



Board of Selectmen **Public Meeting Minutes** **December 3, 2015**

The regular meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Hearing Room by Chairman Erik Tolley. Selectmen present: Norm Holcomb, Jim Quirk, Tracy Post, and Michael Stone. Also attending: Town Administrator, William Hinchey. The Board of Selectmen gave the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Town Administrator Candidate Interview

Chairman Tolley introduced the current Assistant Town Administrator, Peter Johnson-Staub, and asked him to introduce himself and to provide his background, his career, and his experience and asked him to describe why he feels he is best qualified to fill the position of Town Administrator. Mr. Johnson-Staub thanked the Board and the Selection Committee for the opportunity to interview for the position. He then went on describe his background and experience and why he felt he was the best qualified candidate.

Selectman Holcomb started the questioning by asking Mr. Johnson-Staub to describe how his management style is different from Mr. Lawton's and Mr. Hinchey's. Mr. Johnson-Staub explained that his management style is more of a collaborative style, using the expertise of the staff involved.

Selectman Quirk asked Mr. Johnson-Staub to explain how he would manage the wastewater issue and how soon he would expect to have to deal with it. Mr. Johnson-Staub explained that Mr. Hinchey, he, and staff have already begun working on the wastewater issue having met with the consultant and wastewater team members on several occasions and expect a presentation to the Board in the near future.

Selectman Post asked Mr. Johnson-Staub that if he were appointed Town Administrator, what structural changes he would look to implement. Mr. Johnson-Staub stated that first, he would be looking to fill the Assistant Town Administrator position very quickly, and would look to restructure that position in that given the strength of our Finance team, there would be less need for a financial background from an assistant town administrator.

Selectman Stone asked Mr. Johnson-Staub to describe, given the mentoring relationship he has had with the current and previous town administrators, what he has learned from Mr. Lawton and from Mr. Hinchey. Mr. Johnson-Staub explained that he felt the most important thing he learned from Mr. Lawton was to listen to and show interest in each person you meet. He then described what he learned from Mr. Hinchey in that the key to success is to prioritize. There is not sufficient time to devote all your energies to every item that crosses your desk. It is therefore important that you learn to delegate.

Chairman Tolley stated that he would like to give Mr. Johnson-Staub the opportunity to explain his thinking, his goals, and his decisions with regard to applying for the town administrator position in Mashpee several months ago. Mr. Johnson-Staub explained that he was not attempting to influence or coerce the Board into appointing him as town administrator by applying to the town

of Mashpee, but was simply looking to achieve his goal of becoming a town administrator. The opportunity presented itself and he applied for the position.

Selectman Quirk asked Mr. Johnson-Staub what budgetary changes, if any, he would make to the process Mr. Hinchey has established. Mr. Johnson-Staub explained that Mr. Hinchey has done a great job in the past several years in making the budget process transparent and more easily understood. Mr. Johnson-Staub stated he would like to continue with that process but might make some formatting changes to increase ease of understanding and transparency.

Selectman Post asked Mr. Johnson-Staub to describe what he sees his weakness in leadership or management style is and how he sees himself changing or adjusting for that aspect of his leadership or management style. Mr. Johnson-Staub explained that he believes one of his strengths is that he is direct and will confront any issue where some leaders or managers will shy away from confrontation. However, at times, a gentler approach can be more helpful so he stated that is an area he is working on. Selectman Post followed up her initial question with what would Mr. Johnson-Staub look for in an assistant to balance his strengths and weaknesses. Mr. Johnson-Staub explained that he would look for someone who has the requisite skills for the position in terms of human resources, constituent services, and finance but is not a "yes" person. He would look for someone who is a thinker and who is warm and welcoming to balance his analytical approach.

Selectman Stone asked Mr. Johnson-Staub what he sees as his upside to his professional growth and what areas does he see a need for improvement to help him become a better and more effective administrator, and what would he do to assist in that improvement. Mr. Johnson-Staub explained that his current position requires great attention to detail in many areas; he doesn't necessarily see that as his strength and looks to expand his leadership skills, which is where he sees his strength. Further, Mr. Johnson-Staub stated that he is looking into attending the Gestalt Institute which offers leadership training and draws people from around the world. Additionally, he felt he would want to attack problems in a collaborative environment with the leadership team rather than directing solutions.

