

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SELECTMEN MEETING
TUESDAY, JUNE 16, 2009 - 7:00 P.M.
SELECTMEN MEETING ROOM

Meeting came to order at 7:00 p.m. with Selectmen John H. Bruno II, Troy E. Garron and Michael J. Schleiff present.

The following business was discussed:

AGENDA

Garron added a short discussion on the Monponsett Inn's history.

With the above addition, the Agenda for Tuesday, June 16th, was unanimously approved.

SELECTMEN MINUTES

No Selectmen Meeting Minutes were considered or approved.

ABATEMENTS/BILLS/COMMITMENTS/WARRANTS

Moved by Schleiff and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously affirmed approval for the payment of Payroll Warrant/School #103 in the amount of \$507,769.00

Moved by Schleiff and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously approved payment of the following Warrants:

Vendor Warrant	#104	for	\$ 34,451.49
Withholding Warrant	#105	for	\$143,553.09

Moved by Schleiff and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously approved payment of the following Selectmen bills:

Courtney Farley (Donelson Scholarship)	\$250.00
Terminal Exchange Systems (data processing)	\$855.00
Quinn Flags (patriotic banners)	\$146.46
Deutsch Williams Brooks (legal services/May)	\$133.00
Michael Schleiff (mileage/tolls)	\$162.25

TOWN ACCOUNTANT INTERVIEWS

SANDRA NOLAN

Following are questions asked by Selectman John Bruno (in italics); responses by Nolan immediately follow:

What is it you think you can do for us as the permanent Town Accountant?

I believe that I would be able to help the accounting department by improving some of the communication with the other departments. I believe I have already developed a lot of experience in the accounting and have been working with the new software so I could be able to help set that up to work best for the town. I think basically make the accountant department run smoothly.

You have been working in the Accountant's Department for how many years?

Just over two years.

Two years. So I think you have a pretty good understanding of what goes on up there. Supposing you were appointed Town Accountant, what would you do now in order to address some of the issues we know are up there from our meeting with the auditors last week.

One of the things I have already been working on is updating the spreadsheets that had been set up. Keeping the cash reconciliation and receivables reconciliation up to date. Doing it on a monthly basis, rather than catching up at the end of the year. That is one of the main things, having all of the information in so you find problems before the end of the year. If you have to go back twelve months of entries to find a problem, it is much more difficult. If you can keep it up and find the problems as you go, it is much easier and makes things run smoother. Meeting directly with the Collector to iron out differences when you reconcile or meeting with Treasurer. Communication is important and makes interaction between those departments more smoothly.

If you are appointed the Town Accountant, you would have the right to select an Assistant Town Accountant. Have you thought about what you would look for and how you would use that person?

You need to find someone who is not only good with numbers but is detail oriented and someone who has a good amount of discretion, to keep information to themselves and not talk about things that go through the office. I would look for someone who could handle the bills and receivables and who is willing to train in some of the other things the Accountant would be doing. Someone who is willing to go to the classes and learn the information because

that is definitely something that has to happen. You have to have the second person able to step up and understand what you are doing also.

A lot of business takes place after business hours - meetings by boards and committees are in the evening, town meeting goes over several nights, etc. In addition, the Town Accountant has always been the advisor to the Finance Committee and Wage and Personnel and reports to the Selectmen. Do you foresee any trouble with your ability to be available to the town on evenings, etc.

I have no problem with being available at those times.

Have you been to town meeting regularly?

Yes, regularly.

Following are questions asked by Selectman Michael Schleiff (in italics); responses by Nolan immediately follow:

What would you say that you would have above and beyond other applicants applying for the job that may have more time in this position or more background or education. What would you bring to the table?

I think one of the things is my experience in town hall. My familiarity with the system as it works now. The current accounting system. Also the way all the departments interact. Because I have been working in the Accountant's office, I have been gaining experience for municipal accounting. Municipal accounting is different then regular accounting. I have been getting training. I have been able to go to classes to gain that experience.

Following are questions asked by Selectman Troy Garron (in italics); responses by Nolan immediately follow:

You have been in the Town Hall for how many years?

Fifteen years.

In your experience working in the town hall, what do you think has prepared you to do the job as the Town Accountant?

I think the interaction with the other departments in the town and understanding how the other departments work. Being able to know what to expect from different departments. We have volunteer boards that have a secretary that is here during the day and getting those boards in during the day

is next to impossible. Being able to be realistic about what departments know. How to do what things. Knowing where to go to get information. Because I have been working in town hall so long, the interaction with the departments is probably one of my strongest points.

