

Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Select Board

Present: Alisa Brewer, Connie Kruger, Doug Slaughter, Andy Steinberg, Jim Wald

Staff: Deborah Radway, HR Director

Other: Assistant Town Manager David Ziomek; Bernard Lynch, Principal at Community Paradigm Associates, LLC, Town Manager Search consultant

Meeting called to order by Ms. Brewer at 6:17 p.m.

6) Town Manager Search: Discuss Finalists and Appoint a Town Manager pending Negotiations

Ms. Brewer provided a recap of the process to date, noting Finalist Bill Fraser has withdrawn his application for consideration. Thanks were offered to Consultant Bernie Lynch, HR Director Deb Radway, and members of the Search Committee for their work. Appreciation was expressed for public and staff comments regarding the candidates and the process. Members drew lots for order of discussion on each finalist. Substantive discussion regarding the merits of each finalist followed.

On a motion by Ms. Kruger, seconded by Jim Wald the Select Board voted unanimously to place into nomination the names of Maria E. Capriola and Paul Bockelman as the Town Manager for the Town of Amherst.

Candidate Maria Capriola. Members believed she would be a change agent, and her human resource experience would provide a tool for working with senior staff and in attracting new staff. It was also noted that her hiring would serve as an inspiration to women and younger staff. There was clear evidence of a strong work commitment, thoughtful response, and good communication skills. Familiarity with town government relationships, connection to millennials, and program analysis were also noted as strengths. A lack of direct leadership experience and moving from a Council to a Select Board and Town Meeting form of government was thought to be a challenge. Having gone first in the interviews should be considered on comparison. While her answers were more literal, an intellectual curiosity with openness to new ideas was apparent, as was certain humbleness in listening.

Candidate Paul Bockelman. Members emphasized breadth of experience with higher level at MMA, local government early in career and service in his own community on school committee and historical commission; he would be a sure thing. Clearly he understood the broader political perspective. Responses were broader in scope, however his recounting how he goes about hiring of interns showed a sensitivity to diversity and inclusiveness. It was felt his values and temperament were a good match and his positioning within the State would be a benefit for Amherst. Concern was expressed with his experience as a policy person rather than someone who executes policy. He believed it was important to have a Town Manager that can work with senior management staff from day one that will have their respect and support.

There was discussion on the process of deliberation for choice between two candidates. A straw poll thought to be the best way to get a better sense of where the Select Board stood before continuing discussion. Each member wrote their choice on a piece of paper and provided to the Chair to read aloud: Brewer - Capriola, Kruger - Bockelman, Steinberg - Bockelman, Wald – Capriola, and Slaughter – Capriola.

Members articulated their valuations based on question responses, summations, and comparison to job description including managerial experience, whether intellectually curious and open to change and new ideas, strong and decisive leader, strong interpersonal skills, experience in labor relations, passion for local government, and knowledge of Massachusetts laws.

Ms. Brewer moved and Doug Slaughter seconded a motion to appoint Maria E. Capriola as Town Manager, subject to negotiating a contract satisfactory to the Board. VOTED three in favor and 2 opposed (Steinberg and Kruger).

The Board then voted unanimously to make the appointment of Maria E. Capriola as Town Manager, subject to negotiating a contract satisfactory to the Board.

The Select Board voted unanimously to designate volunteers Doug Slaughter and Andy Steinberg as Select Board representatives to commence negotiations on a contract for our next Town Manager with Maria E. Capriola, supported by Temporary Town Manager Peter Hechenbleikner and Director of Human Resources and Human Rights Deborah Radway. Mr. Lynch also offered his assistance in the negotiation process.

Select Board took a brief recess, returning at 9:06 p.m. Ms. Brewer reported that she had spoken to Ms. Capriola and that was looking forward to the negotiation process.

10) Executive Session

MOVED to enter into Executive Session at 9:07 p.m., in accordance with Massachusetts General Law (MGL) Chapter 30A, section 21, part a, subset 2 to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel (Town Manager finalists), and to conduct contract negotiations with nonunion personnel (Town Manager finalists), with the intent not to return to open session.

VOTE by ROLL CALL VOTE: __y__Brewer, __y__Kruger, __y__Slaughter, __y__Steinberg, ___y__Wald

Submitted by Deborah Radway, Human Resource Director