

**SELECT BOARD  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
November 15, 2023**

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6:15 p.m. – Chair’s Introduction to Remote Meeting

SB Chair Cohen reviewed interview process and noted that the interviews will be conducted in the following order:

|        |               |
|--------|---------------|
| 6:20pm | Jeff Bridges  |
| 7:25pm | Clancy Main   |
| 8:30pm | Tim McInerney |

SB Chair Cohen read the remote meeting notice and confirmed the following Select Board members and others could hear and be heard.

Select Board (SB)

Mitch Cohen, Chair  
Kristen Wixted, Vice Chair  
Laura Ziton, Clerk  
Lisa Maselli  
Julianne Hirsh

Others

Michael Gallagher, Interim Town Administrator  
Diane Wackell, Interim Assistant Town Administrator

**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEWS:**

**Jeff Bridges**

Mr. Bridges answered questions put forth by the Select Board. His strengths include finances and collective bargaining. He is interested in progress and seeing things from start to finish. Mr. Bridges believes communities need to list their priorities and use the tools available to them in the completion of projects. He listed Northborough’s strengths as its government, financial strength and continued monitoring of finances. He spoke of using the area along the Assabet River as a tool for development. He indicated that affordable housing creates an increase in population and affects the town’s infrastructure, but it is needed. He stated that the MBTA mandate is a tough issue and that managed growth and affordable housing are important. He acknowledged that the cost of housing is a challenge for seniors.

Mr. Bridges believes that the Town Administrator works primarily for the Select Board. He feels that the Town should use available tools regarding climate change and be conscious of its impact on the environment. He believes the Town Administrator needs to support and be fair with employees. He indicated that traffic is a regional issue and should be discussed with neighboring towns for a solution. He believes White Cliffs would add value to the community. He believes that the staff should be involved in the Select Board’s vision.

**Clancy Main**

Mr. Main is the Assistant Town Manager in Billerica. He is responsible for capital projects, negotiates for collective bargaining, has worked on starting up social media accounts and newsletters. He is a leader and loves working in town government. In regard to budgeting, he works with a Capital Facilities Committee to prioritize projects and create a way to fund the projects over time. He feels that the Town Administrator needs to be a leader and a collaborator. He feels that the MBTA mandate is going to change neighborhoods. He noted that affordable

housing is needed, but it is difficult to know where to place housing while protecting the character of the town. It is important to collaborate with town residents and understand what is important to them. In terms of economic development, it is important to know the needs of the businesses and what can be provided by the town. It is important that the Town is an attractive place to work and live.

Mr. Main feels that it is important to prioritize budget requests and to keep tax increases low for fixed income households. He supports a walkable downtown that is inviting. The Town should help business owners improve their appearance with input from residents. He feels that it is difficult as a municipality to address climate change due to cost.

Mr. Main feels that it is important to have a social presence and post what departments are doing and to be sure to reach all demographics. His experience with traffic is to ban some trucks on certain streets, to look at traffic patterns in the whole town and see how it effects other areas in town. He loves historic buildings and has experience with renovations of a historic building owned by the City of Lowell. He added that it is important to not lose some of the Town's history.

### **Tim McInerney**

Mr. McInerney has served as the Town Administrator in Grafton for 12 years. He has worked at all levels of government. He likes the variety of tasks in the Town Administrator job. He likes to solve problems and explore new ways to fund projects. He has a good understanding of technical infrastructure. His strengths are democracy and transparency. His job is to protect the taxpayers and to do all you can to support them. He feels that customer service is important. In terms of budgeting, you must look at revenues first and consider new growth in town, as well as consider different ways of funding projects to not raise taxes. Good communication between all Boards and residents and staff is important. In regard to the MBTA mandate, he suggested focusing on one area and conducting a pilot program in a small district of the town. With respect to the economic development of the downtown area, he would hold a visioning session with landowners and town residents. He would start to expand pockets along Route 20. It is important to treat staff with respect and common courtesy and to publicly acknowledge their efforts. He added that it is important to understand the workload of staff and to listen to their needs. It is important to understand the needs of seniors and to offer education and programs. In terms of downtown revitalization, landscaping for the downtown area is important. It is a good idea to develop a pilot area and grow downtown from there. It is important to know what the vision of the Select Board is and to involve staff and other Town offices to works towards that vision.