With new department heads and new Treasurer-Collector and Town Clerk, how do you think you will fit in. As you said earlier, one of your responsibilities will be to interact with them. Do you feel you will be ready to hit the ground running. I ask this because this department is not where we want it right now and according to our auditor there are some shortcomings that need to be shored up. Do you feel you are the person to do that?

I do. I believe I am.

Why is that?

I believe I was instrumental in helping the past Town Accountant reconcile some of the issues she was running into. I also believe I know the problems in the Accounting office right now and I can reconcile those, I can get past those and bring them up to speed where they should be. I believe that every department is connected so I would not be trying to just take care of my end of it. I would also be available to help the new department heads and the other departments to bring their end up to where it has to be so everything works well together.

You feel without any more training you are able to do that at this point?

I think I might need a little more advice, a little more training. A lot of it I can get from current resources like the auditors and like. I already got some training. I went to Amherst in March and had training done by a State organization. I also went to seminars by two different auditing firms that provide free training in municipal accounting. Using those resources and resources from the state, I have already been able to pick up a lot of the information we need in that office right now.

In any of the positions you have held, have you ever had to supervise anyone?

Yes. I use to work for J. L. Hammet. At that point I was part of the corporate marketing team and had two employees under me.

Bruno asked Nolan if she would tell the Board about her experience and background and what she thought in that was useful as the role for accountant. Nolan stated she started at the Town Hall fifteen years ago. Before that she worked for J. L. Hammet Company for eleven or thirteen years. She worked her way up from Clerk to Corporate Marketing Manager. He worked in the catalogue and early childhood division. After that she took a break to raise her family. Then she came to work at the Town Hall as a secretary to the regulatory boards,

became the Administrative Assistant to the Board of Health, and then went to the Accountant's office. In every position she has had in the Town Hall, she has taken classes and seminars to help her within that position. She has always been interested in learning. When she worked with Planning and Zoning, she took classes on special permits and site plan reviews. With the Board of health, she was a certified soil evaluator and certified serve safe manager. In the accounting office, she took classes on municipal accounting. It is important to her to not just do a good but to do a good job and understand the entire picture and not just learn things by rote; she wants to know why and how everything works together.

Schleiff noted the salary was Grade 11 with many steps and asked where she would fall. Bruno said at Step 1 because she is new to the grade.

Bruno asked if Nolan had anything she would like to say. Nolan said that, if given the position, she will give her whole heart an soul to it and will work hard to bring the department up to speed and meet deadlines for the closing of the year, certifying cash, etc.

PHILIP WOLTERS

Following are questions asked by Selectman John Bruno (in italics); responses by Wolters immediately follow:

Tell us about your background, experience as an accountant, etc.

Before I became a Town Accountant, I had the usual accountant progression. I got an accounting degree in college, went to public accounting with what then was part of the big eight, spent several years and became senior accountant, then went corporate in New York with a Fortune 500 company. . I started as an internal auditor and worked my way up to managing the internal audit department for ADT Securities world-wide. Then I became the Controller for one of their subsidiaries called Electro Signal Lab in Massachusetts and had three hundred direct labor employees. After a year, they decided to move to Arkansas and I chose not to follow. I was living in Scituate and liked the area. I took controllerships at small to medium size businesses. I was involved in organizing and computerizing their operations. I applied for a job that turned out to be for the Town of Randolph without knowing it was a Town because they had purposely not advertised as such to attract someone who did not necessarily have a municipal background. I figured debits and credits are debits and credits. I knew little about UMAS and found out it is a unique system and not as simple as I thought. They did not have an Accountant for six months and were on a system that preceded UMAS. They had UMAS but had not done anything with it. I was hired in May and had six weeks to convert to UMAS, set up the whole chart of accounts, and get the system ready for July 1st. Not having a municipal background, I emerged myself in the UMAS manual and by July 1st we were

up and running. Part of my responsibility was to train all of the other departments in the operation of the system. They had no computer access to anything. They did everything manually and sent it to the Town Accountant who put in the journal entries. What we did with the new system was convert everyone on line, real time access to their budgets. If we put in a warrant, five minutes later they would see it in their budget. They were not even using spreadsheets. That was double duty, converting the accounting system and training. Luckily I succeeded. I got everything up and running smoothly. Randolph formed a committee to see how they could save money and decided one of the best ways was to combine the Town Accountant with the School Accountant. I left; and, when they told the School Accountant he would take over the job, he said no way. So they were without a Town Accountant again for another six months.

What are you doing now?

