

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES – April 3, 2023

6:15 p.m. - Chair's Introduction to Remote Meeting

Chair Cohen stated that this Open Meeting of the Board of Selectmen was being conducted remotely consistent with the July 16, 2022 Act Relative to Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency and that all members of the Board of Selectmen are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely.

Chair Cohen noted that the Order allows public bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting. He added that ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless such participation is required by law. Chair Cohen noted that this meeting will allow for Public Comment throughout the agenda. He indicated the various ways that the public may view or participate in this meeting as listed on the posted agenda.

Chair Cohen confirmed that the following members and persons anticipated on the agenda were remotely present and could be heard.

Board of Selectmen

Mitch Cohen
Julianne Hirsh
Kristen Wixted
Jason Perreault
T. Scott Rogers

Others

Becca Meekins, Assistant Town Administrator

Any votes taken this evening will be by roll call.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Norm Corbin of 35 Whitney Street urged the Select Board to consider moving forward with the next step for the Metrowest Collaborative reuse proposal for the White Cliffs as soon as possible so that additional information can be discussed in public forums with the goal of scheduling a Fall Town Meeting to decide the project's outcome.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MARCH 16, 2023 MEETING

Selectman Rogers moved the Board vote to approve the March 16, 2023 meeting minutes as presented; Selectman Hirsh seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Perreault	"aye"	Hirsh	"aye"
Rogers	"aye"	Cohen	"aye"
Wixted	"aye"		

BUZZ STAPCZYNSKI AND BOB MERCIER OF MUNICIPAL RESOURCES, INC.

Overview of Town Administrator Recruitment Process and Timeline

Mr. Mercier of Municipal Resources, Inc. (MRI) indicated that the Town Administrator position will be advertised for 30 days with a deadline of May 8th to submit resumes. The resumes will be reviewed by MRI and will be narrowed down for further consideration by the Screening Committee. Following review by the Screening Committee, between 3-5 candidates will be recommended for final interviews with the Select Board.

In the meantime, Mr. Stapczynski and Mr. Mercier will begin having individual conversations with Select Board members, Department Directors and whomever else the Select Board feels is appropriate in order to develop a Town Administrator profile and challenge statement. An email will be set up to post on the Town website that will allow persons to send anonymous comments regarding their thoughts about a potential Town Administrator. A public forum will also be scheduled as part of the recruitment process.

Vote to Approve Advertisement for Town Administrator

Mr. Mercier of Municipal Resources, Inc. (MRI) reviewed the draft advertisement for the Town Administrator position with a suggested salary range of \$185,000 to \$210,000 based on salary information from comparable communities.

Selectman Perreault moved the Board vote to approve the advertisement for the Town Administrator position as presented, and to set the salary range at \$185,000 to \$210,000 as recommended by MRI; Selectman Rogers seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Perreault	“aye”	Hirsh	“aye”
Rogers	“aye”	Cohen	“aye”
Wixted	“aye”		

Vote to Establish a Town Administrator Screening Committee

MRI recommended that the Screening Committee include a manageable number of people with a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 9 members. It was noted that individuals that most communities select to serve on a Screening Committee include any of the following; Chairs or Members from the Finance Committees, Planning Board, School Committee, at-large residents who may have a background in HR and anyone else the Select Board feels could add value to the process.

Chair Cohen suggested that a 7-member committee include members from the following:

- Select Board
- Departing Select Board member
- Future Select Board member to serve as one of the at-large members
- School Committee
- Planning Board
- Two at-large residents

Selectman Wixted would like to see the Screening Committee include 9 members that includes a member of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) Committee, the K-8 School Committee, the Regional School Committee, the Master Plan Implementation Committee (MPIC), the Planning Board and the Board of Library Trustees Mr. Mercier cautioned that with the larger membership, he worries about the ability to coordinate everyone’s schedules, adding that it is important that all members are able to participate and not miss any discussions on potential candidates.

Selectman Rogers would like to see the membership include a member of either the Appropriations Committee or the Financial Planning Committee. Selectman Perreault agreed, adding that it would be more appropriate for a member of the Appropriations Committee to serve on the Screening

Committee. Selectman Perreault would also prefer that it be a 7-member committee and that the Select Board representation include members who have already been serving on the Board that have direct familiarity with the operations of the organization rather than a newly elected member. Selectman Hirsh agreed that a 7-member committee would be more manageable, adding that a member of the Council on Aging should serve on the Screening Committee as well.

