

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

Mr. Hadley convened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. The Board will be interviewing the final two candidates for the position of Town Administrator.

Roy Melnick, Candidate for Town Administrator

Mr. Melnick states that he married, has six children, five adults, 4 married and a nine year old at home.

Mr. Hadley - tell us about yourself and why you are interested in the position?

Mr. Melnick states that he has been in municipal government with a police department for 35 years. He started in New Hampshire, was Police Chief in Ashland, seven years in New Mexico, serving as Chief for five years and then he moved back to Massachusetts. He has been preparing for this career for his entire life. He is a Mass Certified Public Procurement Officer, has taken several leadership management courses including Harvard University's Senior Executives in State and Local Government program. In his last position in New Mexico he also served as the Acting Administrator when the Administrator was on vacation or traveling.

Mr. Hadley - how does your experience qualify you for this position?

Mr. Melnick states that his experience has been a department head for the last twelve years, manages the budget, personnel, training, recruitment, writing grants, drafts policies and procedures. Just in one department instead of the entire city.

Mr. Crowley - what is your experience with developing municipal budgets?

Mr. Melnick, as a Lieutenant in New Hampshire I prepared the budget for our division. As Police Chief in three different communities I prepared the police budget, worked for two towns with a Board of Selectmen type government and two city managers and a council.

Mr. Crowley - explain your priorities in creating the annual budget.

Mr. Melnick – I would act under the guidance of the Board of Selectmen and I would be looking for direction from the Board whether our finances are strong or weak.

Mr. Crowley - please give an example of how you would deal with budget request from departments when there wasn't enough money to fulfill the department budget request.

Mr. Melnick – I would sit with all of the budget directors and go over the budgets and provide guidance throughout the year. The budgets would be developed by department heads based on guidance given to me.

Ms. Bohnson – you said you had experience in writing grants, what type?

Mr. Melnick - \$4 million in my career as police captain and Chief, \$2.78 million in five years, all sorts of alternate sources of revenue to hire police officers and dispatchers and for equipment.

Mr. McCormick - what kind of management style do you see yourself bringing to the job with reference to how you handle the public, officials and employees?

Mr. Melnick – democratic style of leadership, seeking input from people within the organization. In this case, department heads and employees below them, an open door policy, do not screen calls and would take walk in customers.

Mr. McCormick – on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being the lowest, how would the public rate you?

Mr. Melnick – when I was in New Mexico the community respected the police department, the Chief and the leadership. We changed by building a strong team to identify future leaders. In three

departments where I have been Chief we did an inside replacement for the Police Chief. I would say on the high end of the scale.

Mr. McCormick – how about employees?

Mr. Melnick – employees would be the same thing.

Ms. Bohnson - how will you go about assessing the strengths and weaknesses of an organization and identifying ways to improve?

Mr. Melnick – during my tenure I would spend six months learning the strengths and weaknesses and community needs. I reorganized departments to make them more efficient and accountable and better service to the community.

Ms. Bohnson – an example of reorganizing, why and what kind?

Mr. Melnick – in New Mexico the organization was not functioning as efficiently as it could. I changed the structure to more mid-level managers, waited six months and with input from the department they came up with a better structure. The department was not accredited and in 1-1/2 years it became state accredited. When I first took over I had a budget of \$4.5 million. When I prepared the first budget I cut it down to \$4 million and reallocated funds, increased training and in the first year came in under budget. Five years later the budget was \$4.1 million,

Mr. Crowley – how many total paid officers?

Mr. Melnick – 34 and 7 civilians and a regional dispatch center with 23 dispatchers and 9 dispatch state police, fire and medical. Served as the Chair of the executive board representing each community of the Center. Had a Director who worked in the Center who reported to me. When it came to budgeting the Director would present her budget to the Board, two representatives from each community in the Center.

Mr. Rucho - how do you communicate with co-workers? Would you prefer that your interactions be formal or informal?

