

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
THURSDAY, AUGUST 1, 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 4:06 PM.

ALSO PRESENT: Fire Chief Search Committee members Lance Trevallion and Carolyn Brennan.

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

Fire Chief / Emergency Manager Interviews

1. Michael Andrews 4:10 P.M
2. Daniel Corliss 4:45 P.M.
3. Pete Nothe 5:15 P.M.

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

- Tell us about yourself and what brought you here today
- What attracted you to Wilbraham? (Wilbraham residency requirement – 10 mile radius).
- Explain your approach to collective bargaining.
- The cost of maintaining a Fire Department, which also provides Emergency Medical Services at the Paramedic level, is higher than ever and increasing at an alarming rate. What action as Chief can you take to control cost while still maintaining a high level of Fire and EMS service?
- Please describe how you evaluate equipment needs and develop a capital improvement plan.
- Assume the Board of Selectmen gives you a directive that you believe will be detrimental to the Fire Department, but beneficial to the taxpayers. Outline for us how you would handle this situation.
- Describe your approach to budgeting. What is the most challenging part for you?
- Please describe how you would go about gaining the confidence and respect of your department staff as a new Fire Chief.
- Have you ever considered another career path?
- Describe for us the qualities and skills a Fire Chief needs to engage to earn the respect, support, and cooperation of his officers and privates.
- If you could choose one regulation/law to eliminate or add, what would it be and why?
- Do you have any questions for the Board of Selectmen?
- Discuss certifications, trainings, recruitment efforts, and other engagements in region that you are involved with.

Chair Bunnell gave an overview that there will be three Fire Chief/Emergency Manager applicants interviewing today. Chair Bunnell stated to all of the candidates that this meeting is recorded and broadcast live as they entered the room.

1. **Michael Andrews 4:10 P.M.** – At 4:07pm, Mr. Andrews entered the room. He stated that he and his wife and two children currently live in Lincoln, RI. He gave an overview of his educational and professional achievements. He provided a detailed description of his career path to date. He is currently the Acting Deputy Chief in his department and he is responsible for a lot of collateral duties. He stated that he supervises 15 dispatchers. He was responsible for implementing a new computerized timekeeping system for this department successfully. He stated that what attracted him to Wilbraham was the well run department that has similar operations to his current department. He also stated that he would like to be a part of a department like Wilbraham's that is greatly supported by the Town and the Selectmen. Chair Bunnell noted the residency requirement for the fire department employees to live within 10 miles of Town. Mr. Andrews affirmed he is willing to move to and/or near Wilbraham as necessary and that he and his wife have already started looking at houses. Chairman Russell thanked Mr. Andrews for applying and also thanked him for his work at assessment center. Mr. Andrews stated that his community went through a municipal bankruptcy and noted that it was a very educational experience. He stated that communication, reasonableness, and honesty are keys to Collective Bargaining success in order to reach a signed contract. To address costs, he stated that he likes to stop problems before they start and to take good care of existing assets. He believes that it is important to review financials as a daily task. He stated that the equipment must be prioritized properly at all times as they are the tools to keep people safe.

If the Board gave him a directive that he felt was detrimental to the Fire Department but beneficial to the taxpayers, he hopes that he would have a good relationship with the Board that allows him to be honest and state his case for his department. Nonetheless, he fully understands that the Board of Selectmen is his boss.

Mr. Andrews makes efforts to stay within the budget and he brings ambulance fund enterprise knowledge with him. In order to gain the respect of a new department, he would meet with all of the staff within the first thirty days on the job. The staff meetings are intended to get ideas from staff and learn what work needs to be done. He also would meet with the administration. He appreciates the need to also have a good relationship with the union. Mr. Andrews stated that there is nothing worse than the unknown. He understands that change is hard and that it takes courage. He has never considered a different career path. His wife is a Rhode Island police officer, and she does not have a residency requirement for her job. If he could add a new regulation it would be require residential sprinklers even though they are expensive.

