

Westborough Board of Selectmen

Town Manager Second Interview Minutes

April 2, 2009

6:30 p.m. – 8:03 p.m.

Members Present: Chairman Thompson, Vice Chairman Emery, Selectmen Goldblatt, Dodd and Jane´

Also, Present: Henry Danis, Town Manager; Maryanne Bilodeau, Assistant Town Manager; Town Counsel Gregory B. Franks

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Thompson reiterated the Town Manager Interview format that was discussed and voted at their meeting of March 10, 2009

Introductory:

James J. Malloy, Town Manger, Town of Sturbridge

Mr. Malloy said that he was impressed with the Board of Selectmen with having the confidence in their department heads to have been appointed to the Town Manager Search Committee. He said that at an earlier meeting Chairman Thompson asked him the following question “How he would handle an issue that could become controversial and would be related to a Department Head”. Mr. Malloy clarified by saying that his previous answer was based on “how” he would respond to a situation like that. Mr. Malloy strongly reiterated his interest in the Town Manager’s position.

Board of Selectmen Questions:

The Board of Selectmen welcomed Mr. Malloy and each of the Selectmen asked Mr. Malloy the following questions:

Vice Chairman Emery asked Mr. Malloy the following questions:

What would be his approach to the residency requirement if he were hired as Town Manager and must move to Westborough or a contiguous town within the first year of employment?

Mr. Malloy said that he his concern is coordinating the timing of selling his home in Sturbridge and obtaining a home in Westborough that he would be able to afford to live in. In addition, he would need to wait for his son to finish High School. He strongly reiterated that his priority would be to move into Westborough not to an adjacent town.

How many hours does he normally work?

Mr. Malloy said that his work hours vary constantly.

How accurate has his 5 year financial planning been in the Town of Sturbridge?

Mr. Malloy said in years 1, 2, and 3 he was very accurate on year 4 it wobbled a bit and year 5 was not accurate at all because of unforeseen expenses.

Selectman Dodd asked Mr. Malloy the following questions:

What is his general feeling on having a dual tax rate since Westborough has always had a single tax rate.

Mr. Malloy said that his feeling on a dual tax rate is based on whatever is best for the Town.

What experiences and tactics would he apply in working with the School Department and School Committee here in Town?

Mr. Malloy said that he would continually collaborate with the School Superintendent and School Committee and work with them up front if there are any issues to be resolved.

What is his feeling in the protection and the preservation of open space?

Mr. Malloy said that he is very open to any preservation protection suggestions.

What other capital improvements has he worked on other than in Sturbridge?

Mr. Malloy said that he has had opportunities to work and or manage the following capital projects:

County Law Enforcement Center in Colorado

Court House in Colorado

Court House in New York

Social Service Building in Colorado

Water and Sewer Plant in New York

New Town Hall in Sturbridge

Selectman Jane' asked Mr. Malloy the following questions:

If he were offered the Town Manager's job for Westborough would he be willing to make a long-term commitment of more than 5 years?

Mr. Malloy said that he has every intention to commit himself as the Town Manager for more than 5 years.

Has he ever supported a Proposition 2½ Override in the Town of Sturbridge?

Mr. Malloy said that he has never supported a Proposition 2½ Override in the Town of Sturbridge.

Would he ever consider a Proposition 2½ Override in the Town of Westborough?

Mr. Malloy said that he would if it was the very last option.

In his role as leader how would he initiate the collaboration with the School Superintendent?

Mr. Malloy said that he would be the one to call the Superintendent and continue calling often to touch base.

Selectman Goldblatt asked Mr. Malloy the following questions:

If he were hired as the Town Manager how would he spend the first couple of months here?

Mr. Malloy said that he would start some planning and get himself familiarized with how the offices/departments run and get to know the staff.

How would he bring the Department Heads into the process that he would place forward?

Mr. Malloy said that he would first take a look at the Department Heads budgets and then spend time reviewing and discuss their budgets with them to familiarize himself of their necessities.

What was his part in the Gateway Project?

Mr. Malloy said that his role on the Gateway project was from writing the grant, to getting the money, to executing and overseeing the project.

Chairman Thompson asked Mr. Malloy the following questions:

What two things he would like to improve himself on as a Town Manager?

