

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SELECTMEN MEETING
TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 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

The Agenda for Tuesday, August 4th, was unanimously approved without revision.

MINUTES

Moved by Garron and seconded by Bruno, Board approved the following Selectmen Minutes:

- Selectmen Meeting 05-05-09 - Regular Session
- Selectmen Meeting 05-05-09 - Executive Session
- Selectmen Meeting 05-11-09 - Regular Session
- Selectmen Meeting 05-12-09 - Regular Session

Selectman Michael Schleiff abstained from voting as he was not on the Board at that time.

Moved by Schleiff and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously approved the following Selectmen Minutes:

- Selectmen Meeting 05-19-09 - Regular Session
- Selectmen Meeting 06-09-09 - Regular Session
- Selectmen Meeting 06-09-09 - First Executive Session
- Selectmen Meeting 06-09-09 - Second Executive Session
- Selectmen Meeting 06-16-09 - Regular Session
- Selectmen Meeting 06-16-09 - Executive Session
- Selectmen Meeting 06-23-09 - Executive Session
- Selectmen Meeting 07-14-09 - Regular Session

The Board postponed considering the Minutes for 06-23-09 Regular Session until next week.

ABATEMENTS/BILLS/COMMITMENTS/WARRANTS

Moved by Schleiff and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously committed for collection Mobile Home Park License Fee #08 in the amount of \$5,160.00

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

Payroll Warrant	#10	\$178,527.76
Vendor Warrant	#11	\$252,806.06
Withholding Warrant	#12	\$ 58,649.86

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

Halifax Postmaster (stamps)	\$ 96.50
Gilman and Associates (legal services/Jul)	\$ 92.50
Community Newspaper (employment ad/Asst Town Acct) ...	\$196.91
W. B. Mason (office supplies)	\$ 39.00
FRCOG (conference/Seelig)	\$ 20.00

The Board acknowledged payment of the Selectmen Office Payroll for the period ending August 1, 2009 in the amount of \$6,149.39

FIRE CHIEF INTERVIEW

The Board met with the third and final candidate for the position of Halifax Fire Chief:

DAVID GOODFELLOW

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

Tell us about yourself and why you want to be the Fire Chief in Halifax.

I am the Deputy Fire Chief in the Town of Lakeville right now. I have been the Deputy Fire Chief for a little over four years. I have been a firefighter in Lakeville since 1992. I did a couple of years on the call department and went full-time in 1994. Prior to that, I was a paramedic with a private ambulance company that changed names several times. I came on board about the time it became AMR. I worked in Braintree, Quincy and Boston. I went to Northeastern University for paramedic school and continue to take courses. I did fire science work at Bristol County College in Fall River. My duties in Lakeville as far as Deputy Fire Chief go have prepared me well to assume

the position of Fire Chief. It is a very similar community in its composition, a combination department with full-timers and call firefighters.

Being an administrator as well as an operations member of the department is something that lends itself value in the situation that Halifax finds itself in where not only do you need someone with the skills and abilities in the administrative aspect but someone who can seamlessly assume an operations role if there were a deficiency in any given moment where the Chief has the ability to step in whether it be a fire situation or ambulance. I would be comfortable assuming a position rendering patient care, second calls, bringing apparatus to the scene, etc. I have enjoyed a great degree of latitude in my position as Deputy Fire Chief where the Chief has empowered me to do a great deal as far as operations - running the fire department on a day to day basis, participating in the budget creation and implementation, implementing his policies, grant writing, etc. I have substantial experience in grant writing and acquisition; fortunately many of which have been successful. I have been very active in community education. The Chief has allowed me to be the public face of the Fire Department. I go out and do all the public education for the Fire Department, be it visiting the schools, Council on Aging, fire prevention program, and health and safety mitigation programs for anyone who wants it. I also assist in emergency management. In Lakeville, the Chief is the Emergency Management Director; and, by default, I become the assistant. As Deputy Fire Chief I have assisted him in going forward with the CERT team in preparing our emergency dispensing sites. I have been appointed a Board of Health agent in so far as isolation and quarantine purposes. As there was no one on the Board of Health with any kind of medical experience, they look to me for direction as far as those kinds of things. I was able to take some of the burden off the Board of Health in that they did not have to send an agent to isolation and quarantine and for the ICS programs they were able to say they had a member of the Board of Health. I am very active in my position; kind of go everywhere.

