

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING  
TUESDAY, JULY 30, 2019  
TOWN OFFICE BUILDING, SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM  
240 SPRINGFIELD STREET, WILBRAHAM, MA**

**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Chair Susan C. Bunnell (presiding); Selectmen Robert W. Russell; Selectmen Robert J. Boilard, Nick Breault - Town Administrator, Herta Dane - Human Resource Coordinator and Heather Kmelius - Administrative Assistant to the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator. The meeting was called to order at 4:05 PM.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Robert Zollo – Police Chief

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Bunnell asked all to join the Selectmen in saying the Pledge of Allegiance. She then announced, in accordance with Mass. General Law Chapter 30(A), section 20, that the Selectmen's meeting was being recorded by the Wilbraham Public Access and the Board of Selectmen's Office. Chair Bunnell asked if there was anyone present in the audience also recording the meeting. No one present was recording.

**APPOINTMENTS WITH THE BOARD**

Police Officer Interviews

1. Brennan J Polidoro 4:10 P.M.
2. Mark D Harris 4:30 P.M.
3. Benjamin E Regin 4:50 P.M.
4. Charles L Moore 5:10 P.M.

Each of the Applicants was asked the following list of questions.

1) Tell us about yourself.
2) If you didn't become a police officer what would you do for a career?
3) Sell me on why the Town should hire you.
4) What is the best part of the job and what is the worst?
5) How do you deescalate an incident involving a person who may be a harm to themselves or others, due to mental illness?
6) Teamwork is important in policing. Briefly tell me what you have done in your current or past job that shows you believe in teamwork.
7) How would you have handled the recent "New York City water issue"?
8) If you were the Police Chief for the day and you could delete one rule or policy in your current or past job as a police officer, what would it be and why? Which would you add or keep?
9) Is there a question that you expected us to ask that was not asked today that you would like to answer?

The Board briefly reviewed the questions that they would ask the applicants tonight. Chair Bunnell stated that there are three positions open, maybe a fourth to open soon. Tonight there will be four vetted applicants interviewed. Chair Bunnell told all of the applicants that this meeting is being recorded and broadcast live as they entered the room. Chief Zollo stated that 63 applications were received. The applicant pool was narrowed to about 15-16 people and the first round of interviews were done. Eight applicants were selected for the second round of interviews. Four candidates were selected to move forward in the process. Background checks have been done and tonight the Board is interviewing the top four candidates.

Chair Bunnell told all applicants they were being recorded and broadcast live as they entered the room.

1. **Brennan J Polidoro 4:10 P.M.** – Brennan Polidoro entered the room at 4:10pm. He stated that he is almost 30 years old. He is originally from Adams, MA where he grew up in civil service family. He learned a lot through his parents' divorce that helped him find his career path. He has been a police officer for approximately a policeman for 7 years and he has completed the Academy. He gave an overview of his work history to date and explained that he has hit the career ceiling in his current position and is looking to move to Wilbraham. The best part of his job is going home knowing he helped someone and potentially changed someone's life. The worst part of his job is trying to help uncooperative victims. Sometime in this position, you can find that your hands are tied in situations and it can be difficult. To deescalate issues where someone might be a harm themselves and mental health related situations, Mr. Polidoro tries to be distant while also creating communication as to develop a connection as the best way to help. When asked to sell himself to the Board, Mr. Polidoro stated that he has explored Wilbraham

and would like to settle down and start a family with children in a safe community. He is looking to join a department that offers room for advancement and is willing to relocate to the area if he gets this position.