I have worked as a consultant for the last few years.

When did you leave Randolph?

2007

What do you know about Halifax and Halifax's accounting office?

I tried to look it up on the web and the budget. I know you have an Acting Town Accountant but I am not sure why. It looked like the hours were only four days a week. That is basically it.

Are you aware of what goes on in our accounting office or did you take any steps to find out what the situation is right now?

Not specifically what goes on in your town. I assume it is the same as every Town Accountant's office - requirements for Schedule A, budgets, reports to the State, DOR, etc.

As a consultant, what kind of work do you do now?

During tax season, I do taxes and consult with various small businesses that do not need full time people.

Do you do any municipal accounting?

No, not right now.

So the municipal accounting was whatever you did in Randolph for ten months.

Yes

If you were hired as the Town Accountant, what would you do to get yourself familiar with and up and running in Halifax's operation.

I know you have an Assistant Town Accountant so hopefully that person would be a source of information on where you are. I read you are putting in a new computer system. I would have to bring myself up to speed on that and where you are in the conversion and documentation with the State. Municipal accounting is different than regular accounting in that the DOR gives you suggestions as to when you need to get these forms in. I am use to dealing with corporate deadlines and SCC requirements which are not suggestions - you get them done. That was a unique animal for me to get my hands around is that deadlines are not really deadlines but I made them my deadlines because that is how I operate. I am a systems control person, putting in internal controls. I believe in getting things done quickly and correctly with as minimal fuss that you can. I always tell people if you don't like change you won't like me because I want to go in there. I have thirty years experience in accounting and internal controls and I am going to implement internal controls. I believe in doing things the right way and not skipping any steps but also the most efficient way and bringing everyone up to speed as well. I don't not know how you interplay with departments here but I found there was a gap between the Town Accountant and other departments because other than sending in warrants, etc. they do not participate in the whole function - at least that is how it was in Randolph. I am a hands on type person who will get the job done and done right.

One of the responsibilities of the Town Accountant is to hire the Assistant Town Accountant. What do you look for in an Assistant Town Accountant and how would you use that person?

I look for a person who can develop. I believe in cross training so the person could take over for me if necessary. I look for an aggressive type of person who is not afraid to speak their mind and give me their opinion. Someone I can interplay with on a one to one basis because we are the department. Would want to develop this person to be able to help other departments.

A lot of business takes place after business hours - meetings by boards and committees are in the evening, town meeting goes over several nights, etc. In addition, the Town Accountant has always been the advisor to the Finance Committee and Wage and Personnel and reports to the Selectmen. Do you foresee any trouble with your ability to be available to the town on evenings, etc.

I am not a 9 to 5 person. I had six weeks to do everything in Randolph and that was not 9 to 5. I believe in doing whatever it takes to get the job done. If the job means meeting with departments here in evening meetings, so be it.

Following are questions asked by Selectman Troy Garron (in italics); responses by Wolters immediately follow:

You said you have six week to get the job done. That is impressive. I have been around long enough to know that everyone was willing and able to do what was needed. How did you get around that?

Not everyone is capable but I found a lot of people are begging for help. They were looking for someone to help them and speed up their process. It was taking them hours to do things the long way. I would say 90% were on board right away, especially after showing them how to see their budget on line in real time s they could see where they were at any given time. They could catch and fix any errors quickly. The 10% who did not want to get on board, I had to talk with their department head. I did not select the system and it had to go on line July1st. So they had to get on board or be left behind. Those who were reluctant were scared because they had never touched a computer before.

If we called Randolph for references, what would they say?

My reference is the Finance Director for the school. Everyone else who was there has left. I worked closely with the School Finance Director. He would give me a good reference. Together, we managed to pull the operation together in a cooperative mode.

I find most people involved in numbers are not always good with people. how do you feel you fall in that category?

I think I get along with people. Sometimes patience may not always be my virtue. I want things on time and correct. The first time or two, I am willing to bend but, as the time frame gets short, I need the information. Most people try to do their best. I find most Town Accountant's are dedicated people and willing to go over and above. In corporate, everyone is shooting for the goal of the corporation. In a town, departments tend to have their own way of doing things. The Town Accountant and departments should work together.

Following are questions asked by Selectman Michael Schleiff (in italics); responses by Wolters immediately follow:

Have you seen the list of duties and responsibilities for the position (gave him a copy of the list) and do you see anything you are weak or strong in?

The list is pretty standard. I saw them in the advertisement and felt it was a standard job description. I did this in Randolph.

The wage is Grade 11, Step 1 - are you familiar with that?