In speaking with the different department heads, I found that Halifax is a similar community in that the community of public servants get together and get the job completed. It is a team effort, and I enjoy being a member of the team.

What is the size of Lakeville's Department?

Eight full-timers, Deputy Chief and Fire Chief. We have twelve call firefighters reduced from twenty-four because of budget cuts. The operation runs 24 hours, 7 days a week with two firefighters and one paramedic on duty at all times. We have not noticed a real problem with the cut back in call personnel. We have been able to handle the calls with full-timers and I have been active in handling calls and call-backs. I am very active in returning to calls after hours. Most of our business is EMS.

Is Lakeville ALS?

Yes. It is mandatory that one paramedic be on duty at all times on the on-duty personnel. I am usually the second call.

In Halifax, we consider the position of Fire Chief to be a community leader. If you were Fire Chief here, we would expect you to be also. How would you integrate yourself into the Halifax community?

One of my fortes is being involved in the community and getting out whenever I can to put forth a positive face of the department and the town. Customer oriented; we have customers, we have clients. They are not just visitors, they are citizens. We provide a service. I am very interested in making sure that people feel they are being provided a service. I like positive interaction with the public. I was happy to see there was no glass in the public receiving area in the fire station. Any opportunity I can have to get and interact with the public in a positive way - inspections, letting people know we are a resource to help them accomplish their goals whatever they may be.

How do you feel about showing up for some of our community events, such as Fourth of July, Holidays in Halifax, etc?

Absolutely. When you get David Goodfellow, you get all of David Goodfellow. I am very interested in participating in those activities. Maybe even spread myself too thin in Lakeville where I do the community education, an elected member of the School Committee, and Chairman of the Local Emergency Planning Committee. Any time we have an opportunity to go to an event and get a truck over there for the kids. We have a camp in Lakeville and there are often different events. I seek out the organizers to see if we can bring over some apparatus, etc. for show and tell. Any kind of community event, I am usually involved in some way.

Would you be able to make some what of a break with what you do in Lakeville if you were in Halifax?

Being Chief of the department is something I am very interested in doing, something I would do well at, and something my family is behind me. We have spoken about it at great length. I would definitely be able to make that break and would be looking to fill an emptiness in my new community. I would make this my home and would offer myself in any way I can.

You understand the Fire Chief position is 24/7 and there are times you will have to be here at night, weekends, etc. Do you foresee any difficulty with that?

Certainly not. That would not be a change in life style for me. I consider myself a very active 24/7 type of person now and I am a salaried employee now and there is no financial gain for doing extra but I consider it part of my

duty to respond to calls off hours and to offer my assistance. I do pro bono workshop in the City of Taunton. They often have difficulty getting the Fire Prevention Officer in the City of Taunton. Recently, for example, I was asked what my time was worth so they could put a dollar amount in a grant and I said that I consider it my duty and cannot put a number on it; this is part of my job. Returning calls or anything I am needed to do is part of my duty and would be as the Fire Chief.

How do you feel about the fifteen mile requirement?

I currently live 19.36 miles from the fire station. I would not be comfortable in this position if I did not live in the Town of Halifax. I would not be doing due diligence. I would not feel comfortable even living fifteen miles away. I would feel much more comfortable living in the community.

How does your family feel about that?

I have spoken at great length with my family. I have an eleven year old boy and eight year old girl. My wife is fully supportive of the move. Knowing what I know about Halifax, I think this is a community they would enjoy being in and I would be comfortable raising my family. My children are very active and I do not think they have yet developed life long friends.

We have a combination department. It is important to make that department work here. Under the last Chief, we went from four full-timers to eight and to 24/7 paramedic. Even with all of that, we do not see how Halifax can operate its fire department and ambulance calls with just full-timers. How would you integrate the call with the full-time and what would you do for recruitment, training and use of call firefighters?

Lakeville's department is very similar. Unfortunately, we did have a reduction in our call firefighter force and we are hoping it is temporary.

Why did a budget change bring about a reduction in the call force?

One of the most important things to the Lakeville Selectboard was maintaining the ambulance at the paramedic level. We received a 10% reduction in the Fiscal 2010 budget. With a badly aging fleet, the maintenance accounts could not be tapped too heavily. The expenses for paying for drills and the expenses for call-back - the Chief had to make the decision that the funds used for half the call department would be reallocated to maintain the eight full-time firefighters. Our newest firefighters were all paramedics and if you were to lay off full-timers we would be losing at least two paramedics. This was needed to make the budget work and retain all the full-timers.

