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MINUTES
TOWN OF BELMONT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN – OPEN SESSION
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM
Tuesday, December 5, 2017 – 6:00 p.m.

APPROVED
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
DATE: 12-18-2017

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order in open session at 6:16 p.m. by Chair James Williams in the Selectmen's Meeting Room. Member Adam Dash was present. Member Mark Paolillo was absent.

Also Present: Richard White, Consultant; Shawna Walsh, H.R. Generalist; Jay Marcotte; Michael Santoro; Joanna Tzouvelis; Franklin Tucker; Geoff Lubien; Kate Bowen;

Mr. Williams turned to the agenda. Mr. Williams gave a brief overview and synopsis of the Town Administrator recruitment process. He indicated that the Board would be interviewing two candidates this evening, Kevin Sweet and Patrice Garvin. He gave an overview of the work completed by the Screening Committee whose membership included Robert Reardon, Rebecca Vose, Mike Widmer, Charles Clark, Kate Bowen, Roy Epstein and Jim Williams.

Mr. Williams praised the work of the screening committee and in particular the leadership of Chair Kate Bowen. He thanked them for their work and efforts.

Mr. Paolillo joined the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

Mr. Williams indicated that Town of Belmont Department Heads had the opportunity to meet the candidates in advance of tonight's interviews.

The candidates will both be asked seven questions, as follows:

1. Please introduce yourself to the community, providing us with a brief synopsis of your career and accomplishments. Conclude your summary by providing us with you best pitch as to how you think your background and experiences will best serve Belmont deal with the myriad of challenges it faces in the short and long term.
2. As you know, Belmont is blessed with an abundance of quality volunteers active in its governance. Many of these boards and committees are independent with their own statutory standing. Meeting our future challenges will not be easy. Some of the solutions to these challenges will require outreach to the community. The Board of Selectmen and its next Town Administrator will need to develop strategies to gain the informed consent of the volunteers first before it reaches out to the community. Please pick one or two of these challenges that you have discovered through your research and share with us your thoughts on how you will work with the Board of Selectmen to build support amongst the various town professional and volunteer groups and the community.

3. Describe your management style? How would your subordinates describe your management style? How would your current and previous bosses describe your management style? Is there a difference? Can you explain why? How will that style fit Belmont from what you know?
4. What have you learned about this current Board of Selectmen? What do you think will be your biggest challenges working with this Board? How would you facilitate conflict between board members?
5. If you disagree with the Board of Selectmen how do you handle it? Do you offer the Board alternative solutions to an issue when they have only picked one and you are aware of alternatives the Board may not be aware of?
6. Provide us a general assessment of Belmont's financial condition. Please share with us how you would implement these steps into Belmont's budget planning process and how you plan on including Belmont's many boards, committees and budget interests?
7. Explain how honest communications, honor and integrity relate to developing a quality working relationship with the public, committees and town employees. Provide an example for each of these constituencies in which your honesty and integrity may have hurt or embarrassed you in the short run?

Mr. Williams indicated that because he had been involved with the screening committee process as the Selectman's representative, he opted not to participate in one on one interviews with the candidates so as to not have an unfair advantage in terms of more time with the candidates.

INTERVIEW WITH KEVIN SWEET

Mr. Williams invited Mr. Sweet to the table and introductions were made.

Mr. Williams asked Question #1. Mr. Sweet gave an overview of his municipal work experience in the City of Taunton, Cambridge College and subsequently the Town of Maynard. He also explained his experience with various consulting jobs. He has been with the Town of Maynard for 9 years, with the last 5 years as Town Administrator. During his time here, he was part of the MSBA high school project from start to finish, as well as other major capital projects. Mr. Sweet also led a long controversial development project that had previously failed on two occasions. This project has brought much needed revenue to the Town of Maynard.

Mr. Sweet noted that he is one of 28 ICMA credentialed managers in the State of Massachusetts. He stated he holds an MPA and has served on several appointed Boards and Committees within the State. He indicated he is also actively involved in the Massachusetts Municipal Manager's Association.