Every town has its own grade and steps. The salary range was in the advertisement and it was in my range.

Schleiff wanted to ensure Wolters was aware of the salary and at where within the grade he would be hired. Bruno stated that Grade 11 was the Grade under which the Town Accountant is classified. Generally speaking, someone would come in at Step 1 and then move through the steps from year to year. However, this position is one for which a contract can be negotiated and the person could be hired somewhere within the range. Garron noted that a person could not make less than Step 1 but no more than the top step.

What would you say that you would have above and beyond other applicants applying for the job that may have more time in this position or more background or education. What would you bring to the table?

I think I have a unique background and my experience is a big range of fields. Non-profit corporate in New York, small and medium size businesses here, and Town Accountant. You would be hard pressed to find someone with such a broad range of experience. Quite frankly, bringing a business background into a Town Accountant position is something that is desperately needed throughout the state. There are too many town accountants that have never seen anything else and don't know there is an easier way to it because they have never progressed in the accounting field beyond what they know.

Bruno asked if he had anything he would like to say. Wolters asked why there was an Acting Town Accountant. Bruno said because the Town Accountant retired and the Acting is filling in until a permanent Town Accountant is hired. She was the Assistant. Wolters said he is use to coming into a messy situation - whether corporate or town. He is a quick study, use to scoping a situation, jumping in and getting things fixed. He has met a lot of challenges and it does not phase him.

ELIZABETH ZALESKI

Following are questions asked by Selectman John Bruno (in italics); responses by Zaleski immediately follow:

Tell us about your background and why you think your background is what we need for our Town Accountant in Halifax.

At this point, I have spent years in Abington. I started out as the Accounts Payable Clerk and am now the Administrative Assistant Accountant. Right after I sent my resume, I received notification of conditional certification as a

government accountant with the mass municipal auditors and accountant's association. My time in Abington I have assisted the town accountant to bring our receivables in line so that the collector and treasurer and TA office are in balance. Previously it was not. I work closely with department heads on reconciliation of various accounts. there are times when departments will put in vouchers and were over budget. So we stopped the over budget issue. I verify all the town warrants as far as expenditures and submit them to the TA to sign off. Education and training is something Halifax is looking for. I have been continually trained while in Abington. Recently I was trained for the new Gasby 54 which is a total modification of the new fund accounting - your fund descriptions and accounting for your unreserved fund balance is changing and will be implemented June 2011.

Explain to us that you are currently an Administrative Assistant Accountant, what does that mean and how big is the accountant's office in Abington?

There is the Town Accountant, myself, and a bookkeeper. In its charge, Abington does not have an Assistant Town Accountant but it is what I do, so creatively that is my job title.

Your job is to be the Assistant Town Accountant?

Yes

And you started in 2006?

I started in Abington in 2005 and in June 2006 I became the Administrative Assistant Accountant.

Why leave and come here?

This is a new opportunity for me. I love what I do. The growth potential in Abington is not there. The items I have seen in my research, the internal controls and procedures and items you need to address here is something I could bring with me. Historically, since 2004, Abington has received a certificate of excellence and I have been part of that team since 2005.

What do you know about Halifax and Halifax's accounting office?

I met laurel in March and she said potentially she was thinking of retiring so I started doing research on the Town. I have received your 2007 and 2008 management letters from your auditors and as you know there are some internal control issues that need to be address. I am not sure how far you are with your Gasby 34 but your fixed assets are behind schedule. I work with department heads now to verify their fixed assets to make sure we are all in line. Anything above \$5,000 is required to be reported. I have read newspaper

articles. I notice you have a new Collector-Treasurer position. That position with the Town Accountant and Assessors is integral to make sure the Schedule A is done, the recap is done and financial reporting is done on a timely basis. I see that has been an issue for you the last couple of years.

What would you do if you were the Town Accountant here?

The first think I would do is find out where you are in the FY 09 process. We just completed our preliminary audit. our auditors come in May. I would make sure our records are up to date, anything we need to do to facilitate the audit, and cut down on the time the auditors are spending here. I also saw a request was put into the Finance Committee for a transfer for training to close the books. That is something I do now in Abington. I helped close the books and open the books each year.

A lot of business takes place after business hours - meetings by boards and committees are in the evening, town meeting goes over several nights, etc. In addition, the Town Accountant has always been the advisor to the Finance Committee and Wage and Personnel and reports to the Selectmen. Do you foresee any trouble with your ability to be available to the town on evenings, etc.