In reference to his belief in the value of teamwork, Mr. Polidoro currently works in a very small community and is often working on solo patrol. If help is needed, a call for the use mutual aid from other departments and local communities is made. He has developed lots of relationships with assisting agencies and does the best to make the teamwork successful. Selectmen Boilard asked about the recent New York City water issue in the news and was asked how he would have reacted. Mr. Polidoro stated that he would not have turned his back in the situation and he would do his best to keep the situation from becoming hostile. . If he was empowered to add or eliminate any laws, Mr. Polidoro would not eliminate any current laws. He believes the impaired driving laws could be strengthened specific to enforcing OUI charges for marijuana. He is a drug recognition expert himself and would like to see improvement developing roadside testing that will take years to research and perfect. If he was not a police officer, he likely would have been a firefighter as he likes to be the first call and the first on the scene. He believes he would work in civil service no matter what. He responded that he was not anticipating any questions from the Board that were not asked today and he did not have questions for the Board. He left the room at approximately 4:23pm.

2. **Mark D Harris 4:30 P.M.** – Mark Harris entered the room at 4:24p and introduced himself to the Board. He stated that he is originally from Nebraska and he and his wife now reside in Brookfield, MA. He gave an overview of his military experience, as well as his professional and educational achievements. Mr. Harris currently works for the MBTA Transit Police. He and his wife recently had their first child. He stated that he is 28 years old and he has about 5 years of police experience. The best part of his job is helping people and serving the community. The worst part of his job is dealing with undeserved criticism as a police officer. Mr. Harris stated that sometime, no matter what you do, people have preconceived ideas about you in your uniform. When asked about deescalating mental health issues or those who might be a harm to themselves, he responded that he is very familiar with these situations in his work with the MBTA. He often encounters the transient population as well as mental health victims in the MBTA work. To best deal with these types of situations, Mr. Harris likes to take time to let people communicate and release what they feel is necessary. He assesses the situation based on the circumstances and tries to get them the help that they need. When he was asked to sell himself to the Board, he first thanked the Board for the opportunity to be considered at this level. He and his wife would like to move to this part of the state to raise their family. He has heard good things about the Town and this Police Department. He stated that he has thrived working at the MBTA. In his detective work experience there, he became a juvenile crime specialist. He stated that his references can attest that he is a dedicated professional and he will be a valued member of this town for years to come. When asked about the importance of teamwork, Mr. Harris gave examples from his military experience where he was one of four on a team that lived through the trials of deployment. He also noted the team effort to complete the Academy, through training and studying. Mr. Harris prefers to work with a partner. When asked to respond to the New York City water situation, he stated that if it was him, would stop and not escalate situation as he knows that he is held to a higher standard as an officer. Mr. Harris would try to talk to the aggressor. If he was not a police officer, he stated that he would probably have been a firefighter as he enjoys the civil service career path. If he could eliminate or add a law, he would like to make situations like the New York City water recent news be viewed as a hate crime. He understands that the police are not a protected class, but he would like to see that added protection. When asked what he was prepared to be asked today but not asked by the Board, he stated that he thought he would be asked about his strengths and weaknesses. He continued stating that his strength is his leadership skills and his weakness is his organizational skills. Mr. Harris loves Massachusetts and looks forward to the opportunity to work in this town. Mr. Harris left the room at 4:39pm.

Selectmen Boilard asked Chief Zollo if the MBTA Academy was comparable to the municipal Police Academy. Chief Zollo stated that the MBTA Academy is longer than the Police Academy and that it fully suffices the Town's needs.