Mr. Malloy said that he believes that he needs more patience in dealing with state agencies and in the state procurement process which is constantly changing.

Does the Town of Sturbridge have a Town Employee Recognition Program?

Mr. Malloy said that the Town of Sturbridge does not have a town employee recognition program.

What type of investigation did he use to determine the tax rate change in the Town of Sturbridge?

Mr. Malloy said that he spoke with some of the vacating vendors and found out that all of them were closing because they converted to on-line businesses, or they had life altering changes that caused them to close their business. Mr. Malloy said that he believes that the businesses did not close or move out because of Sturbridge's tax rate change.

What are the municipal challenges in Sturbridge that he has encountered in reference to the daytime population being 20,000 and the night time population being 10,000?

Mr. Malloy said that the municipal challenge he has encountered is trying to balance the level of town services with the tax base population.

What is the process that he would go through to better understand Westborough's process of doing things verses Sturbridge's process?

Mr. Malloy said that he would ask "why" a lot to better understand the process and then, if possible make suggestions.

Follow-Up Questions:

Selectman Dodd asked Mr. Malloy the following Follow-up Question:

What are some of his ideas that he might bring to Westborough in regards to reducing fixed and energy costs.

Mr. Malloy said that he would take advantage of any energy and fixed costs programs available to the Towns.

Selectman Goldblatt asked Mr. Malloy the following Follow-up Questions:

What is the percentage of the business tax rate in the Town of Sturbridge?

Mr. Malloy said that the business tax rate currently is at 19%.

How does he feel knowing that Sturbridge's budget is approximately 29 million and Westborough's budget is approximately 80 million?

Mr. Malloy said that he does not have any concerns with that.

Vice Chairman Emery asked Mr. Malloy the following Follow-up Question:

Vice Chairman Emery asked Mr. Malloy what professional organizations/programs he would like to continue with.

Mr. Malloy said that he is a member of the following organizations and would like to continue with them because he feels that all of these organizations benefit the community and the Town Manager:

- ICMA-International City Managers Association
 - MMMA-Massachusetts Municipal Managers Association- currently the first Vice President
 - MMA-Massachusetts Municipal Association Board of Directors
- *Executive Committee and the Local Government Advisory Committee

Selectman Jane' asked Mr. Malloy the following Follow-up Questions:

Has he explored the GIC Program (the State's Health Care System) for the Town of Sturbridge and would he consider the GIC for Westborough?

Mr. Malloy said that he has explored the GIC and has come to the conclusion that it would cost more money than what their current program costs. The program is not beneficial for communities that contribute less than 50%. The program benefits communities that contribute 90% and up.

Who does the collective bargaining negotiations?

Mr. Malloy said that he is the only person who negotiates with the unions.

Have there ever been any cases that have gone to mediation or arbitration?

Mr. Malloy said that the Town of Sturbridge has had two Police Union and two School Teacher's contract mediations.

How much value does he assign his relationship with the Town of Sturbridge's Finance Committee?

Mr. Malloy said that he has a lot of trust and a very good relationship with the Finance Committee.

***The Board took a short break and reconvened at 7:30 p.m.**

Public Questions:

Brigitte Casemyr, Finance Committee Member, asked Mr. Malloy if he has had any experience or thoughts about looking into performance base pay raises for non-union and union employees.

Mr. Malloy said that it is very difficult and near impossible to negotiate anything other than automatic pay increases for unions. The Town of Sturbridge has in place a merit base pay system for non-union employees only. In this system non-union employees do not receive a step increase unless they have received a positive evaluation.

Len Mead, 130 Milk Street, asked Mr. Malloy if he would have a guess as to how much higher taxes are in the state average verses in Westborough.

Mr. Malloy said that he believes that the average state taxes for Westborough is about \$4,500.

Mr. Mead asked Mr. Malloy, in light of that, why he thinks that is the case in Westborough.

Mr. Malloy said that he believes it is like that in Westborough because the EQV is very high and the local aid amount that is received is very low which in turn drives up the community's local taxes.

Mr. Mead asked Mr. Malloy what he would do to possibly lower the property tax in Westborough.