No difficulty. I attend the town meetings for Abington now to assist the Town Accountant.

Before you work for Abington, where did you work?

I am an independent bookkeeper. Prior to Abington, I worked for Old Town Real Estate. He was a friend of mine and I helped him set up his business. I did that on and off since 2002. Prior to that I worked for Stowe Engineering which became a division of Greenman-Pederson in 2001. They are an engineering company that provided structural engineering to municipalities. I was the Controller.

One of the responsibilities of the Town Accountant is to hire the Assistant Town Accountant. What do you look for in an Assistant Town Accountant and how would you use that person.

An important factor would be someone with accounting knowledge, whether private or public. An understanding of how accounting works is what has gotten me to where I am today. Walking into Abington it was easier for me to transfer that knowledge into the different functions they have. I would like someone who would like to have training as I have had. Who wants to achieve for their own good and the benefit of the town. I would have them attend classes at UMASS Amherst and have them eventually be certified.

How would you work with that person now; what would you have them do. It is basically a two man office.

The person in the office now is invaluable to anyone coming in because she knows the system. I would work with Sandra to find out what she knows and incorporate her knowledge into what is needed - be it the implementation of controls and procedures, to understand why you do what you do. Need to understand the basic behind an entry and how it all comes together as a whole.

Following are questions asked by Selectman Troy Garron (in italics); responses by Zaleski immediately follow:

I find most people involved in numbers are not always good with people. How do you feel you fall in that category?

I have the respect of every department head. I am confident in saying that. I help them and in turn they help me and we have a great rapport.

If we called your current employer and asked what kind of job you have done?

I do have references from my current employer. Each person on the list knows I am here tonight. They include the Town Manager, Town Accountant, Superintendent of Water Works, Treasurer-Collector and Deputy Collector. In that regard, I would say it was mutual respect for our jobs.

How many people did you supervise in your past jobs?

At the engineering company the owner was the CFO and I was directly under him. There were thirty engineers and clerical in house and a variety of people outside that we dealt with on a day to day basis. At Abington Incorporated, at different points, I was the secondary foreman for about ten men out in the shop.

Following are questions asked by Selectman Michael Schleiff (in italics); responses by Zaleski immediately follow:

We are getting a new software package - Soft Right.. Are you familiar with that?

I have heard of Soft right although we use KVS. the association share a lot of information and from what I have gathered Soft right is a very good system to get into and it has a lot of components for the financial reporting. I have heard of it and I don't have any problem with adapting to new accounting systems. The other is muice but people d not seem happy with that.

Will your references be unhappy to see you leave?

Let's just say jaws dropped a little bit when I said I was coming. I think they will be disappointed. I have helped the town Accountant with a lot of things he was not able to do as far as projects. The Town Manager came in a few months before me and one of the issues we had is we did not have certificates of insurance on file, we were not doing W9 and 1099 reporting was inaccurate. I took over that project in my first few months. Now we are getting accurate reporting from all departments. I think the Town Accountant will be upset to go.

Bruno asked if there was anything unique Zaleski felt she could bring that is unique, that would make Halifax's Accounting office better and, in turn, the Town. Zaleski said her desire to succeed and bring things around to where the Town needs them as far as getting internal controls, getting reporting done in a timely fashion, and filing the Schedule A and recap on time. If those reports are not filed in accordance with DOR deadlines, the Town can lose its last quarter payment and no one wants that to happen.

Bruno asked Zaleski if she had anything she would like to say. She said she felt everything had been covered and had nothing to add.

MARY DUNDAS

Following are questions asked by Selectman John Bruno (in italics); responses by Dundas immediately follow:

Tell us about your background and why you are interested in coming to Halifax.

I currently work as the Plymouth County Accountant in the Treasurer's office and as Treasurer for the West Barnstable Fire District. I have been at the County for a year and a half and about a year at the Fire District. Previous to that I audited pension funds for the State for about six and a half years. most of my work has been in accounting. Prior to working for the state, I worked in small and medium business and for myself. I have a Bachelor and Masters Degree from Suffolk University in Business Administration.

You said you work for the county as an accountant?

Yes. In the Treasurer's Office.

And for a fire district somewhere?

Yes. In West Barnstable. It is a part time position separate from the County.

If you came to work for us, would you continue to work another job?

Depending upon the hours and requirements here, most likely I would continue to work for the Fire District which is about five to eight hours per week and flexible hours.

What do you do as the Accountant in the Treasurer's office?

Primarily I have worked on special projects - some accounting work that the County had not been complete for a few years. Catching up and bringing them up to date.