Selectman Holcomb asked Mr. Johnson-Staub to expand on his earlier comments regarding his desire to implement a collaborative leadership style and a gentler approach to working relationships while balancing those and getting things done. Mr. Johnson-Staub explained that he has been involved in both minor and significant changes within the town organizational structure over the past several years and he feels that he has implemented novel ideas to improve the organization and efficiency as well as empowering employees to innovate, change, and become more productive in their roles.

Chairman Tolley had a follow-up question regarding some people who believe he is overly direct in his approach. Mr. Johnson-Staub stated that he has been guilty of that approach. He went on to describe events that occurred within one of the divisions in which his direct approach resulted in a better running organization.

Chairman Tolley asked Mr. Johnson-Staub what his goals would be were he to be appointed town administrator under a five-year contract. Mr. Johnson-Staub commented that he would like to work at internal communications and morale issues to improve both. He also discussed working towards improving some of the technical issues some of the staff has had to endure due to software malfunctions. Further, he commented that wastewater and school capital investment are two big areas that will be a challenge.

Selectman Post commented on Mr. Johnson-Staub's statement that he didn't want a "yes" person as an assistant and that the town administrator cannot be that type of person either. In that there are five individual Board members who may have very differing ideas and views, the town administrator must work with all the board members to achieve their goals. Ms. Post asked how he would go about achieving that goal. Mr. Johnson-Staub commented that he would attempt to facilitate a dialogue among the Board members, providing guidance, suggestions, and alternatives.

Selectman Stone asked how Mr. Johnson-Staub interacts with the citizens of Yarmouth and what has he done as the Assistant Town Administrator to improve communication with the residents of the town. Mr. Johnson-Staub mentioned one item he was involved with was adding a question to the census that was sent out this year asking people if they had areas of interest that they would like to receive updates from the town on. This enabled the town to collect email addresses to enhance communications between the town and the residents. He also suggested that he would like to use media a little more than we have in the past (social media, channel 18, etc.).

Selectman Holcomb wanted to revisit Mr. Johnson-Staub's statement regarding not wanting to relocate from the Cape for another position which therefore limits his opportunities for town administrator positions. He asked what it is about the Cape or the area that has caused him to make that decision and is there anything that would change his mind. Mr. Johnson-Staub explained that he will not relocate his family while his children are in school. He and his family like the Cape and their town, but stated that after his children are out of school, he would consider relocating for a position, if necessary.

Selectman Quirk asked what could be done to integrate the regional school budget into the town budget so the Board can have information and control in a more timely fashion. Mr. Johnson-Staub stated he did not have a silver bullet to fix that problem but stated it would be worth a discussion with the town of Dennis to see if there are areas of agreement regarding the school budget issues. Additionally, he stated that he has good working relationships with the school administrators and feels those relationships will help with the budgeting issues. He also stated he hopes to build and improve upon the relationship with Dennis in an effort to streamline and provide more transparency with regard to the school budget.

Chairman Tolley asked Mr. Johnson-Staub to walk the Board members through his first week in the top position, or what would that look like? Mr. Johnson-Staub stated he is going to look for more opportunities to meet with division and department heads and having them communicating more frequently with each other.

Selectman Post asked Mr. Johnson-Staub to talk about the negotiating process he used with the various unions, given the difficulty of the process. Mr. Johnson-Staub explained that he is most proud of the negotiations in that the unions are not normally interested in reducing benefits but through open and direct communications, he was able to reach compromises.

Selectman Stone asked Mr. Johnson-Staub to explain why he did not apply for the town administrator position five years ago when Mr. Lawton retired and what has changed in those five years that changed his mind this time. Mr. Johnson-Staub explained that, primarily, it was a family decision; his children were younger then and he felt he didn't want to devote the time necessary to properly perform the job at that time, however, he did state he feels he was qualified for the position five years ago. Selectman Stone also asked what he learned under Mr. Hinchey that would make him a better town administrator. Mr. Johnson-Staub explained that the delegation of responsibilities down to department and division heads from the town administrator level is something he has learned and would continue to do.