3. **Benjamin E Regin 4:50 P.M.** - Ben Regin entered the room 4:41p. Mr. Regin introduced himself to the Board and stated that he grew up in Ware, MA. He gave an overview of his professional and educational accomplishments including graduating from college and later the Police Academy. Following his part time Police Officer experience in Ware, Mr. Regin started working as a full time police officer in 2017. He also shared that he is an avid outdoors man and he enjoys fishing, hunting, grilling and cooking. Mr. Regin stated that the best part of his job is helping people. He enjoys the chance to be out and about as he is a people person who enjoys talking to people. The worst part of his job is dealing with the negativity towards police adding that this issue can weigh on you and can be frustrating in today's job. Mr. Regin stated that the best deescalating tool he uses is verbal judo, a tool that he learned in the academy. This tool helps him gain communication. When asked to sell himself to the Board, Mr. Regin stated that he is 25 years old and he has been working in this field since he was 21 years old. He stated that he has his college degree in criminal justice and he has job experience. He added that that he 30 years left to go in his career and he is looking for a forever department. He is looking to be part of a respected department with advancement opportunities and he is a 30 year investment for the Board. Regarding his belief in teamwork, Mr. Regin gave examples from his full time Police Academy experience. He also stated that he works the nightshift in Ware, MA and is very close with the other officers. He stated that he is involved with the Domestic Violence Task Force monthly meetings and that this task force is positive and brings a lot of positivity and connection for dozens of agencies. When asked about his response to the recent NY water situation, Mr. Regin stated that he would not have walked away from the situation. He stated that you cannot take situations like that personally and that the situation should have been handled just like any other and followed the protocol for arrest. If he was not a police officer, he would likely have been a fireman. He knows that being a police officer is his calling in life since age 16. If he could add or

eliminate a law, he would implement stricter OUI laws and develop standardized testing sensitive to legal marijuana. He stated that he does not recommend the elimination of any current laws. The question he expected and was never asked, he eventually stated that the strengths and weaknesses question was never asked of him. Mr. Regin described himself as a "100% person" with strengths including flexibility, adaptability, and willingness to learn. He stated that his weaknesses are his anxiety about details and he always tries to make everyone happy which can sometime be a challenge also. He further commented that the interviews have been very thorough. He reminded the Board to review his letters of recommendation as well as his resume on file. Mr. Regin asked what the Board expects from the Wilbraham Police Department. The Board responded stating that it needs dedication, performance, community policing, and school outreach efforts. They want the police officers to have a good sense of humor and also be respected by the community. Mr. Regin also asked the Board where it sees the Town in 30 years. Chair Bunnell stated that the Town had formed the Economic Development Committee to help improve the town's future. She stated that the Town has a reputation of being a "bedroom community". The Board would like to help manage the tax burden for businesses to help grow businesses incrementally. The Board would like to maintain the town's character and charm, and combine it with small town growth. The town also has extraordinary volunteers, as well as top notch professional staff. Mr. Regin left the room at 5pm.

Selectmen Boilard asked Chief Zollo if the Police Department interviews revealed the reasons for the applicants' departure from their existing position. Chief Zollo stated that they always know that information.

4. **Charles L Moore 5:10 P.M.** – Charles Moore entered the room at 5:01p and introduced himself to the Board. He stated that he prefers to be called "Chip". Mr. Moore stated that he has been a Police Officer for roughly 18 years, with 5 years of experience at UMASS 5 years and two other police departments. He is currently a Sergeant. He lives in Brockton, MA and stated that he is married with two children. The best part of his job is helping people and getting the call to help with bad situations. He is able to stay calm in tough situations which make him successful in his work. The worst part of his job is dealing with people at their worst times and seeing the difficult situations they face. When he was asked about how he best deescalates situations where people might be at harm to themselves, he stated that the current trend in law enforcement is to deescalate situations which is accomplished by coming from a place of nonjudgement and having patience. He stated that that time is your friend and best triage crisis situation. When asked to sell himself to the Board, he stated that he has a lot of versatility and experience. He stated that he has worn a lot of hats throughout his career and is willing to fill the needs of the town whatever that might be at the time. He has a variety of skills and he likes to feel useful. He stated that he relied on teamwork heavily while he worked at UMASS Amherst as an officer conducting dangerous crowd management work that faced significant tough, chaotic situations. In response to his reaction to the New York City water issue, Mr. Moore stated that that no person should be assaulted and disrespected like that. He stated that you are not there to let yourself be assaulted and people who do such things should be arrested. He stated you cannot lose his position of authority in such situations. He would have been a teacher if he was not a police officer. He stated that he has great patience and has experience as a CrossFit instructor. He stated that he cannot identify a law or regulation to add or eliminate. He further stated that there are sick people out there dealing with drug addictions and it is difficult to simply arrest those folks who need help versus jail. Mr. Moore stated that his has been a unique experience meeting the Board and being broadcast live for the meeting. He did not prepare for any questions that he was not asked. Mr. Moore thanked the Board for the interview and exited the room at approximately 5:15pm.

