

Members present: Kevin M. McCormick Christopher A. Rucho
John W. Hadley Siobhan M. Bohnson

Mr. McCormick convened the special meeting at 7:00 p.m., which is being held to conduct interviews for the interim Town Administrator position.

James Purcell, Candidate for Interim Town Administrator

James Purcell, Mendon, Massachusetts, joined the Board. He just completed his 40th year of public service, worked in various capacities since 1975. Started with CMRPC, then became the Town of Oxford's first full-time planning director. He then worked as a shared Town Administrator for Mendon, Upton and Millville, and went on to become the Town Administrator for the Town of Ashland. For family reasons he stopped aside from municipal work and did 8 years as the County Manager. After 8 years his children were old enough for him to go back into the municipal field. He was the Town Administrator in Leicester for 8 years and 8 years as the Town Manager in Norton. Family health issues caused him to retire at 57, three years ago. The outcome of that has come out very well. Since then he has been an Associate of the Collins Center for Public Management at UMass Boston, has a small consulting business and did interim assignments Town Administrator assignments in the Towns of North Andover, Sherborn, Ashland, Carver and is finishing up on Friday in Swansea.

Ms. Bohnson: can you tell me why you are interested in the Town of West Boylston's position.

Mr. Purcell likes the geography. One of the benefits is getting out and about to different parts of the state. He was born and raised in Worcester, lived in Oxford for 20+ years and likes West Boylston.

Mr. Rucho: what do you feel the role of an interim Town Administrator is. What should you be doing day to day and how long do you think you will need to be in town.

Mr. Purcell, an interim has to be fast on their feet. You have to adapt to things. There are not a lot of things I have not seen. An interim Town Administrator has to be able to interact with bureaucracy, gain their trust, and let them know that your mission is to help them succeed. He would have one on one meetings with the Board of Selectmen and department heads. He has a question type format. During the time he is here he would like to know what kinds of personnel issues there are. Are there reviews that need to be done, or appointments that need to be done. He catalogues those things in those meetings. He does the same thing with procurement issues. Do you have any expiring contracts for consumables and any other issues that are on the table for them. The Board of Selectmen sets goals and objectives every year and continuing those is an important task as well. As far as how long, he has worked out a game plan. You have a long application period, during that time you need to organize the Screening Committee. There is a lot that you can do between now and June 18th, most important is putting together the ideal candidate profile. The Special Act, job description and bylaws are well chronicled. What are you looking for in the ideal candidate. The Screening Committee can be having meetings with the Board of Selectmen, School Committee and Water Company. With an election coming up, you will have at least one new person and that person has a stake. It is ideal to come up with the candidate profile. He thinks if the Screening Committee gets off to a good pace he thinks we could make an offer by the second week in August, give a 30-45 notice and the incoming Town Administrator has to be involved with the special town meeting, followed by helping with the re-cap

and making sure the tax rate is set. You have to start work on the budget parameter for FY17. He could help with certain aspects of the candidate search. He has done that before. He thinks the level of effort with the expertise of the person to his right and from what he is told, pretty competent department heads, he thinks three days a week, 24 hours, 20 weeks. He would give the town at least 500 hours. In Carver's case the search got prolonged and worked to December of 2013, amended the contract to pay him minimum wage as he was coming up on his earning cap, because he needed to hand the thing off to the Town Administrator. He has earning caps and he would not leave the town hanging.

Mr. Hadley – in the short period of time you will be working, we have some projects going on in town. Is that something in the past you have gotten involved with?

Mr. Purcell. Nothing will slide I guarantee you that. I have done this on a full-time basis for several years. I invite the Board of Selectmen to call where I worked. I assured Swansea, where I will finish up tomorrow, that nothing would fall through the cracks.

Mr. Hadley – with town meeting, have you gone representing that side of it?

Mr. Purcell. Probably 100. As an interim I have had full administrative responsibility for two annuals and three specials. I set up Swansea's annual and I presented the budget and finished up the capital plan for Swansea.

Ms. Bohnson. Where does the town fit in? You have a consulting business and the Collins Center. How do we fit in?