Selectman Holcomb asked Mr. Johnson-Staub to expand on his union negotiations process and experience as it relates to keeping to the town budget and balancing the needs for adequate living wages for the community. Mr. Johnson-Staub explained that through negotiations, communications, and new and creative ways to control costs would allow the town to offer competitive wages to residents.

Selectman Quirk asked Mr. Johnson-Staub to describe what he felt the town administrator's role is with regard to business development within the town. Mr. Johnson-Staub explained that we need to be attentive to the process, ensuring there are not undue delays within town hall for commercial applications, licensing, and permitting. He further explained there are significant ways the town can assist in making property in Yarmouth a more attractive investment for commercial development, such as renovation of some of the vacant and dilapidated properties, thereby increasing the property values for neighboring properties. Additionally, he discussed the wastewater process will make properties more attractive to investors as well.

Chairman Tolley asked Mr. Johnson-Staub what he thinks the town can do to further aid the heroin and other drug problem in the town. Mr. Johnson-Staub explained that the town does not have the resources to solve this drug epidemic on its own but suggested that the Board is and has been engaged in the problem and supports the myriad of educational, medical, social, and legislative services available Cape-wide to fight the epidemic. He did suggest that additional political and legislative pressures could be an additional step the Board could take.

Selectman Stone asked Mr. Johnson-Staub what he would consider the ideal skill set for an assistant town administrator should he be appointed as the town administrator and what would he be looking in an assistant town administrator. Mr. Johnson-Staub explained that he would most benefit from someone who is warm and attentive to constituents and employees and who is able to make the work fun. Additionally, he said he would need a workhorse - someone who is able to get a lot done quickly.

Selectman Quirk asked what department and/or division would require the most attention in the next year to five years. Mr. Johnson-Staub stated that should we find a way forward on wastewater that DPW would be the department that would require the most attention but would also involve the Health Department, the IT Division, and the Finance Department.

Selectman Post asked Mr. Johnson-Staub to specifically address why he would like to further his professional growth in Yarmouth specifically. Mr. Johnson-Staub explained that he, and his peers, sees Yarmouth as the example of municipal excellence on the Cape. More importantly, he felt the Board's goals of big picture, policy issues makes Yarmouth the most attractive opportunity for town managers. Mr. Johnson-Staub went on to explain he feels Yarmouth has the most challenging issues on the Cape and therefore makes the work more challenging and important to accomplish.

Selectman Quirk asked Mr. Johnson-Staub how an aging demographic population in Yarmouth will fit into his plans and finding the eligible, qualified personnel to meet the town's challenges. Mr. Johnson-Staub stated that is going to be a challenge and that he felt we may need to be more flexible in our approach to compensation for future employees.

Selectman Holcomb discussed Yarmouth's percentage of affordable housing and asked Mr. Johnson-Staub his thoughts for increasing Yarmouth's percentage from 6% to 10% affordable housing. Mr. Johnson-Staub stated he shared Mr. Holcomb's frustration but stated it is going to be very difficult to get there given the need for increasing the tax base versus increasing affordable

housing. Selectman Quirk interjected that part of the problem is the cost of a parcel of land in Yarmouth does not lend itself to affordable housing projects. Selectman Post stated that without year-round competitive jobs, there will never be enough affordable housing. She asked Mr. Johnson-Staub if he had any thoughts on that. Mr. Johnson-Staub stated that we need to do everything we can to stimulate economic development by looking at all facets (i.e., zoning, maintaining a low tax burden). He added that finding an affordable solution to wastewater will create a long-term economic stimulant through construction jobs, increased "heads and beds" occupancy, and restaurant revenues.

Chairman Tolley asked the candidate to give a closing statement. Mr. Johnson-Staub thanked the Board for the opportunity to interview for the position and stated he felt he holds the requisite experience and desire to serve in the town administrator position for many years.

2. Adjourn

MOTION: To move that the Board of Selectmen adjourn the meeting.

Motion by: Jim Quirk

Seconded by: Tracy Post

Aye 5 Nay 0

Respectfully submitted,



Linda Dennehy

DISTRIBUTED MATERIAL AGENDA PACKET

- Cover Letter and Resume from Mr. Peter Johnson-Staub
- Cover Letter and Resume from Mr. Mark Rees (*Mr. Rees withdrew his application for consideration after the agenda and packet were posted*).