Mr. Melnick – there is a time to be formal and a time to be informal. My style, democratic, come to work at 8:00 a.m., check email and phone calls and take care of priorities. From 9:30 to 10:00 I go to the lounge area. Employees know if you want to have coffee with the Chief you can. I sit and talk with anybody for 15 to 20 minutes. I made himself accessible and part of the employees, door always open.

Mr. Hadley - what information did you review in preparation for this interview and what did it reveal to you about the town?

Mr. Melnick states it is an open space community, very nice, very pretty. I used to live in Shrewsbury, worked in Ashland, looked at the website, 5-member board, you are in need of a Town Administrator.

Ms. Bohnson - what will your first steps be upon assuming responsibility for this position?

Mr. Melnick – call a staff meeting, meet with department heads to have them tell me about themselves, personally, professionally, what they do and their goals and objectives. Give them my personal information and job background, my expectations, present them with the goals and objectives I will be receiving from this board prior to taking over.

Ms. Bohnson - what is one goal that you would set for the town and yourself to accomplish your first year?

Mr. Melnick – I know we have a pending issue with the Fire Department, they voted to unionize. That would be a top priority. I would ask for the top priorities of the Board they feel are pressing. I will rely on the Board and department heads for top priorities.

Mr. Rucho - give us an example of a time when you reorganized a department or dramatically changed a long-standing process. How did employees, Town officials, and residents respond?

Mr. Melnick – when I came to Ashland it was a Police Department that was not operating efficiently. I received guidance from the Town Administrator and listened to the Board of Selectmen. It was a police union in turmoil and they didn't have a contract for years. I put myself into the middle and tried to find out what was important in the contract with the Town Administrator and the union. That was the first problem we dealt with. We started in February and by July we had a contract. The department was not operating efficiently, no mid-level managers. I reorganized the department and did it within the existing funding.

Mr. Crowley - in your past experience have you had to terminate anyone and if yes what was the process that was followed.

Mr. Melnick – had an employee who was an auxiliary police officer and he was untruthful in a job application. The employee misrepresented himself in the job application for a position he was applying for. I got a copy of the application, gathered the facts, informed the Town Administrator, did an investigation, forward the information to the Town Administrator and the person was fired.

Mr. Crowley - did the town/city face any legal repercussions for the termination?

Mr. Melnick – he sued the city for wrongful termination. He was an auxiliary and worked two or three police details and he tried to stretch that to be a full-time patrolman. It was dismissed for summary judgement, no materials facts.

Mr. McCormick - give an example of how you've handled difficult situations.

Mr. Melnick – whenever I come across a difficult situation I make sure I do not make them on emotion. If difficult I spend a couple of days sleeping on it, then come back and make my decision.

Mr. McCormick - how do you prevent difficult situations?

Mr. Melnick – more arise from poor communication and not fully understanding both sides of the issues. I have monthly department meetings with all the employees, it is a voluntary meeting, late in the afternoon. During the course of the month I write down issues I would like to discuss. When we meet with the employees it is equal. They discuss goals and objectives, ideas, purchases, it is time for discussions, never missed a department meeting, great tool for communication, 70-75% participation.

Ms. Bohnson – it sounds like you have worked for much larger cities than the Town of West Boylston. Do you see that as a positive? What is your perspective on this?

Mr. Melnick – in St. Johns Arizona I had 17 employees, 12 cops, no dispatch center, population 3,000. I have run a small organization, \$1.5 million budget, manages the same as the large department. I was a working police chief who would respond during the middle of the night, familiar with working in a small community.

Mr. Hadley - how do you see your role as Town Administrator in working with the Superintendent of Schools and the School Committee?

Mr. Melnick - always worked very well with the School Superintendent. Met with the Ashland Superintendent about the importance of putting officers in the school. Educated them, two to three meetings of the importance of officers being in the schools, grant funded, brought the change about.

Ms. Bohnson – was it your idea or the Superintendents?

Mr. Melnick – it came from my previous experience when I came to Massachusetts I saw the need.

Mr. McCormick – how big is the school?