Mr. Purcell. You would be my priority. Swansea, I am finishing up. Once you are a client, you are a client for life. Anything after we have separated from service, I am there for you at no charge. Consulting is fun, not at all lucrative. I am part of a team. It is a company called Business Development Strategies, averages 4-5 hours per week, it is not an issue at all. The 24 hours is on premises weekly. You provide an I-phone, or not. He will email responses and take every call all is off the books.

Ms. Bohnson. What kind of schedule would you physically be in this building?

Mr. Purcell. I would adapt to the schedule and culture.

Mr. McCormick. How would you characterize your management style?

Mr. Purcell. Trustworthy, direct, truly collaborative. He read a portion of an article his wife told him to read because he is not good at self promotion. It was written about him when he left Norton. It comments on there are many different types of Town Managers, some are brash, others are the behind the scenes, then there is the Purcell Style. Jim has been a strong leader and makes those around him better, rules with a velvet glove, not an iron fist although when necessary he was as tough as nails. He has inspired loyalty and trust from his employees.

Mr. Rucho. Over all the years you have been doing this, has there been a mistake you made in the past?

Mr. Purcell. It turned out great. I was the Town Administrator in Leicester. Leicester and perhaps West Boylston did joint purchasing with the City of Worcester Purchasing Department and #2 fuel oil was part of it. Leicester didn't have gas, we were oil dependent. Each year we put in our quantities and the bid would get done. Leicester was not the only one. We road the Worcester contract instead of having our own and in 1999 it was Peterson Oil, there was a global oil shock and they were looking to get out from under fixed pricing and they found several of us in the joint purchase group who had not executed contracts. It was the month of March, I owned up to it. Somebody said there was a damaging article about him and we were without a contract and it turned into a positive about how nice it was to have somebody who didn't make excuses and owned up to their mistake. I have never missed a deadline on anything since then. It was the month of March we just topped off our tanks.

Ms. Bohnson. You said you retired to deal with family health issues, have you thought about going back full time?

Mr. Purcell. The home health issue changed. When I decided to retire I was averaging 85 to 105 night meetings a year. When you come home and a family member is in respiratory distress you make a choice. I take as much of the load off as I can around the house. I would not, enjoying life too much right now.

Ms. Bohnson. Do you know any of the hot topics in the Town of West Boylston? If you do, can you give me the top one or two you find interesting.

Ms. Purcell. I love public works construction. You have a lot happening and you would like more to happen over at Goodale Street. I love that stuff. When you get to see your efforts. You have some sort of a management study on the warrant for the DPW. I think that is something I could probably be helpful with.

Mr. Rucho. Have you had much dealing with 40B housing? How could you help the town?

Mr. Purcell. Sure. Things have to be taken on a case by case basis. You have an active Affordable Housing Committee, you hired a consultant, and you are trying to do the right thing. In Norton we were interested in diversifying our housing stock. The philosophy was we do not want our adult children to have to move out of town. We were LIP partners on a 176 unit apartment, 25% would be 40B eligible, but we would get credit for all 176 units for the first year. He has had positive and negative experiences. We would have to talk more if you want somebody to help set a compass point.

Mr. McCormick. You mentioned the Search Committee. We have not done this for years and last time it was just the Board of Selectmen making the decision, now the rules have changed. We would need some help. I never thought about coming up with the ideal candidate profile, you could help us?

Mr. Purcell. I had appointment powers for a number of years. In two interim stints I was helpful in doing that. In both cases it was the Collins Center and in other cases it was a competitor to the Collins

Center. He will help with process, the ideal candidate profile and evaluating candidacies. He would not want to get involved in candidate selection at all. In the North Andover cases because the consultant had a dire family situation he ended up negotiating the contract with two members of the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. McCormick. Right now we are in the mode of not hiring a consultant. We will establish our own Search Committee.

Mr. Purcell. What you will find is there are certain strengths of Leon you would like to build on.

Mr. Hadley. Have you worked in economic development and bringing businesses in town?

