

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
OCTOBER 23, 2013
REGULAR MEETING

Members Present: Nelson Almeida, Gary Sagar, Michael Brady,
Robert McLintock, David Parker

Acting Town Administrator: Bruce Alexander

Chairman Almeida called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and moment of silence.

He announced that in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 20 anybody taping the meeting must notify the Chairman.

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion and Vote on Procedures for Hiring an Interim Town Administrator and Permanent Town Administrator

1. Discussion with Former Town Administrator William Keegan

Mr. Sagar noted that Mr. Keegan served in Seekonk from February 1997 to May 2002. He is a Seekonk resident. The Town has had eight town administrators in eleven years.

Mr. Keegan stated there isn't any stability in the Board of Selectmen in Seekonk.

He said what is lacking here is a cohesive approach to what they really want as a town. Board members should define what they really want. He didn't know what kind of a leader Mrs. Nolan was or the other town administrators. They need a town administrator that will provide leadership and guidance and help develop policy. Board members should talk to department heads.

In his position in Dedham, MA, he has some board members he speaks to daily and others twice a month. The ones on a daily basis are very helpful. They also share the same view as the Board. There should be communication with the Board. He asked his Board about the five most important things they wanted to achieve this year and the next. Usually, there are two or three issues. This is done yearly on the first meeting of the fiscal year. They sit down and set goals.

He doesn't spend too much time in Seekonk. He loves living here. It is difficult for him to think about what is wrong with this town. The Town has a terrific finance director in Bruce Alexander.

The Board has to be careful not to create issues.

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He said the Board should reach out to the community - have a focus group.

Mr. Keegan said that he has worked with Alan Gould. His firm has done a great job.

He suggested the Board should talk to department heads, police chief, fire chief and find out what they want to see in a town administrator. Salary and range is all over the board - \$120,000 to \$130,000 range for a community the size of Seekonk.

He noted that candidates will look at eight town administrators in a short amount of time.

Mr. Brady agreed with Mr. Keegan. Mr. Brady said the town administrator has to deal with residents, employees and elected officials. Two of those have competing interests. In addition, they have to multi-task. It can be overwhelming.

Mr. Parker agreed.

Mr. McLintock asked about Dedham.

Mr. Keegan said Dedham is in the process of changing the Charter. The town manager will become the town administrator. There seems to be a fair amount of support to do those things.

Mr. McLintock asked how he felt about department heads being unionized.

Mr. Keegan said unions should not be an issue if there is a good relationship with department heads.

He said the Board handles the politics and the town administrator handles operations.

A successful town administrator will have a successful relationship with everybody.

Mr. Sagar asked if he had issues with the Town Charter in Seekonk.

Mr. Keegan said to strengthen the Charter to create that central authority of appointment would be beneficial to the town manager. It has to be clear as to who hires.

Mr. Sagar said Assessors, Planning, and Health choose their own employees without input from the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator. Once they become part of the union, they become involved with Board and Town Administrator.

Mr. Keegan said it is common. He will talk about that at a committee meeting at the MMA. The manager position has to be strengthened.

If he was going to hire a person for that office, he would include a member of that Board on the selection process.

Mr. Sagar asked about central authority for building maintenance.

Mr. Keegan said he talked to the school superintendent less than two years ago and director of finance and said there should be one person that is an expert. There is a separate budget called "Facilities Maintenance." It really works.

Mr. McLintock said that Mr. Keegan was in Seekonk before the Charter was changed. Some people feel when that was done a lot of responsibility for the Town, in general, was taken away from Board of Selectmen. People feel they do not have to report to the Board of Selectmen or Town Administrator.

He added that they created a number of kingdoms in this building (Town Hall).

Mr. Keegan said he cannot participate in the selection process.

He urged to get input from the community.

Mr. Sagar asked if he would support some sort of citizen selection committee.

Mr. Keegan said he would. The consultant can advise the Board.

He added that the initial process should include School Committee members, Finance Committee members and the general public.

Mr. McLintock noted they tried it a number of times and it failed, which says they are not doing a very good job.