Mr. Melnick - population 18,000, 1,000 students in high school.

Mr. Rucho - what is your professional achievement you are most proud of?

Mr. Melnick – three departments I worked in, I am proud of all three. Going into an organization in need of repair and building a strong team.

Mr. Rucho - what is the worst situation that ever happened to you as a police chief?

Mr. Melnick - when you have to terminate somebody who is a very good police officer, has too much to drink and you have to terminate him.

Mr. McCormick - give an example of when you were able to meet the professional demands of a similar position, yet still maintain a healthy balance in your personal life.

Mr. Melnick – always had to find a balance between raising children and working with five children. Went to school and graduated from several colleges with several children. I have maintained success in my professional career by paying attention to details, doing what was necessary to get the training and educational experience. Five children went onto college, five graduated, two masters, three bachelors, youngest is nine years old.

Mr. McCormick – how long do you expect to work here?

Mr. Melnick – at least ten years.

Mr. Rucho – if you were to get the job, are you planning on commuting?

Mr. Melnick – yes, until at least one year to determine if I had a strong position with the Board and the Board leadership was stable. Then I would consider moving to the community.

Mr. McCormick - what kind of social events do you attend in the community you are presently employed in?

Mr. Melnick – we would hold events within the Police Department, open houses two times a year. I would have 80% of the staff volunteer to come in. We built a patio out back to entertain. I would go to high school football games, hold a bike race, fun run for children, 3K and 5K for adults. I would do a police event cookout.

Mr. Hadley - what do you do best?

Mr. Melnick – put my 9 year old daughter to bed at 8:00 on school nights and 9:00 on non-school nights.

Ms. Bohnson - describe an area you struggle with and should continue to work on developing

Mr. Melnick – I like to improve any organization that I go into and train and mentor employees from within. It has been pretty successful. I tend to want to do things quick.

Ms. Bohnson – what attracted you to this position?

Mr. Melnick – career goal was to end career as Town Administrator. I could switch over to state government and be a Director of something, am familiar with the area, commute was not bad.

Mr. Hadley – do you have any questions for us?

Mr. Melnick – what is your time frame and process?

Mr. Hadley - our time frame as soon as we feel we have the right candidate and the process is the same thing. We will discuss this on Wednesday night.

Jamie Hellen, Candidate for Town Administrator

Mr. Hellen - life-long Central Mass resident, grew up in Bolton, graduated in 1994, majored in geography because it was really fun. After college got a great opportunity to work for Cabinet Secretary Bob Durand, then worked on the Community Preservation Act with him. Got it passed at the state level and then worked with cities and towns to try to get it implemented. Then he worked in the legislature with Senator Antonioni and two years with Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz. Spent seven months with Metropolitan Area Planning Council, met Town Manager of Ashland and Hopkinton, got a grant to regionalize the two fire departments and then the Town Manager in Hopkinton said you have to come to Hopkinton and that is where I went and have been there 3 years.

Mr. Hadley - tell us about yourself and why you are interested in the position?

Mr. Hellen – in the research I did, I didn't know Leon very well, impressed with stories I heard. The community has been managed well, high standard. We have a high standard in Hopkinton.

Volunteer basis is very strong, citizens are engaged. It is a beautiful town. a unique community with a lot of challenges.

Mr. McCormick – what kind of management style do you see yourself bringing to the job with reference to how you handle the public, officials and employees?

Mr. Hellen – tend to think of myself as a facilitator. Department heads run departments and boards and committee do what they are charged to do. I see the role of a Town Administrator or a Town Manager as a facilitator for their work. If a Town Manager, you want to be a strong listener and in a place where the office feels open and people can talk to you.

Mr. McCormick – on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being the lowest, how would the public rate you?

Mr. Hellen – I hope a ten. We have worked really hard to develop a customer service brand. I like to think that we worked towards consensus. It is the part of the work I enjoys the most. Little things we can do to make the experience in town better. People want people to respond and listen.

Mr. McCormick – how about the employees?

