budget and review budget to be on track, look at capital budget and review make sure what the needs of the department are and work with FinCom and CIP. He stated that he would work on administration, accreditation and decrease IOS. He stated that he would like to look at what can be done to the station as it is very cramped. He stated we would have a good relationship with the Union.

Mr. Fowler asked how he feels about working with neighboring fire departments on staffing and equipment. Mr. Ricker stated that they are meeting to see about bringing in staff from other towns. Mr. Fowler stated with every town having same equipment. Mr. Ricker explained that other towns have different equipment. He stated he would not want to be dependent on another town for equipment and if it was not available. He stated that they have a good mutual aid agreement and explained how works.

Mr. Trapani asked him if he had questions for the board.

Mr. Ricker asked what sort of support would the department have from the town and staff if the new chief requested to move forward in manor he sees. Mr. Trapani stated that the town would be supportive with the plan if balanced with other priorities within the budget. He stated if a critical gap would be supportive. He stated that the department would have to market and sell what the need is. Mr. Fowler stated that he is the no tax guy and if what they asked would create a new tax he would not be there. Mr. Surface stated that they have growing pains, Georgetown is one of the fastest growing towns in Essex County. He stated that have to have a good business plan and town prioritizes issues, growing pains, have to evaluate. Mr. Ricker asked where this board sees the department going. Mr. Dawes stated working with the Chief to see where lacking, and what the department needs, this is where we rely on the Chief. He stated in 12 months not much change but in 5 years could be and have to see the impact of these changes. Mr. Fowler stated that communication with the Fire Department and stated that the board needs to spend more time with volunteers. Mr. Surface stated that wants to see goals and show where they are and where the department is going. Mr. Trapani stated that they need to continue and to get staffing under control, communication can only get better, more efficient department.

Mr. Ricker stated that he has been a member of the Fire Department for 25 years plus and has held every rank and feels that it is his turn and has worked his adult life here and hopes to be given the opportunity to be the Fire Chief and bring the department to the next level.

5-minute recess

3. Peter Lamb

Mr. Trapani welcomed Mr. Lamb and explained the process that the board would be following. He read items from his resume.

Mr. Lamb gave a handout to the board.

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Mr. Lamb stated that at age 15 was involved in firefighting and explained his history. He stated that he has 3 children and is married. He stated that he spearheaded getting hazardous response district in Newport, NH. Has had some good learning experiences, is a problem solver, and numerous commendations. He stated he is a problem solver. He stated in 2008 thought he was getting burned out and was going to do something else which did not work out and later went back into Fire Service. He gave more experience of his fire service.

Mr. Surface asked in the 30, 60, 90 days what would he do. Mr. Lamb stated that one would be to earn the trust of the staff and himself. He stated that he would have to get to know the mutual aid partners, know the street addresses, the resources of the districts, certification of certificates for MA.

Mr. Dawes asked what the single most important characteristic of a Fire Chief is. Mr. Lamb stated not one but accountability as a leader and lead by example, learn, a lot of listening, feedback, know issues, build respect of call and per diem staff. He stated that it is all about getting better.

Mr. Trapani asked what he sees as some top issues of the organization. Mr. Lamb stated tax base has a small commercial base and that makes it tough. He stated that some equipment is aged and would look at need and insurance rating requirements. He stated look at economic development and transitioning to the future. He stated that it is difficult to get staff with the mandated training and with jobs and travel time. He stated that Georgetown is unique and hard to keep volunteer going with all that is going on in people's lives. He stated bottom line is money and every department needs money and have to look to not be a burden to town.

Mr. Egenberg asked his budget experience. Mr. Lamb stated has developed budgets from different amounts, line item budgets, gone after grants, funds for storm management, USDA grants for turnout gear has been successful in getting these. He stated the revenue in ambulance worked to get in line. He stated has done fiscal reform in other towns and has looked to buy in bulk, has done bid requests, RFP's.

Mr. Surface asked what type of manager is he. Mr. Lamb stated that depends on the situation and has played both lines. Mr. Surface asked his leadership style. Mr. Lamb stated that on a fire you must be precise and sometimes he empowers the employee and asks how they would fix an issue. He stated that now the younger generation want answers fast have to be on top of things.

Mr. Dawes asked how he would solve issues and work with board. Mr. Lamb stated have to respectable disagree and have to follow what is required.

Mr. Trapani stated that he stated that he burned out a few times how do they have confidence to hire. Mr. Lamb stated with age he sees another 5-8 years working and health issues that he had in past are taken care of and there is Employee Assistance if needed and never used but use if need too. He stated he has changed jobs and he has learned from them all. Mr. Trapani stated burnout was his concern. Mr. Lamb stated that he has learned that he has to make changes and wants to learn and wants to see people succeed. He stated that have to have checks and balances.

Mr. Egenberg asked for plans for a strategic plan for the town. Mr. Lamb stated that he would have to get all the players together. He stated that a lot of towns are having growing pains. He stated that the cost for volunteer and full time staff can be astronomical. He stated a 6 month project and if that is the wish of the board could move forward.

Mr. Trapani asked why the board should pick him. Mr. Lamb stated that he has done this before and has recommendations and letters that were unsolicited. He stated that he has the skills and drive and who else runs into a building on fire when others are running out. He stated that he is not afraid of work and it is about getting better. He stated he would bring retirees back and get their input.

Mr. Lamb asked when they would have an answer as he has an interview next week. Mr. Trapani stated by the beginning of next week.

5-Minute recess

Mr. Trapani stated the next meeting is August 10th and have two items and will be taking off Parcel F. He stated that they will keep American Legion Park on agenda and if that was fine with all.

Mr. Farrell stated that Mr. Lamb stated that if we delay we can lose candidates and cannot see how their minds will change over the next the two weeks. Mr. Trapani stated can lose candidate if we wait. Mr. Surface stated that we can poll board to see if ready to make a decision tonight. Mr. Fowler is not, Mr. Surface is ready, Mr. Dawes is not, and Mr. Egenberg is not. Board stated that they want to review notes. Mr. Trapani stated that they can get together for a half hour this week. Discussion

Board to meet on Thursday, July 30th at 8AM.

Discussion on process. Mr. Trapani stated that the board can change the process as we need to. Mr. Dawes stated that we had a procedure and Mr. Lamb was not vetted by the Chief Panel. Mr. Trapani stated that a candidate dropped out at the last minute and another was added. He stated we do not have time to change. Mr. Surface stated that the board elected Mr. Trapani Chair and he has no problem with the decision he made and that he acted on our stead to keep the process going.

Mr. Fowler stated he has an issue with last candidate and not sure why he was here. He stated does not want to vote tonight. Mr. Farrell stated that he talked to Al Beardsley and he told him only three viable candidates. Mr. Farrell stated that he felt he had to make a decision on the fly and Trapani agreed. Mr. Fowler stated he feels only two candidates and they went out of procedure.

Mr. Egenberg stated that he concurs with Mr. Surface and the candidate met all requirements and was important to have three candidates. He stated Chair and Farrell made the best decision.

ADJOURNMENT

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Mr. Surface moved to adjourn. Mr. Egenberg seconded the motion and the motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, July 30, 2015 at 8:00AM, 3rd floor meeting room, Town Hall
Monday, August 10, 2015 at 6:00PM, 3rd floor meeting room, Town Hall

Minutes transcribed by J. Pantano

Documents used in meeting:

- Resumes of the three candidates

Minutes approved October 5, 2015.