Mr. Paolillo inquired about the size of the Maynard High School debt exclusion. Mr. Sweet responded that it was a \$48M project. He also indicated that there had been discussion at the time relative to regionalizing the plan.

Mr. Williams asked Mr. Sweet to explain further his ICMA Credentialed Manager certification. Mr. Sweet explained that in order to be credentialed, you need to have at least eight years of executive experience, as well as graduate level coursework, and a commitment to the profession as a municipal manager. There is a requirement to maintain a professional development plan, including citizen engagement, leadership, and budgetary aspects.

Mr. Dash asked Question #2. Mr. Sweet acknowledged the strong citizen and community involvement that exists in Belmont. He suggested that there needs to be a strategic plan in place to harness the energy and expertise the citizens bring to local government. Mr. Sweet stressed the importance of long range capital planning for projects, including buildings and the newly approved community path. Engaging citizens to work with the Board and provide forums for citizen input will be important relative to debt exclusion projects. The Town Administrator and Selectmen will need to provide a transparent process with open dialogue. Another challenge is the unfunded liabilities (Pension and OPEB) that Belmont is currently facing. It will be important to address this while maintaining the level of services for the Town.

Mr. Paolillo asked Mr. Sweet to explain his thoughts relative to a strategic plan. He discussed working with the OPEB study group and other committees who are involved with the various components of a strategic plan, utilizing the documents they have worked on and researched to bring together an overall plan that includes the desires and vision of the citizens.

Mr. Williams noted that the Town has 66 committees overall. He noted that the Selectmen are responsible for the financial strategic planning of the Town.

Mr. Paolillo asked Question #3. Mr. Sweet indicated that he is a collaborative manager, and maintains an open door policy. He views department heads as subject matter experts to whom he provides tools and support for them to complete their jobs. He believes his subordinates would state that he is inclusive, fair and visible as a leader. He stated that he has provided numerous mentoring opportunities. His selectmen would describe him as forward thinking. He believes his management style would work well in Belmont. Mr. Sweet is not afraid to delegate nor is he afraid to make decisions. He also does not believe in making decisions in a vacuum.

Mr. Williams asked Mr. Sweet if he viewed himself as more of a gatekeeper or facilitator. Mr. Sweet stated he is a little bit of both. He believes that behavior earns respect.

Mr. Williams asked Question #4. Mr. Sweet began looking at Belmont back in April, 2017. He has been following the Board actions and other community events and activities. He stated that he has been impressed with the work of the Board, and has come to understand the individual visions of each of the members. Mr. Sweet believes the Board is very deliberate and wishes to engage the citizens. He noted that while there have been 2-1 votes, those votes have been respected by the individual Board members. Mr. Sweet indicated that he is used to dealing with conflicts with his Board members, and believes in giving equal time to all members to ensure fairness. Mr. Sweet currently has a five member board, all different in their views and goals.

Mr. Sweet stated that the biggest challenge will be working with a board of three which he has

not experienced before. He does not anticipate there being any significant issues. He stated that the Town Administrator's role is to remain neutral; to work with the Chair to resolve conflicts with members, and know your place and the dynamics.

Mr. Paolillo inquired about the constantly changing membership of the Board and how Mr. Sweet would handle that given that each Board member comes in with a different vision and ideas. Mr. Sweet stated that as a manager, you need to be open minded, and understand the relationship with the Board. A change in the Board can change and shift the role.

Mr. Paolillo asked Question #5. Mr. Sweet replied that his job is to provide as much detail, information and analysis as possible so that the Board can make the best decision for the community. If the Board makes a different decision from what he would have made, he would respect that and carry out the wishes of the Board and the vote that was made. He said ultimately, disagreements would be handled with respect.

Mr. Sweet has observed that this Board is not afraid to make a difficult decision when needed. He believes the Board to be effective.