Mr. Hellen – maybe 8 or 9. I always have something to learn from the finance office. Trying to create an environment where the department heads are responsible for the work they do. We have a very close town hall, 20-25 employees and have breakfast.

Ms. Bohannon - how will you go about assessing the strengths and weaknesses of an organization and identifying ways to improve?

Mr. Hellen – facilitator asks questions, how do people view their role and success. I am developing a matrix based evaluation system for town employees. If somebody is excelling in their job, how do we go to the next level. We are still working through some of the kinks.

Ms. Bohannon – you mentioned you have an HR department, we do not have that her. How would that impact you?

Mr. Hellen - as Chief of Staff in the legislature, we have had two HR directors. In Hopkinton I have done that for a couple of IT directors too. I am pretty fluid with lots of that stuff.

Mr. Crowley - what is your experience with developing municipal budgets?

Mr. Hellen – I set the budget calendar, set the deadlines, and write the warrant. Have a pretty good knowledge of where you want to be. I do the first crack of the entire town warrant, supervise a couple dozen boards, supervise animal control. I have been able to get people involved with the budget process. We have an engaged citizenry, we make it transparent and have the budget online. I rely on department heads to come up with their budget and come to us with what they want. The budget is \$78 million.

Mr. Crowley - explain your priorities in creating the annual budget

Mr. Hellen – you have to look at the costs you have to do, contracts, debt service and try to facilitate a grass roots process to get a budget so when you get to town meeting doesn't face a lot of resistance. Will rely on boards and committees and department heads on that. You really want to work hard to get consensus, it is not thinking I have all the answers and I know what the priority should be. I look to gather input from the community.

Mr. Crowley- give an example of how you would deal with budget request from departments when there wasn't enough money to fulfill the department budget request.

Mr. Hellen – what are the impacts and how do we manage to get them into the budget. You try to do the best you can. Priority for this year and the year after.

Mr. Rucho - how do you communicate with co-workers? Would you prefer that your interactions be formal or informal?

Mr. Hellen – any direction, prefer face to face. I like to go out on the street and see the culvert, tend to like to be out in the community a little bit more. Phone, email. One of the things I do with the

Town Manager is to keep the Board in the loop with email to make sure they are informed as soon as possible. I have one or two not on email all day, they would get a call.

Mr. Hadley - what information did you review in preparation for this interview and what did it reveal to you about the town?

Mr. Hellen – went through the website, a lot of information on there, did a google search and read town report. Over the summer came into the town to get acquainted. Very impressed with the policies. Changes to town facilities, infrastructure and sidewalks.

Mr. Hadley – did anything stand out as an issue?

Mr. Hellen – got over the bridge and noticed a tremendous amount of bikes trying to cross the street. We are working on pedestrian travel issues.

Ms. Bohnson - what will your first steps be upon assuming responsibility for this position?

Mr. Hellen – do a lot of outreach to the departments and to town staff. Know what their priorities are and projects they are working on. Meet with all town staff, meet with as many stakeholders in the community as possible. Try to do the best I can to try to earn trust and respect from the staff. It is also budget season, getting ready for that.

Ms. Bohnson - what is one goal that you would set for the town and yourself to accomplish your first year?

Mr. Hellen – trust and respect of the community, communication, making sure that town hall is telling its story, are there other ways to reach people.

Mr. Rucho - please give us an example of a time when you reorganized a department or dramatically changed a long-standing process. How did employees, Town officials, and residents respond?

Mr. Hellen – when I started working and trying to get a lot from the smaller boards and committees involved in town hall I learned that the Historical Commission kept their records in members' basement. We moved those records into town hall. There was a lot of support and it was done step by step at their level of comfort. We had the records digitized and at the end now everybody feels comfortable.

Mr. McCormick - Give an example of how you've handled difficult situations.

Mr. Hellen – listen as much as you can to whatever the situation is. Make sure you identify that a difficult situation is arising and make sure the folks know you are involved. Strategize on how you would handle this. When people come in made I am the first person they see at town hall. I focus in on them and listen to their concerns and gather facts.