When asked if he had any questions, Mr. Andrews asked what the Board's expectations of him would be. Chair Bunnell noted the tenure of the fire department and that this position is a big investment. Chair Bunnell would like to see future efficiencies and improvements to the department. The Fire Chief must have great communication with the Finance Committee, the Capital Planning Committee, as well as the administrative staff. The Fire Chief position was compared to community policing.

Mr. Andrews believes that training is very important and he helps advocate education. He would like awareness brought to the cancer epidemic in fire service. He believes that PFAS in fire gear needs to be addressed and researched as it is an issue that cannot be taken lightly. He also believes that mental health needs for firefighters is a real issue that needs improved attention. He stated that there are resources through associations like the International Association for support of such issues and concerns.

Mr. Andrews stated that his current position is similar to the position that he would like in Wilbraham. He believes that he is ready for the challenge of a new department and he wants everyone to be successful. He thanked the Board and he left the room at 4:32pm.

- 2. Daniel Corliss 4:45 P.M.** – Daniel Corliss entered the room at 4:35pm. He stated that he has 22 years of experience with the Wilbraham Fire Department. He was born in the Massachusetts hilltowns and he is from a family with a lot of firefighting experience. He gave an overview of his educational and professional achievements and provided a detailed description of his career path to date.

Mr. Corliss stated that he believes that there is not a written path to become Fire Chief but that there is a lot of guidance to get there. His career path has helped him learn time management. He grew up learning a trade, has earned his Master's degree and has diversified his career. In 2015, Mr. Corliss was promoted to Captain. He currently lives in Granby, MA and meets residency requirement of the job. When asked about his approach to collective bargaining, Mr. Corliss stated that he was the union president for some time and through his involvement he has seen it all. He went through the Collins Center at UMASS and learned from people from other communities. He stated the importance of making sure that labor, management, and the town share a common objective with the community's best interest in mind. As an example, he referenced that the fire department staff through 2000 was given an annual 3% COLA increase, until it was realized it was not sustainable.

To control costs, Mr. Corliss stated that he thinks you must stay ahead of maintenance and plan accordingly to budget for proper department functioning. He wants to make sure that the department has safe driver operators. He also stated that Capital Planning is a work in progress that can be unique in context to collaborations with other departments. Mr. Corliss believes there are opportunities to work with others.

If he, as the Chief, was given a directive from the Board that was not positive for the Fire Department but positive for the taxpayers, he would like to be able to have open communication with the Board for an opportunity to fully understand what was being asked of the Fire Department. If he had control of the budget, he stated that he would like a team approach with open communication with Town Administrator and the Assistant Town Administrator of Finance & Budgeting. Mr. Corliss reviews a lot of data that helps him to be able to address issues head on and he wants to be careful not to touch the reserve. He completed a thesis regarding staffing at UMASS. Mr. Corliss explained that when he started thinking about being Fire Chief, he became more reserved and helped mentor others to help himself better navigate his career. He believes he is ready to be Chief at this time.

In Mr. Corliss's life, he considered a sports medicine career and possibly a career as a doctor. He now believes that he has found the right job to help those on their worst day. He is inspired by the people he works with. In order to gain the respect of his department he stated that it will take positive energy. He stated that he must present integrity, honesty and gratitude to lead his department. If he could eliminate or add a regulation, he would pursue getting carcinogens out of fire protection materials. He also stated that residential sprinklers are critical for safety and he is interested in how to implement requiring them while offsetting the cost. He stated the importance of having cisterns in neighborhoods. He would also like to see his staff have a second set of gear. Mr. Corliss asked the Board about the timeline of hiring a Chief and the Board responded that it could be at tonight or it could be at the next meeting on August 12, 2019. Regarding his community involvement outside of the fire station,

Mr. Corliss talked about the importance of community recruitment and community service. He made reference to a program that allows Greenfield Community College students to ride along with Wilbraham Fire crew as part of their education. Mr. Corliss is also on a Regional Tech rescue team which is a four county system. He is also involved with a small collaborative for EMS training. Mr. Corliss thanked the Board and left the room at 5:06pm.