Selectman Rogers suggested that a 7-member Committee include members from the following:

- Select Board
- Planning Board
- School Committee
- Appropriations or Financial Planning Committee
- DEIB Committee
- Two at-large residents

Following no further discussion, Board members agreed to table this discussion and make a final decision on the Screening Committee membership at the April 10th Board meeting.

Interim Town Administrator Interviews

The April 3rd meeting packet that includes the candidate's resumes can be found [HERE](#)

The April 3rd interviews can be found [HERE](#)

Kevin Flynn

Following a brief review of his background and experience in municipal government, Mr. Flynn provided the following answers to questions asked by members of the Board.

What are your goals and objectives while serving as Interim Town Administrator (TA)?

To maintain the continuity of operations and maintain a forward motion through close communication with the Select Board and Town staff.

How do you see your relationship between yourself as Interim TA and the Select Board?

Meet individually with Select Board members to gain an understanding of what their expectations are and provide weekly written reports to keep the Select Board informed on what is being accomplished.

Describe your experience serving as an Interim Town Administrator in other communities.

Described a difficult situation that involved a lot of turnover in one community where he was heavily involved with the hiring and appointment process to fill those vacant positions. In addition, it was discovered that the tax bills were not being processed in a timely fashion. He was able to hire extra help to quickly mail out the tax bills and ensure that the payments were applied properly.

What qualities and professional experience are necessary to succeed as an Interim TA?

It is important that the Interim TA is knowledgeable about all the various aspects of local government and is able to adapt quickly and to communicate effectively to gather information before making important decisions.

What is your leadership style and how would you build trust and confidence with the Select Board and Town staff?

Meet with the Select Board, Town staff and the various Boards and Committees to gain an understanding of the concerns and priorities of the community.

What is your work availability?

Available to start as soon as April 10th and would work however many hours are required.

David Marciello

Following a brief review of his background and experience in municipal government, Mr. Marciello provided the following answers to questions asked by members of the Board.

What are your goals and objectives while serving as Interim Town Administrator (TA)?

To make sure that Town operations continue to move forward and to get to know everyone too ensure that this transition period runs smoothly. Described a difficult situation when he was an Interim TA in another community where most of the financial team was on FMLA leave and the one remaining departmental employee quit. With no institutional knowledge and through his years of experience and connections, he was able to quickly gather a team of financial experts to keep the finance operations moving forward.

How do you see your relationship between yourself as Interim TA and the Select Board?

Meet individually and collectively with Select Board members and schedule meetings with Town staff on a monthly basis. Will provide weekly reports to the Select Board and will attend Board and Committee meetings as needed. It is important to build relationships when there is no institutional knowledge of the organization.

Describe your experience serving as an Interim Town Administrator in other communities.

Uncertainty can be a challenge to an Interim TA when trying to build relationships. Because of his leadership style, he will be transparent in his interest to eventually become the permanent TA.

What qualities and professional experience are necessary to succeed as an Interim TA?

An Interim TA must have a diverse amount of education, experience and knowledge and should be familiar with the priorities of the community.

What is your leadership style and how would you build trust and confidence with the Select Board and Town staff?

As Interim TA he is here to provide a smooth transition. His leadership style is to listen to everyone and understand their issues and priorities.

In answer to a follow-up question, Mr. Marciello explained that during the gap between his last place of employment until now he was busy taking care of family members during the pandemic.

What is your work availability?

He is available to start as soon as possible and would work however many hours are required.

Bob Reed

Following a brief review of his background and experience in municipal government, Mr. Reed provided the following answers to questions asked by members of the Board.

What are your goals and objectives while serving as Interim Town Administrator (TA)?

The first responsibility is to make sure that the transition goes as smoothly as possible. He would meet with the Select Board members and Town staff to understand those items that are time sensitive to make sure that deadlines are met. He would get involved in potential issues and the continuing projects that are important to the community.

How do you see your relationship between yourself as Interim TA and the Select Board?

He has a very open management style. First and foremost, he would meet with the Select Board and continue with regular communication. He appreciates that Northborough has a reputation of being a very stable and well-run community and hopes that his experience with working in other communities can bring some good counsel to the Select Board and some value to Northborough.