Mr. McCormick - how do you prevent difficult situations?

Mr. Hellen – the town just rehabbed their library in the historical district. I tried to strategize how do we get this project approved. We had \$3.5 million of state money in the banks for the project. After the public hearing some people were talking about how the public hearing was now the model for public hearings in town.

Mr. Crowley - In your past experience have you had to terminate anyone and if yes what was the process that was followed.

Mr. Hellen – fortunately I have not. I have not been in a complete supervisor role to go ahead and terminate anybody. We use progressive discipline, try to get the most we can out of people. We have a strong family environment.

Mr. Crowley - what is your professional achievement you are most proud of?

Mr. Hellen – I was very fortunate to work in the legislature for a long time. I worked to get the Wallace Civic Center transferred to the Fitchburg State College. They have Ipads and a saving \$5,000 a year by using them. Most proud of improving peoples quality of life on a day to day basis. A small

business opened up in Hopkinton. I deal with all the licensing. I act as kind of the chief point person to coordinate work to make sure things are up to code before it comes to the Board of Selectmen. The owner sent a follow up email saying he just wanted to thank all of us for our work and they said I cannot thank Jamie Hellen enough in the Town Managers Office because he made me feel like I was the most important business when I came into the Town Managers' office. That is what we do in Hopkinton and town hall. Those are the kinds of things I am most proud of.

Mr. Rucho - What is the worst situation that ever happened to you.

Mr. Hellen – probably a half a dozen things in the legislature, cutting a deal in the hallway with stakeholders and then somebody goes back on their word. You have to make sure you have crossed all your Ts and dotted all your Is.

Mr. McCormick - Give an example of when you were able to meet the professional demands of a similar position, yet still maintain a healthy balance in your personal life.

Mr. Hellen – this last weekend Hopkinton celebrated their 350 birthday. It was a full celebration, signature event. I have been working with the town committee planning this, the central command operations manager. One of the things that made it easier on my family was the Chairman of the committee and I planned five weeks in advance and I knew a lot of volunteers were going to be on vacation. By preparing ahead and thinking ahead to prepare us.

Mr. McCormick - how long do you expect to work for us if hired?

Mr. Hellen - I think the decision is more up to the community than me. As long as the community is supportive, for quite some time.

Mr. McCormick - What kind of social events do you attend in the community you are presently employed in?

Mr. Hellen – a lot of chamber events, we have a Memorandum of Understanding with them. We do quarterly get togethers, annual holiday party, marathon. The Town Manager tries to encourage as much as possible community events. Working with the legislature as Chief of Staff it is tremendously important.

Mr. Hadley - how do you see your role as Town Administrator in working with the Superintendent of Schools and the School Committee?

Mr. Hellen - the schools are what the schools are. It is important to develop a partnership. You want to be as open and available as possible to build the relationship, I think it is important to make the case why town hall is developing a case for what they need. The school will make their case. The town hall side of things should tell their story. Try to resist the either or that can go out.

Mr. Hadley - What do you do best?

Mr. Hellen - I like to think that being a consensus builder, communication. We had six debt exclusions pass this year in Hopkinton. It was done through transparency and due diligence, four land purchase, a new DPW facility

Mr. Hadley - Describe an area you struggle with and should continue to work on developing

Mr. Hellen – one of the areas I need to continue to work on is the labor. It is a huge interest of mine. Never sat at the table, familiar with contracts. Something that continues to need a little more practice. I will be taking a negotiations class.

Mr. Hadley – do you have any questions for us?

Mr. Hellen – I do not.

The Board thanked him for coming in.

With no further business to come before the Board, motion Mr. McCormick at 8:15 p.m. to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Crowley, all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy E. Lucier, Municipal Assistant

Approved: October 7, 2015

John W. Hadley, Chairman

Kevin M. McCormick, Vice Chairman

Siobhan M. Bohnson, Clerk

Christopher A. Rucho, Selectman

Patrick J. Crowley, Selectman