3. **Pete Nothe 5:15 P.M.** - Mr. Pete Nothe entered the room at 5:07pm. Mr. Nothe stated that he is here tonight to become the Fire Chief. He has 40 years of experience in Fire service, with 36 volunteer years in Monson, and 32 years with Wilbraham. Mr. Nothe stated that his entire life revolves around public safety. Throughout his career, he has worked for thirteen different Chiefs who have all helped him learn what works and how to avoid problems. Mr. Nothe already meets the residency requirement. When asked about his approach to collective bargaining, he stated that he does not have collective bargaining experience. He would like to bring the union contract up to the current 2019 standards that meet the needs of today's job. He would like to make the contract black and white, without any gray areas. Regarding cost controls, Mr. Nothe stated that the department just got one new truck that replaced old pieces of equipment that helps reduce maintenance. He also stated that the department has a new ambulance on the way. He stated that it is important to invest in proactive maintenance. He would like the opportunity to evaluate the capital planning needs specific to the department's needs and expenses. As an example, he stated that it would be wise to refurbish the department's existing tanker versus replacing it.
- If he was given a directive that is beneficial to tax payers yet detrimental to the Fire Department, he understands that the Board is the boss and he will advocate for his department nonetheless. He stated that his department will always get the job done. His approach to budgeting is with an understanding that there is only so much money to work with for the department. Mr. Nothe knows every department would like to add new staff positions, and that he will ask for that annually even if it does not happen. Mr. Nothe stated that he will always make due with accessible resources. He is comfortable communicating with the Finance Committee and he will always advocate for his department. When asked about how he will gain the respect of his department, he responded that he already knows all the staff and that people have their opinions of him already. Mr. Nothe believes that people already know whether they like him personally or not. Regardless of that, Mr. Nothe stated that he will always make the best decisions for the department. When asked about gaining the confidence and respect of his department, he stated that he would be honest and that he would tell the staff what his goals are and ask for their feedback. He stated that he would try to come to a compromise.
- Mr. Nothe clearly stated that he has never considered a different career path. He believes that honesty is important and that he cannot help but tell things like they are and he always sticks to his goals. Mr. Nothe stated that the fire department is like his own personal business and he likes to be engaged daily with the department.
- If he could add or eliminate a regulation, he discussed alleviating the EMS regulations explaining that there is a lot of regulation in Ambulance service that is too costly. Mr. Nothe explained that all EMS regulations are expensive and that the enterprise fund is challenging to manage. When asked about trainings and recruitment efforts involvements, Mr. Nothe acknowledged that he does not have the education experience that the other candidates for this position have. He stated that he values hands on experience as events that you have to survive yourself and not be taught in the classroom. He discussed recruiting and the value of community involvement. Mr. Nothe stated that he encourages training. He did not have any questions for the Board. Mr. Nothe thanked the Board and the Fire Chief Search Committee for the opportunity to interview for this position and again asserted that he wants this position. He left the room at 5:28pm.

Chair Bunnell stated that she was very pleased that they town has three great candidates. Selectmen Russell stated that he puts a lot of stock in these interviews and used the interviews as his first impression. He stated that he looked at the scoring from the previous assessment center and previous interviews following this interview and was surprised with the results. Selectmen Boilard stated that he looked at the previous results and information prior to the interviews. Selectmen Russell and Selectmen Boilard both stated that they need more time to consider this decision. Chair Bunnell agreed. The Board agreed that it will announce its decision at the next meeting on August 12, 2019. Town Administrator Breault will reach out to the three candidates and let them know that the decision will be made at the next Board meeting.