Why leave?

Since I started there has been some turmoil. The Commissioners disapproved my salary before I started and there have been furloughs. It seems unstable to me and I would like a stable position. I prefer not to work two jobs anymore. I would like one job that I can feel secure at and can continue to work at a number of years.

You said you were an auditor for the State. What did you do?

I did pension audits for PERAC for six and a half years as a traveling auditor. I covered Southern Massachusetts and the Cape. I left because it was a lot of driving and I had a family to take care of. The focus was singularly on pension funds and there was nothing more I could do there. The expertise was in the law. It was less about accounting and I could not add to my skills.

Do you have municipal accounting experience?

I do not. It is a goal of mine which is why this position interests me. It is the type of position I would like to be in.

Why is that?

In observing government - I worked at town halls through my work for the State - I like the work that is done there. I believe a well run town contributes to the well being of the families that live there and benefits the people and children who live there. You can effect how people live there. The playgrounds are open and the schools are well run.

Is there a difference between what you would do for the County accountant office and a municipality - such as schedules, etc.

I believe there would be many and I am not aware of all of them truthfully. I think I am learning some of that as Treasurer of the Fire district because there

are filings, etc. that the County does not do. There are a lot of things I could learn in this position.

How would you go about learning?

Certainly the resources in place in the town already and continue educational program. I just started on a training program for the Treasurer Collector position and I am going to concentrate on the Treasurer's aspect for West Barnstable's purposes. Joining associations and networking with people I can call with questions. I believe the accounting work I am well capable of. I can learn the specific reports, deadlines, etc.

What do you know about Halifax and Halifax's accounting office?

I know the town in general. I know that your Accountant retired and that you recently combined the Treasurer-Collector. You do not have a finance manager. I do not know how the Town Accountant role interplays here.

Did you do anything to find out about what would be expected of you?

I believe I understand generally what would be expected but not specifically.

How would you run the Accountant's office; how would you manage it?

I can't venture what I would do without knowing where you are. I would not know what changes would be required and I don't know if there are things you want to accomplish in your new hire. I wonder if you were hoping for change and to improve on anything.

We would like to tighten up some of the reporting which has not been kept up as it should and account reconciliations which were cited in our most recent audit. Part of the Accountant role is to assist in all financial issues, figuring out revenues, etc. How do you feel about that?

That would be fine. I am willing to contribute and do not feel something is not my job. I like to be involved in things. The better understanding you have of the whole, the better.

A lot of business takes place after business hours - meetings by boards and committees are in the evening, town meeting goes over several nights, etc. In addition, the Town Accountant has always been the advisor to the Finance Committee and Wage and Personnel and reports to the Selectmen. Do you foresee any trouble with your ability to be available to the town on evenings, etc.

It is the kind of thing I would want to know about ahead of time but would not want it to be something on a regular basis. If I need to stay late to get

something done, I am willing to do that. Just staying after hours would be difficult for me. I am a single parent and have a young daughter. I live about 1 ½ hours away.

It is not unusual to have the Accountant around after hours but it is generally known ahead of time.

I have met with the Commissioners, etc. at night. It would be more the surprise factor that would be difficult.

One of the responsibilities of the Town Accountant is to hire the Assistant Town Accountant. What do you look for in an Assistant Town Accountant and how would you use that person.

I would look for someone who, if they had experience all the better, but think you can tell fairly quickly if they had the ability to learn something and I think that is more important than whether they have actually done it before. I would want them to do they should know what I do and I should know what they do. if something happens, the town would not want to be in a position where no one can fill in. Cross training is important. I am a big proponent of everyone knowing what everyone does. Not a good practice to have someone doing a job and not know what it means in relation to the whole. If you have the fundamentals you can solve any problem.

Following are questions asked by Selectman Troy Garron (in italics); responses by Dundas immediately follow:

I find most people involved in numbers are not always good with people. How do you feel you fall in that category?

I think I get along well with people. It is important to listen to them. I can debate points with people. I ask a lot of questions about what a particular job or project might be. And I have been asked for my input. I like being involved. If someone values my opinion, I am very willing to give it. Even if they don't, I might be willing to give it.

If we called your current employer and asked what kind of job you have done, what would be their response?

I think it would be positive. I would like to call them first and tell them I was here. I know Tom O'Brien and I work well together and I am accomplishing a lot for them and I think he would be sorry to hear about my desire to leave.

Following are questions asked by Selectman Michael Schleiff (in italics); responses by Dundas immediately follow:

We are getting a new software package - Soft Right. Are you familiar with that?

