

Memorial Town Hall, 1 Library Street, Georgetown, MA 01833
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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
Memorial Town Hall
7/30/15
8:00AM-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

Old Business

Fire Chief Candidate deliberation and selection

Mr. Trapani stated that today they would discuss and make a decision on the candidate for the Fire Chief position. He stated that on Monday, July 27 the board interviewed three candidates for the position. He stated that he was going to give each member a chance to comment on the interviews.

Mr. Fowler stated that he ranked two candidates higher than the other and they were very close. He stated that as he stated the other night he is not in favor of a new Fire Chief at this time. He stated that the candidate that he liked the best was the first candidate and in his rankings of essays he had some issues. He read from Mr. Mitchell's essay question 2 and his response. He discussed his reference to a strategic plan is another plan. He stated to Mr. Trapani that he has talked about putting together a strategic plan and he feels the town should hire an interim Fire Chief until a plan is done and they as leaders find out what is best. If board decides to vote today he would be ready to vote.

Mr. Surface stated that he had one clear winner and it was close. He stated to have his support of one candidate the issue of two full time positions would have to be resolved. He stated that if the will and pleasure of the board to appoint Mr. Mitchell he would be able to vote. He stated Mr. Ricker has given a lot to the town but he has an issue with the two positions. He stated that he Fire Chief's contract which he worked on states that you must be available to the town at all times. He stated the two positions make him pause and not sure if there is a bylaw or law against. He stated that he felt Mr. Ricker was his

top candidate. He stated that he felt that they should go out for more candidates. If not he would go with the majority of the board.

Mr. Dawes wanted to thank all the candidates for their time. He stated that his two top candidates were Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Ricker. He stated his concern is the dual employment of Mr. Ricker. He stated that he has learned and feels you cannot serve two masters. He stated that it would be a burden to move Mr. Ricker forward because of that. He stated that Mr. Mitchell presented very well and being the new may work better. He stated that between the two if making a decision today it would be Mr. Mitchell because of the dual position. He stated that Mr. Ricker commented in the interview about two positions that his priority would be he stated it would be where he was at and he has issue with this.

Mr. Egenberg also thanked all the candidates. He stated that he has discussed the position with Mr. Farrell and town department members. He read section from the Fire Chief contract stating that the Chief shall be available at all times to the town unless for illness, accrued vacation or other time off. Also that primary employment will be with the Town of Georgetown. He stated that alone disqualifies Mr. Ricker. He stated that he is a huge fan of Mr. Ricker and he stated that he never heard a direct answer when asked about his employment in Wakefield. He stated that he heard Mr. Ricker state he would do what he has to do and he is not sure what that means. He stated that he has received a lot of support from the community for Mr. Ricker. He stated that he knows his stuff and would want him on a call. He stated that he does not feel he is ready for the Chief's position from an administrative position and has some issues with his leadership. He stated that he does not feel Mr. Ricker is ready for the position nor has all the education for the position. He stated Mr. Mitchell does and is pursuing his Masters in Fire Safety and applaud him for that. He stated his vote is for Mr. Mitchell.

Mr. Trapani stated that the pay that we offered for this position is not going to get us the most qualified applicants. He stated that all three applicants are qualified for the position. He stated some have more qualifications. He stated that we have an incumbent candidate and is looking at why should not hire. He stated that has positive and some not sure on style for department. He stated that as a board they could work with Mr. Ricker and make him into the Chief they need. He stated that the one thing he cannot get around is someone working 88 hours a week. He stated that this is not fair to the individual or his family and will lead to burnout. He stated that the other is the contract and could change but the contract is what it is.

Mr. Fowler stated that an offer could be made to the candidate that this would be the primary position and then his choice. He stated that the job description does not mention the ambulance and is dated 2008 and is not up to date and yet we are hiring a Fire Chief. He stated setting a candidate up for failure without up to date job description and we should wait.

Mr. Surface stated if putting someone in place for 3 years we should look at the job description and have to look at union involvement. He stated that we are looking more like a city department and what city pays a Fire Chief \$60,000. He stated that if the board makes a decision today that we need to plan to review the position for the future. He stated that Mr. Mitchell will probably use this as a stepping stone and the salary has to be addressed.

Mr. Trapani stated he agrees and this will be a retention issue.

Mr. Fowler stated that if we hold off and review we may get a better candidate.

Mr. Egenberg stated from a long term strategic plan he agrees and he liked the succession plan that the Police Department used and does not know why that did not happen here. He stated that where there may be a union and this will put a strain on the budget and the Fire Department is changing and he may not agree with this but this job has to be reviewed. He stated there are probably other departments in the same boat. He stated that with the changes need someone in the corner office and do not want to hold off. He stated that we do not have to do a three year contract could do a one year contract with quarterly reviews with benchmarks.

Mr. Surface stated that he feels has to be a well thought out review of the position and not a quick change in salary. He stated he would want to see at least a two year contract. He stated to have someone relocate for one year the candidate may not do.

Mr. Trapani stated that if not prepared to offer a three year contract and do not have the confidence in the employee then should not hire. He stated we always have the option to release a candidate if they do not work out. He stated all are well qualified to serve and up to the board to make the position work. He stated not fair to have a cloud over their head to start.

Mr. Dawes stated that he feels it is important to have a Chief in place to work on the strategic plan moving forward along with the Selectmen and Town Administrator. He stated does not want to hire someone just based on pay.

Mr. Egenberg stated he can go with a three year contract with reviews done.

Mr. Fowler stated that he would want to be sure the review is done and they see it. He stated that the Personnel Director does the review now and he never saw the current Fire Chief's review.

Mr. Trapani stated that the reason we have the Personnel Director do the reviews is he is the professional and he is comfortable with that. He stated that we all have supported the Fire Chief.

Mr. Surface stated that the reviews by the Personnel Director have only started once the Personnel Board was eliminated. He stated when he was Chair the board did the review and he received all the comments and put together a final review. He stated that they can all get copies. He stated that they are a board of overseers and caution the board to get

into day to day operation. He stated that we have issues reviewing the Police Chief, Town Administrator, and Fire Chief. He asked Mr. Farrell how long he has been doing the reviews.

Mr. Farrell stated that he did them all this last year.

Mr. Egenberg asked Mr. Farrell if they hired someone today what his recommendation would be for a review.

Mr. Farrell stated that our Personnel Policy requires a 90 day review and then in the next six months. He stated he agrees metrics need to be set. He stated that he speaks several times a week with the Chief as he does with Police Chief and other departments.

Discussion on contract and 90 day probationary period.

Mr. Egenberg moved to extend the offer of *Fire Chief to Fred A. Mitchell Jr.* Mr. Dawes seconded the motion.

Mr. Fowler asked if there can be more than one nomination.

Vote was 4-1 and the motion was approved.

Mr. Surface stated that he feels that this should be a unanimous vote to support the Fire Chief.

Mr. Trapani asked Mr. Fowler if he would reconsider his vote.

Mr. Fowler stated that he agrees a unanimous vote shows support and his vote is not against Mr. Mitchell it is against the hiring process. He stated that he would reconsider.

Mr. Fowler reconsidered his vote and made it a yay from a nay making a unanimous vote in favor of the offer.

Mr. Trapani congratulated Mr. Mitchell.

Mr. Dawes stated that this was a difficult decision and congratulate both and hope all members will welcome Mr. Mitchell.

Mr. Egenberg also congratulated both candidates. He stated that he would hope that the department will work on a succession plan.

Mr. Trapani thanked all who were a part of this process and looks forward to moving forward.

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:05AM.

Minutes transcribed by J. Pantano.

Minutes approved December 14, 2015.