Mr. Sweet believes that it is the manager's job to provide all alternatives and options to the Board as well as the potential results of every alternative so that the Board has a full understanding of what can happen in any scenario. Mr. Sweet noted the example of the water and sewer rates.

Mr. Dash asked Question #6. Mr. Sweet noted that Belmont is a AAA bond rated community, which is a testament to our financial health. Strong fiscal policies were noted. Mr. Sweet stated his goal would be to maintain that bond rating, and work with the Selectmen and town officials throughout the budget process to develop short and long term priorities that will need to be addressed while maintaining services. Mr. Sweet then reviewed Maynard's budget process and how he would apply that process to Belmont. He noted the various drivers of the budget and the similarities to Belmont. Principles and steps for the creation of a budget are the same regardless of the size of the budget. The overall goal would be to prepare an inclusive budget that addresses all of the needs.

Mr. Paolillo asked how Mr. Sweet would work with the school committee. Mr. Sweet explained that he holds a town/school leadership meeting to start the process. He explained how they merged town and school facilities in Maynard and that it has been very effective and allowed the schools to focus more on education efforts vs. building and maintenance efforts. Mr. Sweet indicated that collaborative discussions with the school committee take place all year, not just at budget season.

Mr. Williams asked Question #7. Mr. Sweet indicated that he follows the ICMA code of ethics which govern his leadership. Honesty and integrity are key components of this code. He does not feel that being honest has ever hurt or embarrassed him.

Mr. Williams asked Mr. Sweet to conclude by giving an overview of what he could bring to Belmont. He stated that he has solid experience with financials, that he would ideally move to

this area, and be an active, visible leader within the community. He would be looking to make a commitment to Belmont for a long period of time. He believes that Belmont has a lot to offer him professionally; this would not be a “next step” opportunity for him. He would like to take this community to the next step and build upon the work and successes of prior town administrators.

The Board thanked Mr. Sweet for meeting with them.

INTERVIEW WITH PATRICE GARVIN

Mr. Williams invited Ms. Garvin to the table and introductions were made.

Mr. Paolillo asked Question #1. Ms. Garvin introduced herself and thanked the screening committee and department heads for their time. She believes that her experience to date will be a benefit to Belmont. She has always wanted to be in a profession where she can help people. She explained her background in volunteering efforts and non-profit experience. She stated that she loves local government because she can help people as well as see her efforts in a short period of time. She loves making people’s lives better. Ms. Garvin has faced numerous challenges; she seeks common ground and never lets anyone leave her office without a resolution to their problem or issue. She has balanced Shirley’s budget; secured various grants; and has financially improved the community. She believes she is a very balanced Administrator.

Mr. Paolillo asked Ms. Garvin to provide some examples of how she has affected people. Ms. Garvin gave an example of a situation with ambulance services and response times. She worked with the Chief to produce a plan for around the clock ambulance services without the need for mutual aid for all calls. They were able to decrease response times and save lives.

Mr. Williams asked Question #2. Ms. Garvin stated that volunteers drive the community. Belmont currently has building committees established with a variety of capital projects in the pipeline. It is important to get volunteers motivated to work on these expensive projects. One of the first things she would do would be to meet once a month with the chairs of the major building committees. While they are all working on different projects, there is overlap in ideas, concepts, challenges. Ms. Garvin stated an example of how she did this with the various land committees in Shirley. She had success with this and believes that she could have success in Belmont in getting these projects rolled out to the community.

Mr. Paolillo noted that the Board is responsible for bringing the community together. He asked how she would have handled the recent Planning Board issues. She stated that her role would have been to be a bridge between the Planning Board and the Selectmen; that perhaps the issue might have been avoided altogether had communication been taking place between the two groups with her involvement.