I have heard of it. I have never used it. I worked for a computer software company and helped them install and teach bookkeepers on different programs. If you understand accounting, you can use any of them. If you know what is suppose to come out, you can figure it out. I have no fear of them.

Bruno asked Dundas if she had anything she would like to say. She asked if the Selectmen were looking for specific changes in the new hire and what changes if any they were looking for in the new Collector-Treasurer position and how those changes would interplay with the Town Accountant. Bruno explained the Collector-Treasurer was a separately elected position and not under the jurisdiction of the Selectmen. Over the years, the financial departments work as a team to determine revenues, etc. He did not believe changes were needed in the current checks and balances and noted that the Town is one of the few not making cuts this year because of the strong working relationship between the financial departments including the Town Accountant office. He stated there are some deficits in the Town Accountant's office that need to be address, some of which were talked about by the auditors in the Management Letter. These include the areas of reporting and reconciliation. In response to a question from Dundas, Bruno said the last audit was just completed for Fiscal 2008 and should be available soon. The audit is done every year. In response to her question as to what the Board was looking for in an Accountant, Bruno said someone who can come into that office, take charge quickly and have a strong presence in getting our books in shape. Halifax is a small solvent town and relies on Department Heads to be strong in their positions. Garron was looking for someone who was disciplined, likes to meet deadlines, and interacts well with people.

PHYLLIS TIRRELL

Following are questions asked by Selectman John Bruno (in italics); responses by Tirrell immediately follow:

Tell us about your background and why you are interested in coming to Halifax.

I have worked for the Town of Bridgewater since 1989. I became the Assistant Town Accountant about ten years ago and have worked for two great Town Accountants. I have helped them do everything. I also worked in Berkley with their Town Accountant. We work with a data national system

and do in house payroll with contracts and all that. This is where I have been for the last twenty years.

How many people in the office?

There are three of us. The Town Accountant who is part time right now, the Assistant Town Accountant and a payroll person. We interchange all the jobs and help each other out. We work very well together.

Why leave?

There are a lot of changes in Bridgewater. A lot of furloughs and layoffs and I believe our office will be hit next year. They will be hiring a full-time Town Accountant and will do the first audit in two years.

What do you know about Halifax and Halifax's accounting office?

I have owned property in Halifax for the past six years and have live in Halifax for the past three years. I looked on line for the Town's reports. I assume the office is the same as in all the towns, same reporting and laws you have to comply with.

Have you been to town meeting?

Yes

A lot of business takes place after business hours - meetings by boards and committees are in the evening, town meeting goes over several nights, etc. In addition, the Town Accountant has always been the advisor to the Finance Committee and Wage and Personnel and reports to the Selectmen. Do you foresee any trouble with your ability to be available to the town on evenings, etc.?

Have no restrictions on being available. That is how it works in Bridgewater.

One of the responsibilities of the Town Accountant is to hire the Assistant Town Accountant. What do you look for in an Assistant Town Accountant and how would you use that person.

In the office we work in, we work together and I would want someone with whom I can interchange and do each other's jobs.

Why do you think you are ready to make the step from Assistant in Bridgewater to the Accountant in Halifax?

Bridgewater's budget is 47 million and we do pretty well with it. It is a smaller budget and I could probably (did not finish)

How would you go about integrating yourself in our system?

You usually work very closely with the Collector, Treasurer and Assessors. You have to know what is going on in their offices to make their office efficient. You have to make sure all of your checks and balances are in for the state. I met a few of the board people here through owning property. Where I work now, we work with all the departments and help with whatever they need. I would be open to all the departments whenever they need anything to make their department work well.

Following are questions asked by Selectman Troy Garron (in italics); responses by Tirrell immediately follow:

I find most people involved in numbers are not always good with people. How do you feel you fall in that category?

We do not have any problem with Department heads. I would not anticipate. If you work on a professional level and help with what they need, you would not have any problems.

If we called your current employer and asked what kind of job you have done, what would be their response?

Fine. You are welcome to call the current town Accountant, and the others on my reference list which work for the town or have worked for them. We work very well together. We are going through a very difficult time and hard to watch people being laid off after twenty years of service.

What role do you lay inc losing out the books at the end of the year?

We watch all the bottom lines and funds. Make sure they are all right. Go over the balances because it all has to fit into Schedule A. I post all the town meetings. Just the normal closing of the books. We do it around mid August.

Following are questions asked by Selectman Michael Schleiff (in italics); responses by Tirrell immediately follow:

We are getting a new software package - Soft Right. Are you familiar with that?