Mr. Purcell. Quite a bit. I am pretty assertive that way and when you get that kind of reputation people call you with tips too and I had a pretty good network. He has also made cold calls, which brought business to town including General Motors in Norton. He road around town the other day through the industrial area and noticed all the vacancies. He knows we have an active Economic Development Committee and wonders why all the vacancies and if there is something you can do to put your ideal tenant profile together and put a TIF together. Taunton set a certain baseline standards and in Mansfield they flipped their profile and offered TIF only to companies in certain profiles. You need some sort of a jump start.

Ms. Bohnson. What would you consider your greatest strength and weakness.

Ms. Purcell. Strength, acquired some knowledge over the years. I interact with people very good skills that way, work like a dog. Shortcoming, perhaps not revealing enough of my shortcoming.

Ms. Bohnson. Three words to describe yourself, thinking along why we would hire you, what would they be?

Mr. Purcell. Competent, collaborative, goal oriented.

Ms. Bohnson. What about commuting, are you comfortable with that and late nights?

Mr. Purcell. You do not go too deep into the night.

Suzanne Kennedy, Candidate for Interim Town Administrator

Suzanne Kennedy, Worcester Street, Grafton, joined the Board. She thanked the Board for inviting her, she is grateful and thanks them for the opportunity to meet with them. She considers herself a season professional, worked in small towns, small cities, and local county governances. She looks at the role of Town Administrator was a passion. She has a passion to learn and to provide services to those who are in needs. She is hands on, had success as a Chief Executive Officer and a Chief Administrative Officer. When she started in Medway she had every expectation of coming in and surveying the business community walking up and down the street saying hello to people. When she walked into the office she had two letters in her in box. The first saying she had a \$895,000 negative Free Cash position and the other was we would not be able to set our tax rate until the financial statement was reviewed and approved by DOR because there had been misrepresentations by

certain members of the financial staff. It was quite a ride. We ran into significant difficulties in the very beginning and through the efforts and support of the Board of Selectmen and staff we wound out of our fiscal debacle. After that we were able to achieve some fiscal stability. She was able through a charter to make changes in the Board of Assessors, DPW and Health Department. They did not report to the Town Administrator prior to the Charter. They reorganized, were successful as well and it lead to other opportunities. They were successful with a regionalized Veterans Services, shared Conservation Commission, shared services for animal control and shared services for an energy manager as well. It sparked a sense of respect for the town. She would not have been able to make those achievements without the support of the Board of Selectmen and the department heads.

Ms. Bohnson. When did you leave Medway?

Ms. Kennedy. I went from Medway in June 2014 and three weeks later I went to Sturbridge, which will end on Friday.

Ms. Bohnson. Why are you interested in the Town of West Boylston?

Ms. Kennedy. I have always loved the area. It is a nice place to live and raise a family. You are very well managed, done a tremendous amount of work with limited resources and you are in good financial condition. It is all set on your website with your video done for economic development purposes.

Mr. Hadley. Are you looking for something part-time?

Ms. Kennedy. There are limitations when you are retired in terms of the number of hours you can work. She is part-time in Sturbridge as well because of those constraints.

Mr. McCormick. How many hours do you work in Sturbridge?

Ms. Kennedy. I clock 28 hours, four days a week. I work beyond that as every manager does.

Mr. McCormick. You feel that would be the right amount of hours? We have Nancy and she has a really good handle on what goes on in the town.

Mr. Rucho. What do you feel the role of the interim Town Administrator is.

Ms. Kennedy. It is to keep the ship afloat. Manage the process in a manner that gets you to your new Town Administrator. It is not appropriate to make big changes. You work collaboratively with the staff. She thinks she has a lot of respect from the Board of Selectmen and the staff in Sturbridge. She walked into a lot of problems and has managed a lot of problems. She tried to get the position ready for the next Town Administrator.

Mr. McCormick. How would you explain your management style?

Ms. Kennedy. Inclusive, collaborative, use multi-departmental approach to problem solving. If there are issues I will call in several people from different departments to resolve the issue. They had a

problem with the Medway Fire Department collection rates for ambulances. She brought in the finance department as opposed to just sitting with the Fire Department. It is not a one department approach to get the best results.

Mr. Hadley. Have you worked with economic development. One of the issues we have in town is we need to look at our empty buildings, would you get involved?