Describe your experience serving as an Interim Town Administrator in other communities.

Honesty is important, and in one community he had to have difficult conversations with Select Board members regarding the State of Affairs in that community that they were unaware of at the time.

What qualities and professional experience are necessary to succeed as an Interim TA?

It is important to have had a long career in municipal government and to have retired successfully in order to share that experience and knowledge in the role as Interim TA. His approach to acting as an Interim TA is the same as if he were the permanent TA.

What is your leadership style and how would you build trust and confidence with the Select Board and Town staff?

He will stay in close contact with the Select Board, Department Directors and other employees to understand what is important to them and their department.

What is your work availability?

He would be available to start at any time and would plan to work at Town Hall three days per week. He would approach the work as a full-time Interim TA and would be available by phone and email on those days he is not physically present in the office.

DISCUSSION – TOWN ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEWS

Prior to the Select Board discussing each of the candidates, Mr. Stapczynski and Mr. Mercier offered their thoughts on each of the candidates interviewed this evening.

Board members shared the following thoughts on each of the candidates.

Kevin Flynn

Board members agreed that Mr. Flynn is very knowledgeable and would communicate well with the Select Board and Town staff, adding that the weekly written reports would be helpful. Board members expressed concern that the communities he has worked with previously are much smaller than Northborough.

Davide Marciello

Board members expressed appreciation for his open management style and his background as an attorney. Board members noted that his prior experience goes back and forth between being a Town Administrator and an Attorney. Board members compared his experience in a number of

different dimensions to someone who has direct experience and focus on acting as an Interim TA. Board members also expressed concern with hiring him as an Interim TA knowing that his interest is to eventually serve as the permanent TA. It was noted that there are potential complications of acting as the Interim TA while also being a potential candidate for the permanent TA position.

Bob Reed

Board members expressed their appreciation that Mr. Reed clearly has had a long career as a Town Administrator and has significant experience in working as an Interim TA in other communities. He has a good reputation working with not only Department Directors, but with all Town staff. He treats all staff like they are colleagues and has an open management style with a very direct and candid approach to daily tasks.

Board members questioned the importance of hiring an Interim TA that would work in the office 5 days per week. Ms. Meekins responded that the weekly work schedule is secondary to the amount of experience that someone can bring to Northborough. She added that given Mr. Reed's significant background and experience, she is more than comfortable with an arrangement that he work 3 days in the office each week.

VOTE TO APPOINT INTERIM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Selectman Wixted moved the Board vote to appoint Robert Reed as Interim Town Administrator, subject to reference checks and successful contract negotiation, and to allow the Chair to negotiate on behalf of the Board; Selectman Perreault seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Perreault	"aye"	Hirsh	"aye"
Rogers	"aye"	Cohen	"aye"
Wixted	"aye"		

OTHER BUSINESS

Selectman Rogers asked for an update on the efforts of Town staff to answer some of the questions brought about during Metrowest Collaborative's recent presentation on their reuse proposal for the White Cliffs. Ms. Meekins indicated that she will check with the Planning Director.

Selectman Rogers requested an update on when the Select Board can anticipate receiving the categorization of the public ARPA input. Chair Cohen indicated that he is hoping to schedule an initial review of public ARPA requests on the May 8th meeting agenda.

Selectman Rogers asked when the Board would consider the approval of the Town Administrator's recommendation for appointments to the Town Offices Feasibility Study Committee? Chair Cohen asked Ms. Meekins to provide copies of the applications so that this can be scheduled on the April 10th meeting agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Cohen invited comments from the public. There were none.


ADJOURNMENT

Selectman Rogers moved the Board vote to adjourn; Selectman Perreault seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Perreault	“aye”	Hirsh	“aye”
Rogers	“aye”	Cohen	“aye”
Wixted	“aye”		

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Diane M. Wackell
Executive Assistant to the
Board of Selectmen

Documents used during meeting:

1. April 3, 2023 Meeting Agenda
2. March 16, 2023 Meeting Minutes
3. Memorandum – Town Administrator Recruitment Process and Timeline
4. Draft Advertisement for Town Administrator
5. Memorandum – Town Administrator Screening Committee
6. Interim Town Administrator Resumes