Currently we use WTI which is windows based. They had Data National when I started which merged with WTI. I think they are going to Fun Ware next year.

What would you say is why you would be an asset above other applicants that may have more education or experience?

I have learned a lot from the current Town Accountant and her experience and she is a very good teacher. She is always open to help people along. She is a very smart woman.

Bruno asked Tirrell if she had anything she would like to say. She asked what kind of software Halifax uses. Schleiff said it is a new program called Soft Right. Tirrell said she knows what the books are suppose to look like and what they are suppose to say. In response to a question from Bruno, Tirrell said she did not have a degree from Bentley College; she took a lot of accounting courses.

The Board took the matter under advisement and will take it up again on June 26th at 7:45 p.m. Seelig will call the candidates and advise them the Board will make a decision next week.

MONPONSETT INN

Garron stated that, at a meeting he attended on Sunday, the Plymouth County Registrar of Deed presented Halifax with a copy of a deed citing the Monponsett Inn located on Monponsett Street as a historical site. Descendants of the original owners still live in Halifax. At the request of Garron, the Board agreed to frame the document and hang it in the Selectmen's Office.

GENERAL MAIL/BUSINESS

A. Halifax In Lights and 275th Anniversary Events - Fourth of July

Anniversary Committee Chairman Maureen Rogers was present and said parade participants will line up at Wal*Mart at 9:00 a.m. Step off is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. Route 106 will be shut down from Wal*Mart to the Mobil Station during the parade which is expected to last about an hour.

The Board read a letter dated June 15th from Halifax In Lights and the 275th Anniversary Committee listing various requests to facilitate the events planned. Rogers stated that all events have been cleared by the Fire Chief and Police Chief. Moved by Bruno and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously granted the following:

- Use of Town property in various locations for various purposes as needed on July 4th
- Use of the Town Seal on banners, certificates, anniversary cake, etc. in connection with the Town's 275th Anniversary celebration
- Authorization to restrict vendor access to Town property on July 4th
- Use of Town buildings as necessary on July 4th.
- Use of the Town's PA system.

The Committee will meet with the Selectmen next week to finalize the list of events scheduled on the Fourth of July.

B. Vacation Carry-Over - Highway/Cemetery

Seelig reported he talked with Highway Surveyor Robert Badore relative to the Board's question as to why four employees are each requesting to carrying over forty hours of vacation. One of the employees was out on workers compensation and did not use all his vacation; reasons for the other employees not using all their vacation were not given.

Bruno felt the Board should write to the Highway Surveyor stating it is fiscally responsible to take vacations within the year but should not shut the department down for that purpose. Garron agreed he was not looking to shut the department down. Schleiff had spoken with Badore who said carryovers have been done in years past with no problem. Bruno stated it creates an impact in that someone could leave and then be owed money for vacation time that is not in that budget. Bruno and Garron agreed vacation time should be taken with the fiscal year. Schleiff asked if it is part of the contract. Seelig said carryover is allowed with permission of the department head and the Board of Selectmen. Schleiff agreed that carrying over vacation should not be encouraged.

Moved by Bruno and seconded by Schleiff, Board unanimously approved the vacation carryover requests for the four Highway/Cemetery employees and instructed Seelig to write to the Highway Surveyor stating the Board asks he try to have vacation taken by employees within the fiscal year.

C. Use of Bunting - Democratic Town Committee

Moved by Bruno and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously granted a request from the Democratic Town Committee to use the Town's old patriotic bunting to decorate the Democratic Town Committee's float for the Town's 275th Anniversary Parade.

D. Use of Selectmen Meeting Room

The Board granted permission to the Zoning Board of Appeals to use the Selectmen Meeting Room to hold a public hearing on Monday, July 20th, at 7:00 p.m. relative to Blackledge Farm Petition #719

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Moved by Bruno and seconded by Garron, Board voted as follows to enter into Executive Session at 9:15 p.m. with Town Counsel to discuss litigation and with Board members only to discuss litigation:

John H. Bruno II	-	Yes
Troy E. Garron	-	Yes
Michael J. Schleiff	-	Yes

Bruno announced there would not be a statement at the end of the Executive Session and the Board would not reconvene in open session.

Moved by Schleiff and seconded by Garron, Board voted as follows to come of Executive Session at 10:30 p.m.:

John H. Bruno II	-	Yes
Troy E. Garron	-	Yes
Michael J. Schleiff	-	Yes

There being no further business, moved by Schleiff and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 p.m.

Michael J. Schleiff
Clerk