

*BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, April 19, 2016
5:30 P.M.
Groveland Town Hall*

Attendance: Chair, Bill Dunn, Vice Chair, Ed Watson, Selectmen Joe D'Amore, Daniel MacDonald, and Mike Wood

Absent: None

Also Present: Finance Director, Denise Dembkoski

Chairman Dunn opened the meeting at 5:40 pm for the purpose of conducting a public interview with Deputy Police Chief Jeffrey Gillen for the position of Chief of Police.

Chair Dunn began by asking questions of Deputy Gillen in regards to past events and problems in the department. Deputy Gillen said he treats people fairly, ethically, and has taken classes in management. "This is the best group of officers collectively right now" stated Gillen.

Selectman Wood asked Deputy Gillen what his vision of the police department is. Deputy Gillen responded that he would like to bring back the departmental accreditation, implement a civil fingerprint policy, provide more community outreach, meet more regularly with the Board of Selectmen, and continue to provide community support.

Selectman Watson commented on the number of recommendations provided with Deputy Gillen's resume, but stated that there were several notable recommendations missing. He did not see recommendations from the state police, the DA's office, the court house, former Chief Weeks, officers within the department, and rank & file from other communities.

Deputy Gillen responded to each category:

State Police: The Newbury barracks change rank/file often. He could get a reference from a State Police officer that he has worked with in the past, but they would not still be posted locally;

DA's Office: Given recent controversy with the parole board, the DA's office is prohibited from providing a written recommendation for anyone. However, DA Blodgett relayed that he would be the top reference, should phone call references need to be made;

Court: As with the DA's office, it is against the court policy to provide written recommendations;

Former Chief Weeks: Given the length of time since they've spoken, Deputy Gillen said he would be uncomfortable bothering him for a recommendation;

Subordinates: Deputy Gillen was advised that as a superior officer asking a subordinate for a recommendation could be viewed as unethical;

Rank & File in other towns: This could also be viewed as unethical, since Deputy Gillen is in a command position.

Selectman Watson feels the Board never had a chance to review the job description and didn't understand why the Board was going through this process so early.

Deputy Gillen stated that going through the process now would allow him, if selected, to start making decisions that impact the future of the department. He feels this is not being rushed, it's been in the works for the last eight years since he was made Deputy of the department.

Selectman Watson said he would have liked to see other things added to the job description. He would like to have added having an outside study of the department. Look to see if the department has too many cruisers or if the department has lost too many officers.

Chair Dunn asked the Finance Director if the position had been posted in the Police Department. Ms. Dembkoski responded yes. Selectman Watson had asked Ms. Dembkoski if anyone else applied for the position, she responded no.

The Board discussed the merits of the job description for a brief period. Deputy Gillen said that with all due respect, we're here for my interview, not to discuss the job description.

Selectman Wood indicated that Deputy Gillen is a great guy and the lynching towards him is ridiculous and needs to stop. He also said he is prepared and plans to make a motion tonight.

Selectman D'Amore said the Board of Selectmen have made some significant hires over the last several years and succession planning was established by previous Boards of Selectmen. Our current Fire Chief was an internal hiring on the basis of succession planning.

Selectman MacDonald said the Deputy's resume speaks volumes. He has a stellar record, with a stable, commendable career. MacDonald went on to state he believes in hiring from within and "we should hire the best and hardest worker, and I believe that is you". "I've never heard anything negative about you that has any merit."

Selectman Dunn said he took the Deputy's resume and the current Chief's resume and did his due diligence by doing his own research. He then asked Deputy Gillen if he would be a uniformed officer if need be at times? The Deputy responded that he will maintain his training and be "ready to respond at the drop of a hat."

Selectman Dunn said he believes the department is heavy on staff and vehicles. In addition, there needs to be a conversation to resolve the issues between the Fire and Police Departments. Originally he supported going outside the department, but now he feels it is okay to move the Deputy up. The Deputy said he would be happy to meet and discuss these issues with the Board if he is selected.

Selectman D'Amore recalled a private matter with a family in town and asked Deputy Gillen how he got involved in dealing with the Australian officials. The Deputy stated that he met a contact from Australia at the FBI National Academy and was able to reach out for information. He felt he was able to provide support to the family in their time of need and would step up and help anyone that needed his assistance. Deputy Gillen said it is nice to have contacts from other state, federal, and international agencies and to be able to work reach out to them for help from time to time.

Selectman Watson asked what type of leader the Deputy sees himself as. Deputy Gillen said he is sincere and passionate. Selectman Watson asked how he would deal with a complaint made against an officer. Deputy Gillen said he would meet and talk with the complainant and see if they would put the complaint in writing, then if it merits it, he would conduct an investigation. Selectman Watson asked at what point he

would inform the officer that a complaint had been made. Deputy Gillen said he would meet with them once a formal complaint was made.

Chair Dunn said he wants an open relationship with the police, and if there's a problem he will call and get to the bottom of it. Deputy Gillen said he absolutely encourages a relationship with the Selectmen after all, "I answer to the Board of Selectmen and townspeople. This is your police department."

Selectman MacDonald asked if there is a grievance process if an officer feels they feel grieved against the Chief. Deputy Gillen said there is and they have a formal process within the union.

Selectman Wood made a motion to appoint Jeff Gillen as the next Police Chief pending successful contract negotiations. Selectman D'Amore seconded the motion.

During the motion discussion, Selectman Watson said he was not prepared to vote tonight.

Selectman MacDonald feels they have the right candidate here and he's making an objective decision and doesn't believe he could be swayed elsewhere. He said that Jeff's resume speaks volumes and he's pretty much had a twenty-five year interview with the Town.

Hearing no more discussion, Chair Dunn asked for a roll call vote on the motion by Selectman Wood.

D'Amore – Yes

Wood – Yes

MacDonald – Yes

Watson – No

Dunn – "I had not made my mind up before this meeting, but after hearing everything tonight, I'm comfortable making this decision." – Yes

Chair Dunn said the vote is 4-1 in favor of Deputy Gillen.

The Board offered their congratulations to Jeff.

6:33 P.M.

Adjournment: The Board unanimously approved a motion by Selectman Wood to adjourn, seconded by Selectman D'Amore.

True Attest:



Denise M. Dembkoski
Finance Director

*** Approved on a vote of 4-0-1, with Selectman O'Neil abstaining on May 16, 2016 ***