Materials Referenced: Employment Applications submitted to the Selectmen's office from M. Andrews, P. Nothe and D. Corliss. New sample interview questions and the list of interview questions presented to the candidates on 6.18.19 for the Board to consider provided by HR Coord Dane. Fire Chief Search Committee Scoring results from the first interview and the Assessment Center performance results provided by HR Coord Dane. Municipal Resources Inc. Wilbraham Fire Chief Assessment Scoring results from July 18, 2019.

NEW BUSINESS

Competent Person Designations for the DPW

TA Breault stated that competent persons need to be designated by the DPW Department as it's an OSHA requirement. DPW Director Ed Miga presented a list of people for designation that the Board considered.

MOTION (Russell, Boilard): Move the Board of Selectmen, based on the recommendations of Ed Miga, Director of the Department of Public Works, designates the following Public Works employees as Competent Persons for the operations of trenching and confined space: Edmond Miga, Director; Tonya Basch, Assistant Director; William Sperazza, Superintendent of Operations Vincent Pafumi, Water Superintendent; Lionel Duquette, Water Foreman; Gary Butler, Waste Water Foreman; and Tim Grise, Highway Foreman; and to stipulate that said designations shall apply only to these individual employees and not their positions, and shall remain in effect as long as the designees maintain the necessary level of training and experience as required by applicable regulations, which shall be the responsibility of the DPW Director to ensure. **Approved (3-0).**

Materials Referenced: Letter from TA Breault to DPW Director Miga dated 8.1.19

Approval of hire of Administrative Secretary for the Police Department

TA Breault stated that the Town's personnel policies have been followed in the hiring for this position. He further stated that this vacancy has been filled. Selectmen Russell inquired about a probationary period and whether that was required by contract. TA Breault and HR Coordinator Dane stated that they will have to confirm this after the meeting as they need to review the contract. TA Breault stated there were three internal candidates for this position and Maria Gildea was the strongest applicant.

MOTION (Russell, Boilard): Move to approve the hire of Maria Gildea for the position of Administrative Secretary for the Police Department at Grade 8 Step A at \$22.56 per hour effective immediately. **Approved (3-0).**

Materials Referenced: Spreadsheet titled "Police – Administrative Assistant Applicants 2019" showing interview scoring provided by HR Coord Dane.

Authorization to hire of an Ambulance Billing Clerk

This position is open to replace Maria Gildea's current position following her promotion.

MOTION (Russell, Boilard): Move to authorize the replacement hire of an Ambulance Billing Clerk. **Approved (3-0).**

Accept resignation of Borrower Services Assistant (part-time) - S. Fratoni

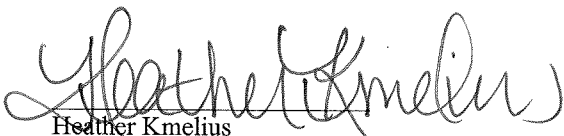
MOTION (Russell, Boilard): Move to accept the resignation of Steven Fratoni, Borrower Services Assistant (part-time) effective August 7, 2019. **Approved (3-0).**

Materials Referenced: Letter of resignation from S. Fratoni received via email by HR Coord Dane 7.29.19.

Authorization to hire Borrower Services Assistant (part-time)

MOTION (Russell, Boilard): Move to authorize the replacement hire of a Borrower Services Assistant (part-time). **Approved (3-0).**

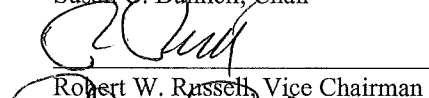
Having no further business, Selectmen Russell made a motion to adjourn and Selectmen Boilard seconded. Approved (3-0). The Board of Selectmen adjourned at 5:37 pm.



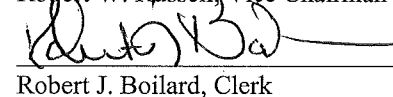
Heather Kmelius
Administrative Assistant to the TA/BOS



Susan C. Bunnell, Chair



Robert W. Russell, Vice Chairman



Robert J. Boilard, Clerk