

## *Town of Adams Massachusetts 01220-2087*

### BOARD OF SELECTMEN

TOWN HALL BUILDING  
8 PARK STREET

Monday, December 9, 2019, 6:00 p.m.  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Mahogany Meeting Room

### MEETING MINUTES

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by Chairman Hoyt at 6:15 p.m. Present were Vice Chairman Bush, Members Blanchard, Duval, and Nowak. Town Administrator Green and DPW Candidate Tober were also in attendance.

### DPW DIRECTOR INTERVIEWS

**Robert Tober, 6:00 p.m.:** *Mr. Tober* advised that he had met the key players at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, the Department of Public Works, and the Town Hall staff, which he felt was a productive day. He expressed that what some saw as challenges he felt were opportunities, and pointed out that meeting the DPW Team was the highlight. He noted that the DPW Operations Supervisor expressed his concerns, and the crew is a tight team that works very well. Board Members asked unscripted questions of Mr. Tober. He was asked about a corporate answer given regarding how he planned to get to know the team and whether after meeting them he felt that approach would still work. He advised he felt it would as he started out as a DPW member and evolved from the same position as them, so felt the same brotherhood. He stated he started to see them open up and was comfortable dealing with the Board of Selectmen and other Town staff. He noted that he is a collaborative person, and received input from the Operations Supervisor so if it seems like something doesn't work he will move on to something else. He explained he would get to know everyone individually and pointed out the hierarchy and chain of command. He advised he had worked in a union shop before, was familiar with unions, and the direct supervisor should issue discipline unless it is a safety issue which needs immediate attention. Mr. Tober was advised that it is a small department and some team members specialize in certain things. It was pointed out that they are not ready to have someone out in the field watching them, and he was asked how he would handle complaints. He explained that the complaint would go to the Operations Supervisor to handle, and that he would not replace him. He noted he may do an inspection or observe the work but would not micromanage it or discipline but be collaborative in a one-on-one situation. He gave the example that if someone is using a weed whacker and using a pull cord but not pulling with tension they will break the cord and will require more cord pulling training. Mr. Tober's education and business experience were noted, as well as his hands-on experience and compassion. He explained that he prefers to be selfless rather than selfish so people know you care about them. He gave examples of working with students and the praise he gave them as a leader, as well as being firm and professional. Mr. Tober was asked about having no DPW experience showing on his employment history and application documents. He advised that his experience goes back further and was outlined in his cover letter. He noted jobs he worked at in related fields and that it gravitated toward administrative work. He outlined experience in landscape and design, as well as construction businesses and property management, DPW and water. He explained his management positions and noted he supervised 10

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TOWN CLERK

managers and 85 staff members. He explained that the Town of Adams has been running without a Director for 1.5 years and can continue to do so but he wants to look at buildings, planning and the future. Significant road construction projects were noted as forthcoming in the next year, and he was asked for his project management experience. He explained his knowledge of all parts of a project, from permits to planning, installation of a sluiceway and coordinating with the Town, property management, Health and Fire Inspection services. He explained a project on the expansion of a cafeteria floor, but the RFP was taken care of. He noted in Holliston he did maintenance of fields, put together a \$30,000 turf plan by field where he limed, fertilized, aerated, and spread the soil, planned and kept track of the fields. Town owned buildings were outlined, and their upkeep was noted as part of the responsibility. Mr. Tober was asked how he would implement a plan for capital improvements and what the process would look like. He responded that he would gather information on the need and research resources available, and prioritize by emergency situations, needs, resources available, and prioritization by urgency. He advised he would do a one-year, two-year, five-year, and ten-year plan. He noted that fleet management can have some leeway determined by regular maintenance. It was noted that a needs assessment is in process for the Elementary School and that a DPW Director would be keeping the momentum on this going forward. Mr. Tober expressed he has experience in construction and property management, which deals with rehab work and repairs. He noted his hands-on experience with older buildings and had an active supervisor's license for over ten years which he could get again. Military background was briefly discussed and he expressed comfort whether giving or receiving orders. It was emphasized that our current grant writer has been extremely successful in supporting the Town, and an inquiry was made on Mr. Tober's grant-writing ability and experience. He explained his work with writing, administering grants and reporting on the metrics. A hypothetical scenario was provided to him regarding a mock employee in an ethical or legal issue and how he would handle it. Mr. Tober brought forth a real-life example of a situation he handled which included an investigation that he initiated and provided an immediate termination, following the steps of a human resource procedure for a gross violation of policy. He noted that depending on the situation and input from the direct supervisor would inform what steps and documentation that would take place from an incident. Clarification was requested on a short position outlined on his application, and Mr. Tober noted that the position was highly clerical which is not his forte and changes were made to the position. A recent acquisition of a Fire Truck was reviewed and it was clarified that the DPW Director will have to require research and due diligence on large purchases and use of funds. Mr. Tober agreed that research would be done, priority and resources will be assessed and if necessary a case would be made to compromise, find alternate solutions or present the case to the Board for extra funding. It was noted that the DPW Director would not interact much with the Board, but that stability in the position and to be accessible especially after hours and during storms is critical for the community. He noted he would be on call 24 hours per day, 7 days per week unless other arrangements are made, and he would relocate to this area. Delegation would be done at his prerogative. He explained that this would likely be his career-ending job, he is looking to be in this area and thanked the Board for the opportunity.

***A brief recess took place at 7:13 p.m. and the Board was called back to order at 7:17 p.m.***

***Paul Markland, 7:30 p.m.*** *It was noted that Mr. Markland had withdrawn his candidacy for this position, and he had been thanked for his interest in the community and the position.*

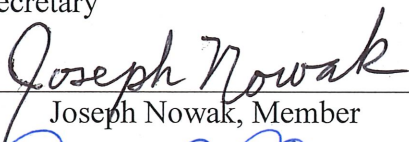
**DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION ON DPW DIRECTOR HIRING:** A brief overview was given, including a review of Wastewater Treatment Plant issues and the candidate's response. The DPW staff meeting with Mr. Tober was outlined for the Board. The fleet was reviewed, and it was

noted that he listened very intently. Mr. Tober met with Community Development and Accounting Department Heads, and funding and maintenance issues of large projects were reviewed with him. It was noted that his landscape and construction business were not outlined in the interviews. Input was received from the DPW Operations Supervisor on the candidate. Brief discussion took place on whether this position has a contract or whether salary needs to be approved by the Board. Past DPW Director hiring and negotiations were reviewed as well as a probation period. A January start to this position was noted as desirable. Hiring requirements were itemized. ***Motion made by Member Blanchard to make and an offer and appoint Mr. Tober to the position of DPW Director, second by Member Nowak. Vote: unanimous.***

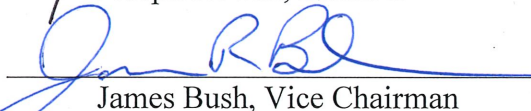
**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GOOD OF THE ORDER:** *There were no announcements made at this meeting.*

**ADJOURNMENT:** *Motion made by Member Blanchard, second by Vice Chairman Bush. Vote: unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 7:29 p.m.*


Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,  
Recording Secretary

  
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Joseph Nowak, Member

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John Duval, Member

  
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James Bush, Vice Chairman

  
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Richard Blanchard, Member

  
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Christine Hoyt, Chairman