Ms. Kennedy. It depends on your priorities. If it is an important issue any interim Town Administrator would have to put themselves out there to stabilize the situation. If you form in roads into the empty building problem then you want to keep current with it so the next Town Administrator does not have to revisit it.

Mr. Rucho. What experience have you had with 40B and how could you help West Boylston.

Ms. Kennedy. It was shortly after I left Medway that the impending threat of 40B manifested itself. I am a little familiar with your circumstances with the Gaylord sewer project. It is your desire as a Board to increase affordable housing. You try to do that with a friendly 40B, otherwise it becomes very acrimonious. I know it has been in the works for about ten years. Even if you have lack of sewer and water capacity notwithstanding that the state will say it is your issue. You are dealt a hand of cards dictated by state statute. The best thing is do a friendly 40B to maintain a project that will ultimately work in the best interest of the town.

Ms. Bohnson. You have been in Sturbridge eight months. Your first interim position, can you tell me one of the things you like about being an interest.

Ms. Kennedy. It almost becomes like a full-time job because of the number of projects. It gives one flexibility in terms of personal priorities. Most of us who do this love the profession. It is nice to know you can have a little more of a personal life if you are only working on a part-time basis.

Mr. McCormick. Have you had any experience with the search committee to look for a permanent Town Administrator? The last time it was the Board of Selectmen and things have changed now.

Ms. Kennedy. As an interim, I remove myself from the process because it might be a potential conflict because I would know most of the candidates. It took Sturbridge six months to identify the candidate. There are fewer people entering municipal service. Her experience is in trying to get the process moving as quickly as possible so the good people we identify do not leave us because we have not been timely with our process.

Ms. Bohnson. On your resume it says budget oversight, did you create it the budget?

Ms. Kennedy. Yes in Medway. In Sturbridge we have a Finance Director whose role is budget development. I have an extraordinary amount of experience in developing budgets.

Mr. Rucho. Your resume says you are in Medway until the present, you are not?

Ms. Kennedy. Correct.

Mr. Rucho. Over the years is there a mistake you made?

Ms. Kennedy. When I was working on the island there was a process called Total Quality Management, it was to try to get employees to work collaboratively together for a better product for the town. One of the employees was opposed to it, he shared his feelings with other members of the Board. I think in retrospect he may have felt threatened and that was not the object. It was to improve working conditions for employees.

Mr. Hadley. Do you have any experience with grant writing.

Ms., Kennedy. Yes, was Director of Grant Writing in New York State. She thinks we have done very well for a small community.

Ms. Bohnson. Have you done any research on the hot topics in West Boylston Can you name two that would be of interest.

Ms. Kennedy. The Gaylord sewer project and looked at affordable housing that is a pro-active role on affordable housing and you could manage the outcome

Mr. Rucho. What would be the first thing you would do as the interim.

Ms. Kennedy. Sit down with the Administrative Assistant to get the lay of the land, then the Town Accountant and the Treasurer/Collector after that meet with every department head one on one basis. What is enjoyable is to go out with them, I've gone snow plowing and been in a police car. Get to know the operation. I do like to get involved. I am interested in what they do.

Ms. Bohnson. If you had three words to describe you as to why we should choose you.

Ms. Kennedy. Strong fiscal manager, organizational skills, management skills, very passionate about my work.

Mr. McCormick noted that we have one more interview next week and we will make a decision after that. Ms. Kennedy is available immediately. She asked if we intended to hire a firm for our search. McCormick advised that we have talked about doing it on our own. Mr. Rucho would ask the interim. Ms. Kennedy had a situation in Sturbridge. She was there one month before any movement took place. There is a provision in their Charter that says only the screening committee can advance. You need to strike quickly, you have a great town, it is welcoming site it is fabulous.

Mr. McCormick reminded the board that FISP meets tomorrow at 7:00 followed by a Board meeting at 7:30.

Motion Mr. Rucho at 8:20 p.m. to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Hadley, all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved: May 6, 2015

Nancy E. Lucier, Municipal Assistant

Kevin M. McCormick, Chairman

John W. Hadley, Vice Chairman

Christopher A. Rucho, Clerk

Siobhan M. Bohnson, Selectman