Mr. McInerney feels that social media is an important resource to communicate with the public. It is important that the Town website is up to date. In terms of traffic control, it is important to collect data and to be in touch with business owners and trucking companies. He shared how he developed a town trash and recycling program in Grafton. He demonstrated how the adoption of this program would lead to increased recycling and add another source of revenue at no cost to the taxpayers.

### **SELECTION**

SB Member Hirsh indicated that the Board should determine who is the best fit for Northborough, both now and in the future. All candidates had good energy.

SB Member Wixted felt that Mr. Bridges seemed very intelligent and has an out of Massachusetts perspective. He had good answers for problem solving and knows how to do the job. She is not sure what he would be like on a day-to-day basis and he may not be the right fit for Northborough. She felt that Mr. Main gave good answers to the questions regarding communication and he had good ideas and was looking forward to doing the job. She expressed concern that his answers to complicated questions were very general or that they did not apply to Northborough. He has great

energy but she is concerned that he may not be ready for Northborough. Mr. McInerney indicated that he wanted this to be his last place of employment. He knows how to do the job and has done it for 12 years in Grafton. She liked his demeanor and the Board's rapport with him. She liked that he lives close by. Overall she felt that he had the skills, was at a good place in his life and he was a good fit for Northborough.

SB Member Ziton liked Mr. Bridges' experience with budgeting and the work he has done. She liked his confidence and his views on economic development. She liked Mr. Main's energy and enthusiasm, but didn't feel that he could help with the large projects concerning Northborough due to his lack of experience. She liked his communication skills and how he has embraced technology in the community. She felt he had a good rapport with his colleagues. She liked how Mr. McInerney talked about smart framework in his essay and during the interview process. She liked how he integrated with his staff and his Board. She liked his zoning ideas regarding the downtown area and how he supports staff involvement.

SB Member Hirsh agreed with SB Member Ziton regarding Mr. Main. She didn't feel he was a good fit for Northborough right now due to his lack of experience.

SB Member Maselli felt that Mr. Main didn't have enough experience even though he had good ideas and was enthusiastic. She feels that Mr. Bridges was the strongest of all three candidates and that he would provide the structure that Northborough needs. She felt that Mr. Bridges would be able to help Northborough meet its financial obligations, as well as the obligations to the needs of the residents. She liked Mr. McInerney as well.

SB Chair Cohen indicated that Mr. Bridges was very smart, capable and confident. He expressed concern with his experience in the State of Kansas and how it is very different than Massachusetts. He did not feel he had the personality to be as good a collaborator as the other candidates. He indicated that Mr. Main had a lot of energy that could be good for the Town. He was very enthusiastic and he liked his ideas on communication and technology, but he doesn't feel that is necessarily the job of a Town Administrator. He had good detail on budgeting. He liked Mr. McInerney's confident and friendly manner. He felt Mr. McInerney would be a very balanced individual to work with and that he would fully listen to different ideas to solve problems and let people know they were heard. He appreciated that he had worked as a Town Administrator in Grafton for 12 years.

Following some discussion, the consensus was that Mr. Main lacked experience and would not be a good fit for Northborough at the current time. Both Mr. Bridges and Mr. McInerney would be strong Administrators. Mr. McInerney served in Grafton for a long time while Mr. Bridges has moved around a bit.

Mr. Gallagher indicated that Mr. McInerney reached out to him and asked about the challenges and opportunities in Town and showed a genuine interest.

SB Member Wixted thought Mr. McInerney was the best candidate and that Mr. Bridges did not have the personnel skills that the Town needs right now.

SB Member Ziton thought Mr. McInerney was very approachable. She felt that he would work well with the Board and that he was open to working together.

SB Member Maselli indicated that Mr. Bridges was the best candidate for right now because of his strong financial background and his view on economic development and arts and entertainment. She liked that he was looking to the future and felt he would work well with the Town.

SB Member Hirsh felt that Northborough is in a time of transition and thinks that Mr. McInerney would be the best fit.

SB Chair Cohen feels that Mr. McInerney may be the best fit at this time.

SB Member Wixted moved the Board vote to authorize Municipal Resources, Inc. to make a conditional offer of employment to Timothy McInerney for the position of Northborough Town Administrator. This offer is conditioned upon the satisfactory background interview/investigation conducted by Municipal Resources, Inc., a physical exam, if required, and the successful negotiation of the terms of appointment by the Select Board; SB Member Hirsh seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

SB Member Hirsh moved the Board vote to adjourn; SB Member Maselli seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 10.53pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda DiCelle  
Board Secretary

Documents used during meeting:

1. November 15, 2023 Meeting Agenda
2. Applicant resumes