We maintain about thirty call firefighters (did not finish question).

I think it is a very efficient way of being able to get a greater degree of protection without the enormous cost of full time people. But the nature of call firefighters has changed in recent history. It use to be we had people who were able to leave their jobs and come at a moment's notice. We have a lot of call firefighters now who are professional engineers, teachers, etc. and they cannot leave their jobs. It has presented a challenge where I believe you needed to have additional full-time staff but by no means eliminate your call department. It is nice to have a large enough group that you are always getting some people.

How would you use our call fire department here?

I would endeavor to train them to the same level as the full-timers so they would integrate seamlessly. Firefighting is firefighting. I would make sure they are trained in all aspects with the exception of ALS if they are not at that level. I see no difference operationally between call and full-time firefighters but you must have the initial response on hand which is why you have the full-time force and have supplemental help available when you need it.

How do you keep the call people sharp?

Interesting, active training where they feel they are involved in the planning. Participation would be mandatory. The more they participate, the better they become. The better they become, the more confident they are and the higher morale gets and the more active the call firefighters get. That relates to retention. They see themselves as members of the Fire Department - not call firefighters or full-time firefighters but members of the Halifax Fire Department who collectively work together to accomplish the mission.

How would recruit call firefighters?

I have not found it necessary to actively post. I maintain a file of interested applicants. When positions become available you make sure interested parties are notified when a position comes up. If there were to be a situation when a recruitment drive is necessary, keeping the public well informed that there are opportunities available and there is no second class status in the fire department because you are a call firefighter.

What is your philosophy and experience for hiring fire department personnel?

I have been on the hiring committee for the last five full-time firefighters which consists of a panel made up of the Chief, myself and two other area Fire Chiefs that interview applicants. Prior to becoming Deputy, I was the ambulance coordinator and was involved in hiring the full-time paramedics.

What do you look for when hiring someone for the fire service?

Someone who is enthusiastic in the position, who has the availability to provide the services necessary. Not looking for someone who comes to work eleven days a month. I try to look beyond the resume. I like to think of firefighting as not just a job with a paycheck but as a vocation. Are they passionate about what they are doing. You are going to be a part of someone's worst day. What type of person are you putting in that situation; what do they bring to the table; what will they offer in participating in a positive outcome. I look for enthusiasm and expertise. In a small fire department you have to have a greater ability to work independently than in a larger department. You do not have three other guys on the truck and an officer with you at all times. So to a greater degree, someone who is able to operate independently, think clearly and receive direction.

Have you had experience in discipline as Deputy Chief and what is your philosophy in handling discipline?

I have that experience. Discipline is pretty much handled by me. I consult with the Chief as to the situation. I do the fact finding and he has pretty much left me to my discretion for discipline because he has left me to the operations. I believe in progressive discipline. I believe in documentation. They hate my log book because I tell them the date and time I spoke with them and when I spoke with them again. I believe in counseling early on. It is far better to prevent a problem than deal with one after it occurs. I believe in listening carefully. Talking only gets you so far; listening gets you a lot further. I believe in allowing for a positive outcome from perhaps a negative event. You have to allow for redemption and to allow the counseling to take place and let someone know that a limit has been met or crossed and it is unacceptable. But, let's teach them the right way and then make sure they do.

On your site visit, tell us what you saw and what you think about the current Fire Department and how things might work better?

One of things that was enticing in applying for this position and knowing Chief Benjamino, there did not seem to be any significant degree of dysfunction as far as the department went. He was a very effective Chief. When he left, the position was left in capable hands. The information I received during the visit was forthcoming. The dialogue could have gone for hours on what was going well and addressing deficiencies. Once you are in a position, then you learn intricacies and nuances and you listen very carefully on what is going on and find out how my ideas can best affect a positive outcome.

Who did you speak with besides Acting Fire Chief Marty Bosworth?