Mr. Dash asked Question #3. Most will say that she is even across the Board. She maintains an open door policy and treats everyone the same. Dropping by to touch base is encouraged; she is constantly in communication with people. Ms. Garvin stated that she does not micromanage; she does not want to run their departments. She does not hold things up to do the “big check”. She

prefers to be kept in the loop on issues, and generally has an idea of what everyone is working on. She believes that employees knowing their roles is key to being effective. It would be her intent to meet with every department head when starting this role to get an understanding of what they do, what the needs are, what can be improved, etc. Monthly department head meetings are held; weekly finance meetings during budget season are also held, as are public safety meetings. Ms. Garvin believes she has grown as a manager during her time in Shirley. She does not want to come in and change things; she would want to observe and make changes, if necessary, over time. She relies on the professionalism of the staff; she believes that people want to contribute and she does not take credit. Past supervisors would say that she is in tune with everything going on, but that she does not feel the need to be involved with everything. Ms. Garvin keeps her personal opinions out and does not let them affect her job.

Mr. Paolillo asked Question #4. From an early age, she has worked with all kinds of people. She has always worked well with Selectmen because she understands and respects the role and position. Ms. Garvin noted that it goes beyond the person sitting in the seat at any given time. She has found this has made it easy for her as she realizes that the goal is for them to do well for the Town. The biggest challenge will be to gain the respect and trust of the Board. She believes in always keeping the selectmen informed (no surprises); one will never know something the others do not know.

Mr. Williams asked Question #5. Ms. Garvin acknowledges that there will be times she disagrees with the Board. She first checks to see if she disagrees because of her personal views or if it is not in the best interest of the Town. If it is the latter, she would tell the Board. She would provide alternatives; would ask for more time to find better solutions if need be. She always focuses on doing what is best for the Town vs. what is best for her. Ultimately, the final decision rests with the Board. Ms. Garvin noted that she would keep all members informed of all issues. Ms. Garvin believes in letting her work speak for itself.

Mr. Paolillo inquired as to how she would handle a change in Board membership and how the vision for policy and direction may change. Ms. Garvin stated that the Board sets the policy, and her job is to implement that policy.

Mr. Dash asked Question #6. Relative to the budget, Ms. Garvin looks at the budget and believes that the process is similar regardless of the size. She also noted that she was the chair of the finance committee in Chelmsford which has a budget the size of Belmont's. Ms. Garvin noted the FY15 override and the various capital projects in the pipeline as well as the projected deficit in FY20. It was also noted that school enrollments continue to increase so she would want to meet with the superintendent to better understand what other needs exist. If there are any "catch up" items, she would want to sit with the treasurer and accountant to review the 10 year debt schedule to understand where things are at. She would then complete a cost and data analysis to present to the various financial boards and committees. Ms. Garvin also made note of the incinerator site and how there was interest in using this in Belmont for a solar project. She would then look for any potential savings within the budget and work closely with the finance team to identify as many as possible.

Mr. Williams asked about how far ahead she focuses on the budget as it was noted in an earlier

meeting that Ms. Garvin looks ahead when doing budgets. Ms. Garvin did indicate that she is usually thinking one additional year ahead while working on the current budget. She stated that she likes to hear the various "wish lists" of the department heads so that it is always in her mind in terms of what might be able to be added when.

Mr. Paolillo asked how Ms. Garvin has worked with the school committee. Ms. Garvin indicated that Shirley is part of a regional school district and that this transition had just been made shortly after her arrival in Shirley. She believes that progress is made when there is a lack of fighting between the stakeholders. She currently has a great relationship with the superintendent in Shirley.

Mr. Paolillo asked Question #7. Ms. Garvin stated that in this role, integrity is constantly challenged. She stated that when she says something, she does it. With regard to the public, there was a situation where numerous public records requests had been made relative to a public official. Some residents did not understand the parameters of public records requests. She stated that some felt she was releasing information to intentionally embarrass this particular individual. She explained the law and how she was bound to follow it. With regard to Committees, she presented a plan to end health insurance coverage for elected individuals. She was tasked with informing that individual that terminating their benefits was being considered by the Selectmen. She invited the individual to attend the meeting and comment. This particular initiative saved the Town a quarter of a million dollars. With regard to employees, she has had some employees leave the organization, some by choice, some not by choice. The Board desired to terminate an employee that she did not think should be terminated. The Board had a split vote; it was costly; it was a financial burden. Ms. Garvin knew that this process had to be handled correctly so that the Town is protected. This was a challenge as she liked this employee, but the decision had to be carried out. She knew she did the right thing by how things played out after the employee's departure. It is important to make sure process is done properly.