Mr. Malloy said it would be a very difficult thing for one person to do; however, looking at all of the town's costs including fixed and insurance costs that would not effect local services is where he would look to see if there could be any savings. The ultimate decision to have these savings implemented, if any, would be the Board of Selectmen and by Town Meeting vote, not by the Town Manager.

Joe Harrington, Town Moderator, asked Mr. Malloy what is the nature and the sort of communication, if any, between him and Sturbridge's Town Moderator prior to the warrant finalization and at the start of the Town Meeting.

Mr. Malloy said that he drafts the warrants and then it goes to Town Counsel. Then it gets forwarded to the Town Moderator. He and the Town Moderator have always had a very good relationship and he welcomes the Moderator's suggestions which have worked very well.

Nidia Ruberti, Administrative Assistant, asked Mr. Malloy if he would consider having staff meetings (his office staff) to facilitate communication and in addition to that also consider having department head and financial team meetings.

Mr. Malloy said that he has an open door policy and encourages everyone to come and speak with him for anything. He said that he currently has weekly meetings with his office staff and Department Heads and hopes to continue with that practice to ensure that communication is always flowing.

Ms. Ruberti asked Mr. Malloy if he would come out of his office to meet people instead of waiting for people to come to him.

Mr. Malloy said that he currently does and will come out of his office from time to time to converse with people.

Ms. Ruberti asked Mr. Malloy if he considers family being an important part of life to him and town employees.

Mr. Malloy said that he considers families being an important part of his life and also for town employees.

Email Questions:

Chairman Thompson asked Mr. Malloy what kind of process he would use to attract and select the best volunteer candidates to the Town's committees.

Mr. Malloy said that he created a program where each Committee Chairman including the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen meet with potential candidates and explain what each committee, board or commission's role and responsibility is. He said that this process takes 14 days to complete and then after the process is completed, they encourage the potential volunteers to apply in the area of their interest. Mr. Malloy said that he hopes to bring this process to Westborough if there is not a process implemented already.

Chairman Thompson asked Mr. Malloy if the committees in Sturbridge have term limits.

Mr. Malloy said that the committees in Sturbridge do not have term limits.

Vice Chairman Emery asked Mr. Malloy if he ever lead or participated in business initiatives?

Mr. Malloy said that he believes that municipal government operates in a very transparent world and that the Town of Sturbridge utilizes their web site as much as possible to inform the residents and businesses of anything that the Town is involved in or offers and also places all of their Department Head and Committee Meetings on-line.

Selectman Jane' asked Mr. Malloy what has been the largest public construction he has overseen.

Mr. Malloy said that the largest public construction he has overseen is the Town of Sturbridge's Wastewater Treatment Plant project.

Selectman Jane' asked Mr. Malloy for the dollar amount of the Wastewater Treatment Plant project in Sturbridge.

Mr. Malloy said that it is a 14 million dollar project.

Follow-Up Questions:

Selectman Dodd asked Mr. Malloy what are his reasons drew him to Westborough.

Mr. Malloy said that the reasons that drew him to Westborough are the following:

- bigger community
- different issues
- larger budget
- new issues
- did not have to place him in the position that his wife would need to change jobs
- large commercial tax base
- attractive Town

Chairman Thompson asked Mr. Malloy what is the largest reduction in force that he has managed in Sturbridge.

Mr. Malloy said that there has never been a reduction in Sturbridge.

Chairman Thompson asked Mr. Malloy from a leadership position how would he react if a Board of Selectmen member approached him and requested that he not accept his raise because of the faltering economy.

Mr. Malloy said that he would definitely give up his raise or would have voluntarily done so in order to help the Town's services and to deter lay-offs.

Closing Remarks:

Mr. Malloy reiterated his strong interest in the Town Manager's job opportunity and said that he is very impressed with the Town Manager's Search Committee members and strongly believes that this is a great career move.

Adjourn Open Session

Selectman Goldblatt moved to adjourn the Board of Selectmen meeting at 8:03 Selectman Dodd seconded. 5-0

Submitted by Nidia L. Ruberti

Chairman George Thompson Vice Chairman Leigh Emery Selectman Lydia Goldblatt

Selectman Timothy A. Dodd

Selectman Rod Jané