Mr. Keegan said the candidate presented is only as good as how the Board of Selectmen makes that person look.

2. Discussion with Alan Gould, Vice President Operations Manager from Municipal Resources

Mr. Sagar said he was impressed with Mr. Gould's presentation. He felt the Board would be best served with him as a consultant and have a team member serve as an interim and provide the Board with feedback. He would support Mr. Gould's proposal.

Mr. Brady agreed. As a previous member of the Board of Selectmen, he saw one committee by a professional company and one a citizens' group. He would prefer the company. He was impressed by the proposal. He also favored the interim town administrator.

Mr. Parker totally agreed. The consultant firm is the best way to go.

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The Board would contract to put in an interim administrator. He asked if somebody from the firm would act as a go between with the Board.

Mr. Gould said they would do team building with the Board and employees. An interim would be his employee providing him with information. He would review the resumes and help to develop the essays. The Board would get feedback from the interim and also from him.

He could come down on a couple of occasions and facilitate a discussion on what was happening.

Mr. Gould advised he would have an interim next week. He had two people in mind. It would be two independent contracts – one for interim and one for the recruitment process. They have to work out price for the interim. The interim would work Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, staying in town for two nights.

Mr. Gould noted that his firm makes very little on an interim; most of it goes to the employee.

Mr. Alexander advised there is money in the salary line item for the town administrator. He could do a year-end transfer after May 15th.

A motion was made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Sagar, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To direct the Acting Town Administrator to actively seek from Municipal Resources a price to provide an Interim Town Administrator three days a week and to provide a search process for a new Town Administrator; to present three candidates to the Board for consideration.

The vote: Mr. Parker – Aye; Mr. Sagar – Aye; Mr. Brady – Aye; Mr. McLintock – Aye; Chairman Almeida – Aye.

Prior to the vote, Mr. Gould stated it would be a different price for community involvement.

Mr. Parker said his motion does not include citizen involvement.

Mr. Brady would like to see them talk to other boards, department heads and employees.

Mr. Gould said the Board could identify who they might be.

Mr. Brady did not want to use wages for expenses.

Mr. Alexander will prepare a reserve advisory. The Finance Committee will meet on November 5, 2013. He has a lien item for contracted services.

This will be an agenda item for next week.

Chairman Almeida noted the Town is in the process of building three buildings. They need an administrator who is familiar with purchasing, RFPs, and the building process. There have been a lot of hurdles with these projects.

Mr. Alexander advised that staff in Attleboro have offered to help.

Mr. Gould advised that the interim he has in mind is very knowledgeable.

Mr. McLintock noted that the senior center and Banna Fire Station have OMBs.

B. Continued Discussion on Draft Warrant for November 18, 2013 Town Meeting

1. Accept and Sign Warrant

Mr. Sagar wanted to amend Article #7 - \$500,000 to MCIC and \$500,000 to regular stabilization. He felt the amount should be doubled to \$1M at Town Meeting into stabilization. That would leave a \$507,206 free cash balance.

He talked to Mr. Alexander who said he wasn't opposed to it.

Mr. Parker said that free cash and stabilization are two different accounts but are both savings accounts.

Mr. McLintock felt the bonding company did recommend it.

Mr. Parker would not oppose putting it on.

A motion was made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Brady, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To include Article 1 (report of town officers or committees) on the warrant for the November 18, 2013 Town Meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Brady, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To include Article 2 (\$35,000 rental of tub grinder & screener) on the warrant for the November 18, 2013 Town Meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Sagar, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To include Article 3 (demotion of police association building) on the warrant for the November 18, 2013 Town Meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Brady, and it was unanimously

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VOTED: To include Article 4 (Schools – appropriation change to \$21,568,942) on the warrant for the November 18, 2013 Town Meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Brady, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To include Article 5 (Zoning Bylaws) on the warrant for the November 18, 2013 Town Meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Sagar, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To include Article 6 (\$500,000 transfer from general fund free cash to MCIC stabilization fund) on the warrant for the November 18, 2013 Town Meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Sagar, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To include Article 7, as amended (\$1M transfer from general fund free cash to stabilization fund) on the warrant for the November 18, 2013 Town Meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Brady, seconded by Mr. Sagar, and it was

VOTED: 4 Ayes; 1 Abstention; To include Article 8 (\$19,941 increase) on the warrant for the November 18, 2013 Town Meeting.