Mr. Williams asked Ms. Garvin what she would bring to Belmont and how we would benefit by her as our Town Administrator. Ms. Garvin has been in municipal government for over ten years. She has learned a lot in this time, and has always had a drive to know more. Her failures have driven her as much as her successes have. "If you aren't making mistakes you are not trying." She will keep trying and not give up until the job is done. She explained the example of the MassWorks grant that she kept applying for and going after.

The Board thanked Ms. Garvin for meeting with them.

The Board took a brief, ten minute break.

DISCUSSION

The Board reconvened at 8:20 p.m.. Chair Williams opened the floor for comments from the public. There were none.

Mr. Dash stated the Board has a tough decision. Mr. Williams stated that once the Board makes a decision there is still the possibility that the Board may not reach agreement on a contract. Mr.

White stated that was highly unlikely.

Mr. Williams stated that Mr. White did a terrific job with the process. He was pleased with the candidates that were presented to the Board by the Screening Committee.

Mr. White stated that both of these candidates are up and coming in the profession.

Mr. Williams felt that the public has had the opportunity to research and meet the candidates. The Board is prepared to vote a decision this evening. Mr. Williams asked for feedback from the other Board members. Mr. Dash stated that he liked the vision presented by Ms. Garvin. He stated that Mr. Sweet would do a terrific job. He felt the financial knowledge was equal amongst the candidates. He believes that Ms. Garvin is honest and forthright and that the Board got a sense of who she was as a person and she gave a statement of purpose. He recommends Ms. Garvin for the position.

Mr. Paolillo agreed with Mr. Dash's comments. He stated that Mr. Sweet came with excellent credentials and was well networked in the profession. Mr. Paolillo appreciated the specific examples provided by Ms. Garvin to some of the Board's questions. She brings a quiet forcefulness that will help bring the community and committees together on the issues. Mr. Paolillo felt she would be a strong administrator and would work collaboratively with the Town.

Mr. Williams liked and respected both candidates. He felt both would serve the Town well, and that they offered different styles and approaches. Mr. Williams believes that the job itself is not one of being the 4th selectmen but rather someone who will facilitate the Board's direction. He believes both candidates can do this. He believes that both candidates are capable of doing the job. Mr. Williams noted that the screening committee focused on candidates who have been Town Administrators and who can manage both up and down. Mr. Williams stated he did not have a strong preference on which candidate should be hired. He believes that either one could fit.

Mr. Paolillo noted that Mr. Sweet is used to working with a larger budget than Ms. Garvin. That said, he felt Ms. Garvin's answer to the budgetary question was good. Mr. Paolillo noted that Ms. Garvin had to grow into her position in Shirley which is what she would need to do here. He also noted that it would be a growth and learning curve for Mr. Sweet as well.

Mr. Dash felt that Ms. Garvin had the edge on some of her answers this evening. He felt they were honest vs "canned" and that the Board will know what they are getting with her.

Mr. Paolillo a motion to offer the position of Town Administrator to Patrice Garvin pending the outcome of the final background check and contract negotiations. Mr. Dash seconded.

Vote: 3-0-0.

Mr. Paolillo inquired about process going forward relative to the contract negotiations. He recommended that Chair Williams work with Mr. White and labor counsel to solidify a contract.

Mr. White indicated that he would assist the Board by meeting with each of them individually

about terms of the contract.

Mr. Dash made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Paolillo.

Vote: 3-0-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Porter
Human Resources Director