

## MINUTES

### BOARD OF SELECTMEN

OCTOBER 15, 2013

Meeting called to order at 7:30 P.M.

**Present** Selectmen Elizabeth A. Gorski, Joseph R. D'Amore and Chairman Donald N. Greaney

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Greaney announced the procedure the Board used for hiring the town's new Fire Chief; that there had been twelve applicants, one had dropped out; that the Board had conducted eleven telephone interviews asking all applicants the same five questions so the Board could screen the applicants down to the four or six they would conduct in person interviews with; that the Board held interviews with their final four choices, one of which dropped out after the interview.

Selectman D'Amore stated that it is very difficult for the Board to make a decision; that the process has been good and he commended Chairman Greaney and Selectman Gorski for wanting the Board to do the process on its own; that he is very impressed with their candor and professionalism. Selectman D'Amore announced the three finalists as Michael Kastrinelis, Robert Lay and Arthur Howe. D'Amore nominated Michael Kastrinelis for the position of Fire Chief and asked for a second for the purpose of discussion only. No second followed.

Selectman Gorski stated she was very impressed with the process and the quality of people was outstanding. Gorski mentioned that one applicant withdrew and the Board narrowed the finalists to four, one of them being a younger Captain and he did an outstanding job and she feels sure he is a future Fire Chief in our town or some other town. Gorski commented that she has learned so much about Fire Departments throughout the process, about SOPs and SOGs, sharing resources, but to her, one of the applicants stood above the others and nominated Robert Lay to become the Fire Chief. Chairman Greaney seconded Gorski's nomination.

Chairman Greaney stated that he had served on the department for 21 years and when he was a firefighter Bob was further up than he was; that he doesn't believe there weren't conflicts between the stations when he was on or when he left; that Bob has showed the Board he has the experience and management ability, and that he has the time and would probably be a good candidate for us. Selectman D'Amore responded that he appreciated both of his fellow members opening statements; that when he moved to town in 1993 Bob introduced he and his wife to this town and they became friends.

D'Amore addressed Selectman Gorski saying he was glad she brought it up; that one of the most exciting candidates for the Board was a young man, Brian Greaney. Brian arrived at the meeting and D'Amore thanked him for coming and told Greaney that Selectman Gorski had been singing him praises for six weeks. D'Amore continued about his choice saying Kastrinelis was the only candidate who specifically mentioned without being asked that he would not mind being second in command or being an assistant to Brian Greaney if he were the Board's choice for Chief; that no other candidate indicated to him (D'Amore) that they were not in it for themselves. D'Amore said Mike was the only candidate that demonstrated very clearly that he was thinking of what was in the best interest of the town/department. D'Amore said for that reason Mike would be the only candidate for his choice because he understands something that the other eleven candidates never even came close to and that is what is called the succession plan.

D'Amore told his fellow Board members that if they want to select a Chief there are two ways to do so; that they can go through a search process as they just did, or they could get to a point because they have the talent in house, where they can grow the talent internally, develop it, mentor it, cultivate it, and that would make the department stronger, nothing else will. D'Amore told the Board that Bob Lay is a good

candidate, but he has a list of reasons why Mike Kastrinelis would be the ideal candidate for this time in history and developing the internal talent and succession plan is the unique distinguishing factor of that candidate and is the primary reason he would select Michael because otherwise he is equal in every other way with the other excellent candidates they have, i.e., technical ability, experience, etc. D'Amore asked his fellow Board members to reconsider their vote because they want a department that is strong; that they want a Fire Chief that does not want to control the department, one who wants to care for it; someone who wants to make the department stronger and then pass it off to the younger leadership who deserve to take it for decades. D'Amore stated again that's why Kastrinelis is his candidate and asked the Board to reconsider.

Chairman Greaney responded to D'Amore stating it's always been somebody that has been moved up from within the department; that the people all train together and work together and work as a team in order to grow the department. Greaney told D'Amore that maybe that was one part he hadn't been informed of. D'Amore thanked Greaney for his comments and told him that it was exciting to him; that that's good to know because the bottom line is they have a department that has some internal strife and that has been the common theme throughout all the questions with all the candidates, how are we going to fix this rift. D'Amore said mentoring people and getting them involved is one hell of a way to fix a rift; that they don't need people to control the department, they need people to care for it

Selectman Gorski mentioned candidate Dan Stewart who came from Wilmington. She said one thing that resonated with her that he said and she will use it all the time now, and that was that you can't thank volunteers enough; that these are all volunteers not to be criticized and that he said "I believe in praising in public and chastising in private". Gorski said those are words everybody should take to heart because no one needs to be dressed down in front of their peers; that if you want to correct a behavior then you can do it quietly and not embarrass people.