The vote: Mr. Brady – Aye; Mr. Sagar – Aye; Mr. McLintock – Aye; Chairman Almeida – Aye; Mr. Parker – Abstained.

A motion was made by Mr. Brady, seconded by Mr. Sagar, and it was

VOTED: 4 Ayes; 1 Abstention; To include Article 9 (increase salary of Town Clerk) on the warrant for the November 18, 2013 Town Meeting.

The vote: Mr. Brady – Aye; Mr. Sagar – Aye; Mr. McLintock – Aye; Chairman Almeida – Aye; Mr. Parker – Abstained.

A motion was made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Brady, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To include Article 10 (amend Bylaws to delete Category 3) on the warrant for the November 18, 2013 Town Meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Brady, seconded by Mr. Parker, and it was unanimously

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VOTED: That the Board of Selectmen has no position on Articles 11, 12, and 13 (voter petition).

A motion was made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Brady, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To include Article 14 (\$20,000 for town administrator search) on the warrant for the November 18, 2013 Town Meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Sagar, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To include Article 15 (access easement – Pine Street) on the warrant for the November 18, 2013 Town Meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Brady, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To include Article 16, as amended (\$110,000 –traffic control device) on the warrant for the November 18, 2013 Town Meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Brady, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve and sign the warrant for the November 18, 2013 Town Meeting.

COMMUNITY SPEAKS (FIRST SESSION)

None.

OTHER BUSINESS

Discuss Other Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chairman 48 Hours Before the Meeting

1. Resolution of Open Meeting Law Complaint Filed by Lauren Walsh

Mr. Sagar asked if Ms. Walsh was informed she was on the agenda this evening.

Mr. Brady said he got an e mail from the complainant that said she got the response from the Atty. General's office.

Chairman Almeida read the response. This concerned the Animal Shelter Building Committee meeting minutes.

A motion was made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Brady, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To authorize town counsel to response to the complaint as per the law.

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Chairman Almeida noted that about \$4,5000 was spent to defend these charges.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Alexander advised that the deadline for submitting applications for the Building Commissioner position was today. People who looked at the resumes were not impressed. He asked the Southeastern Mass. Building Officials to post on their website.

Also, Communications Director will be advertised on the Public Safety Communications Officers of Mass. website.

The part time position in the Building Department has not been advertised.

Mr. Sagar felt the entire Building Department has to be looked at and reallocated some resources.

Mr. Alexander felt the new Building Commissioner, when hired, should be involved.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN LIAISON REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Mr. Sagar asked for an update on the situation with the Building Department and the police investigation.

He would like to talk about the budget priority going forward.

He advised the foundation will be poured for the Banna Fire Station.

He stated that town counsel Ilana Quirk will come down to do a defendable decision seminar. It will be scheduled at a time when the entire Board is available.

Mr. Sagar asked how many snow plow vendors.

Mr. Alexander said maybe six.

Mr. Brady advised that Mr. McLintock and he met with members of the Veterans Memorial Committee and the Library Board of Trustees. They met individually with each committee and then with both committees together. Communication is on going.

Mr. McLintock said there are issues associated with the land transfer.

Mr. Parker announced that tickets are still available for the Pasta Night on Thursday, October 24, 2013 at the high school to benefit residents who needs assistance with fuel and electric.

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Chairman Almeida noted that a resident had spent a lot of time to come with an article to amend or fix the sign bylaw.

Mr. Sagar said the Planning Board is working on a zoning rewrite. The Chairman of the Planning Board would have more information.

COMMUNITY SPEAKS (SECOND SESSION)

None.

A motion was made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Sagar, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn at 7:41 p.m.

The vote: Mr. Parker – Aye; Mr. Sagar – Aye; Mr. Brady – Aye; Mr. McLintock – Aye; Chairman Almeida – Aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Brady, Clerk

Patricia Gamer, Secretary