Police Chief Zollo stated that the interview process is very accurate and telling and all of these candidates are ready to go. He reiterated that the candidates have been through two interviews and background checks. He stated that the police interview process ended with the applicants ranked in the following order: Chip Moore, Ben Regin, and Mark Harris. He gave an overview of the process that they use to conduct the background checks including visiting the applicants homes, and neighbors. Selectmen Boilard stated that he was impressed with Mark Harris, Ben Regin and Chip Moore. Selectmen Russell stated that his rankings were as follows: Chip Moore, Mark Harris and Ben Regin. Chief Zollo stated that Mr. Regin has experience working with IMC, a computer system used in Wilbraham combined with the fact that Mr. Harris doesn't do motor vehicle stops as the reasons why Mr. Regin was ranked the #2 candidate by Police Department. The rank order that the officers are hired in will impact their seniority throughout their careers. All agreed that Chip Moore is clearly the top candidate.

**MOTION (Russell, Boilard): Move to appoint in the following order Charles L. Morre, Mark D. Harris, and Benjamin E. Regin as full-time police officers for the Town of Wilbraham, contingent on successful completion of a pre-employment medical screening, psychological assessment and physical abilities test requirement of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, a background investigation conducted by the Wilbraham Police Department, and a waiver of MGL Chapter 41, Section 96B; and successful completion of the Massachusetts Municipal Training Committee Basic Training Course for Police Officers; appointment to be effective on a date determined by the Chief of Police. Approved (3-0).**

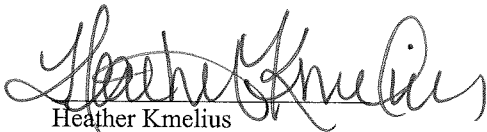
*Materials Referenced: Applications for employment from Brennan J Polidoro, Mark D Harris, Benjamin E Regin and Charles L Moore submitted to the Selectmen's Office. Sample interview questions for the Board to consider provided by HR Coord Dane. Letter from Chief Zollo to the Board dated 7.22.19 re: Police Hiring. Police Department interview files for the four interviewed candidates including interview information, background check information and interview schedules provided by the Wilbraham Police Department.*


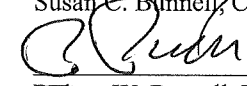
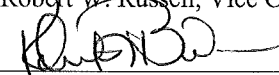
**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Chair Bunnell stated the following at approximately 5:29 pm. As Chair of the Board of Selectmen I hereby announce the Board of Selectmen will hold an executive session for the following purposes: Per M.G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a) (3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining--UPSEU Local 424M, whereas an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Board of Selectmen, and as the Chair I so declare, and that the Board of Selectmen shall reconvene in open session only to adjourn.

**Selectmen Russell so moved to hold an executive session for the following purposes: Per M.G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a) (3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining--UPSEU Local 424M, whereas an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Board of Selectmen, and the Chair so declares, and that the Board of Selectmen shall reconvene in open session only to adjourn. Selectmen Boilard seconded this motion. Roll call vote: (Chair Bunnell – yes, Selectmen Russell – yes, Selectmen Boilard– yes).**

The Board returned to open session and having no further business, the Board of Selectmen unanimously agreed to adjourn at approximately 5:46 pm.

  
Heather Kmelius  
Administrative Assistant to the TA/BOS

  
Susan C. Bunnell, Chair  
  
Robert W. Russell, Vice Chairman  
  
Robert J. Boilard, Clerk