Chairman Greaney mentioned that another candidate had been asked how we could resolve a conflict between two stations. Greaney stated they should not be looking at it as two stations; that it is one department; that it seems to be too much of looking at it as a negative from one side to the other. He said he felt a lot of that type of questioning was sort of tough on the outside people but the one thing that one of them mentioned was fundraising together, doing dinners together; etc. and he said they always did that in the past and the women's auxiliary would arrange the Christmas parties, progressive dinners, etc and maybe that was why back then there wasn't much of a conflict between the two. Greaney said it's funny that someone from the outside, without even knowing, may have touched on one of the bigger problems. Greaney commented that they use to enjoy those gatherings when he was on.

D'Amore commented to Selectman Gorski that she has been a part of public service for many years and he knows she has seen conflict, confrontation, dissent in departments and that they all know that the only way to achieve true harmony is for those few who are disharmonious are either shown the way on how to get involved, or they are shown the door. D'Amore said the reality is that the rift in the department does have the potential to destroy it and to convert it into a much more expensive department, and that he believes the candidate that takes this position which he believes is a long term interim for two, three possibly four year job at the most, would immediately bring the men together by getting them involved in activities and also focusing on the young talent, not promising them anything but working their butts off. D'Amore said he would like to see some competition in the department amongst the young men to produce what could be potentially a 10, 15 or 20 year Chief. D'Amore told the Board that the department needs to be managed on interim basis to prepare for the future and the future is the young guys and only one candidate was focused on the young guys; that he actually said he would be willing to do that more than actually have the job. D'Amore said to him that was unbelievable, compelling; that Mike is a turnkey candidate; that there's no learning curve; that it's seamless, uninterrupted service to the town. D'Amore told his fellow board members that Mike's dealings with the public have been flawless; that he has not seen or read anywhere anything about Mike Kastrinelis with the public something going wrong. D'Amore said John Osborne who criticizes everyone has said good things about Mike and how things have been

handled down at Bagnall under time constraints and technical issues that needed to be resolved. D'Amore stated that Mike is turnkey, flawless public experience, been on the ground with the troops for years and he's focused on the young guys, bringing them together, bringing the department together. D'Amore commented that the strife is not going to go away; that there's going to be an internal strife that will be there for a long time and he believes if they don't have the right candidate it's going to get wider, it's going to get worse. D'Amore asked his fellow members again to reconsider who their selection would be and said he hopes they would support him in choosing Mike Kastrinelis.

Chairman Greaney stated at this point there is a motion and a second and asked if the Board is ready to vote. Gorski asked if anyone has anything further to say. Gorski said that when they have a new Fire Chief that the first order of business should be to sit and talk with him about the Board's expectations, not that we want to micromanage but she wants communication open. Gorski commented that when the Board had initially talked with Brian Greaney he had asked if he were to be made Chief would he have the support of the Board of Selectmen and she thinks that is a very good question; that this turmoil within the department, south, central and people not talking with each other, it will probably be the new Chief's first order of business to reach out to everybody no matter who they supported and ask for some unity and stability; that that's her wish and she is ready to vote.

Greaney stated that there is a motion and a second and called for a vote to nominate Bob Lay as part-time Fire Chief. Gorski, Greaney - "Aye"; D'Amore - "Opposed".

Chairman Greaney told his Board members that they will need to get together and come up with what they need to do going forward. Greaney expressed publicly thanks to Mike Kastrinelis for filling in as the Acting Chief in the interim, for taking care of the business that had to be taken care of at the Bagnall School and Selectman Gorski commented that that was huge; that she thinks Bob Lay did go over there when it was first made known that there was a problem over there; that she doesn't know if he went with Mike or if they went at different times. Chairman Greaney said "let's move forward" and Selectman D'Amore responded "agreed".

Chairman Greaney asked if the Board members had read the Minutes from August 5, 12 and 26 and D'Amore and Greaney stated they had. Greaney asked Gorski if she was comfortable with the Minutes of August 5, 12 and 26 and she stated "as long as there was no police business on them" and Greaney replied there may have been an appointment that Gorski had abstained from voting on. (Note for the record: The Minutes were checked and there was no police business voted on at any of the August meetings).

Upon motion duly made by D'Amore, seconded by Gorski, and it was

**VOTED:** To approve the Minutes of August 5, 2013, August 12, 2013, and August 26, 2013, as presented. 3-0

Chairman Greaney reminded his fellow Board members that there were Property Use Permits on the table that needed to be signed.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Gorski moved, D'Amore seconded, and it was

**VOTED:** To adjourn.  
Adjourned at 7:54 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,