There were two firefighters on duty. They were very busy. I got to speak briefly with them. Bosworth was very accommodating in giving me information about the apparatus. You have very nice apparatus. Benjamino was very active in ensuring the apparatus befits a high standard. We spoke briefly about budgets. Through your website, I followed the town meeting and how the budget was going as well as some discussion on call captains and their roles. I did not speak with any of the call captains. I spoke with the Police Chief for about forty-five minutes. He told me how this was a community-oriented atmosphere. That the Fire Chief was the leader of the Fire Department but everyone accomplishes the goal together. We talked about emergency management, my experience with that and the assistance I could give him. Talked about LEPC and how you are tied in with the Town of Plympton which has lent itself to some difficulties sometimes but how members of the LEPC are endeavoring to improve that. I gave him my insights on that. I spoke with the Superintendent of the Water Department about water issues and the Communications Center. I spoke with the Building Inspector. I came away with a good feeling. This not very different from where I am. We work very closely with everyone in Lakeville and we have to. You have to be willing to assist others.

With regard to your experience with grants, did you write them, what were the results, and how would you handle that here?

A large degree of the grant writing is my responsibility in my current position. It is a joint effort between myself and the Chief. Mostly where he is approving the material I put together. The preparation is my responsibility. Finding out what grants are out there you have to be continually searching.

How do you do that?

Through networking is one way. Making sure you maintain open lines of communications with federal and state agencies. We apply for the Assistance to Firefighter grants consistently. We did get an emergency vehicle exhaust system. We received a federal grant for upgrading of the SCBA equipment. Grants currently in the works are for an SCBA filling station and a pumper truck. The narrative takes the longest time. You get out there and take the on-line courses and any opportunity to take grant writing courses, learn the catch phrases and learn what the priority one projects are. You go and analyze the needs of the department and how they fit with specific grants. The SAFE grant through the state for fire safety education. Firemen's fund grants, etc. Just recently received a gift from Wal*Mart for a child safety seat program. A police officer and I are certified as child safety seat technicians. I am happy to help anyone who has to have a child safety seat put in.

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

What does the term fair, firm and consistent mean to you?

Lead by example. I would not ask anyone to do anything I would not do myself. Make sure people understand what is expected of them and they know how to do their job. Consistent - it is always the same for everyone. I will not say something is okay for one person and not okay for another person. Lead by example.

What would you do if you have two employees who have a problem with each other and may cause disruption?

You have to get everyone together and talk about it. We are professionals and must work out their differences. I would be instrumental in having them work them out. They have to get the issue out in the open. You may not like the person you are with but you have to understand you are a professional.

Have you ever had to terminate someone because of something like this?

No. I have not had to for people not being able to get along. I have had to because of other events. As far as not getting along, I had to sit down with people and have had positive results. I had a full-timer take exception to a call firefighter. There are no exemptions. We are professionals and have to work their way through it.

How do you deal with aggression or disrespect toward you?

Talk about it and let them understand that, in a fire department, there are times when we can all be involved and sometimes it has to come from the top.

Have you ever had to deal with irate citizens or a complaint against one of your members?

Yes. Fact finding goes into gear. Citizens know they are being heard. If they have an issue that is legitimate, this is an opportunity to look at what might have gone wrong and how to improve the service. Sometimes you will have someone who is just not happy. Let them vent and let them know they are being heard and you are doing everything you can to prevent the situation from reoccurring. Get back to them and let them know what you did about it.

What do you do to relax?

I enjoy my family. I am a member of the Masonic Lodge and involved with charitable events. I enjoy sports - hunting, fishing, etc. And I enjoy reading.

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

You are on the School Committee. How would they get along without you?

I have some very competent colleagues on the Committee. I spent two years as the Chairman and have since transferred it to another member and offered to help in any way I can. Also, we have recently elected another competent member. I would be leaving them in good hands. I will be taking a step back from the position no matter whether I am hired here or not because of budget considerations with the fire department and having to focus there.

How far are you from here?

19.36 miles. About 20 to 25 minutes. But, again, I would not consider the position without moving. I need to be here to fully execute my duties.

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

You are involved with CERT in Lakeville. Would you be interested in being involved in Halifax.

Yes. I received that letter from the Health Agent. The various things on the list we would have to inspect together - such as food establishments, etc. I do my inspections now with the Building Inspector. Whenever the Health Agent has an issue, we inspect together. If I see something that could be an issue, I let the departments know. Also worked closely with other departments.

I am very interested in CERT because I am interested emergency services and being involved. If something happens, we have to be self sufficient and I would endeavor to continue in that.

You were in the National Guard for ten years. What did you do?

I was a section chief. Each unit is broken down into battalions and assigned medical staffing. Those medics report to the battalion level section comprised of enlisted men, nurses, doctors and physician assistants. It is a combat armed unit and first level of evacuation. The medical staff officers are officers because they are doctors. The command positions were enlisted men. It was my job to give the medics their orders, make sure they were supplied, keep the communication lines open and make sure ready to receive casualties.

Was this a National Guard assignment of two weeks drill?

Fortunately, while I was in, it was peacetime and my experience was one weekend a month making sure we were ready and trained. Every time we met, we trained for a particular block of time on site improvement.

What would be your philosophy here or what would you implement to ensure training is done?

Training on a daily basis. It is important to involve all members in the training, that it is relevant. In Lakeville, we train all the time. Try to keep a set schedule.

Do you have call officers?

They are part of the chain of command. We have a Call Captain with eleven firefighters under them. We have regularly scheduled training and post the schedule. Everyone is involved in the development of the schedule. They are encouraged to develop ideas and come to me to incorporate them into training. We have set times when we anticipate training and make them as open as we can and get participation.

At this point, Bruno asked Goodfellow if he had anything he would like to say. Goodfellow said he tries to do his very best in everything he does which has given him a great deal of experience. To get that educational opportunity; always learning from the newest member to a Fire Chief ready to retire. Listening gets you further than talking. There always has to be a time to step back and think outside the box. He does not have tunnel vision. He considers the fire service more than a job and feels rewarded to participate in it. He enjoys it a great deal and enjoys the people he works with and for. When you have David Goodfellow, you have all of him.

RECESS

GENERAL MAIL/BUSINESS

A. Crosswalk Safety

Seelig reported the Highway Surveyor received donations to pay for signs which have been put up at crosswalks in several locations. The cones have been replaced by the signs which are placed in the middle of the street at the crosswalk. Bruno expressed concern that the signage would not hold up during the winter or that someone will run over the sign.

Research continues on other methods to alert motorists to stop when a pedestrian is crossing, including stop lights and “in the road” warning lights. Any such devices would have to be approved by Mass Highway since Plymouth Street is a State road. OCPC is gathering existing data on various locations for crosswalks and signal lights.

Schleiff stated the Town should continually pursue safety. He noted that this past weekend the Police Department set up a pedestrian crosswalk trap using a police officer in plain clothes.

The Board acknowledged a letter from Acting Fire Chief Henry Bosworth in which he (a) outlines a number of problem areas, (b) suggests a future meeting be held with the Fire Chief, Police Chief and Highway Surveyor to discuss the issue and (c) recommends forming a coalition to address the problem areas, install state-of-the-art crosswalk protection devices, eliminate passing zones in and adjacent to all crosswalks in town, and educate the driving public regarding crosswalk safety.

The Selectmen scheduled this meeting for September 8th at 7:45 p.m. Seelig will call Mass Highway and get the exact regulations relative to passing zones and signaling devices.

B. Finance Committee Vacancies

The Board acknowledged notification that Finance Committee member Greg Tilley will be moving out of town the end of the month at which time there will be three vacancies on this Committee. Anyone interested should contact the Selectmen’s Office.

C. Monponsett Pond Diversion

Seelig reported that, as has been the case in past years, Brockton has been diverting water downstream and to Silver Lake to reduce the height of Monponsett Pond because of the heavy rains. As the Board of Selectmen has received numerous complaints in past years of flooding basements from abutters to the Pond when the water level of the Pond is too high, the Board has been in approval of this action. However, because of the algae problem in the west lake, diversion has caused the algae to move into the east lake. Brockton will keep the sluice gate down so water will flow freely from the west lake into the Snake River but will cease diverting toward the east lake until the algae problem has been resolved.

FIRE CHIEF SEARCH

The Selectmen wanted an opportunity to review the interviews of all three candidates, noting it will not be an easy decision. The search has been narrowed

down to three outstanding candidates, each of which bring different strengths and any one of which would make a good Fire Chief. The question is which candidate best fits the needs of Halifax.

The Board agreed to postpone a decision until next week and will take up the discussion at 8:00 p.m.

There being no further business, moved by Garron and seconded by Schleiff, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Michael J. Schleiff
Clerk

/bfs