

Town of Adams Massachusetts 01220-2087

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

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8 PARK STREET

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Thursday, June 11, 2020, 5:30 p.m.
Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER: On the above date the Board of Selectmen held a meeting on the first floor of Adams Town Hall. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Board of Selectmen Chairman Hoyt. Present were Vice Chairman Bush, Members Duval, Blanchard and Nowak. Present in the room were Town Administrator Green. On phone were Town Counsel St. John III, Lou Moser, Courtney Canales and Deb Dunlap. Donna Poulton, Reena Bucknell, Donna MacDonald.

Chairman Hoyt advised that "pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 *Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18*, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Town of Adams Board of Selectmen is being conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order. A reminder that persons who would like to view this meeting while in progress may do so by tuning into Channel 1303, thank you to Northern Berkshire Community Television OR by calling (888) 788-0099.

NEW BUSINESS

Reopening of Parks: *Chairman Hoyt* reviewed that Vice Chairman Bush and Member Duval are working with staff to look at the reopening of parks. It was explained that Monday a review was made about the opportunity to reopen restaurants with outside meals and pickup food and to put together a plan for businesses to go through this phase. It was noted that the Lieutenant Governor indicated youth organizations can begin to develop plans with communities and youth organizations to reopen parks and playgrounds. It was explained that the Town Administrator has been supporting these efforts and identified four individuals from Town staff to support the effort. It was pointed out that the goal for the Board of Selectmen is to provide guidelines for the organizations to use the fields in accordance with the guidelines of the Governor. There was a meeting with the team of the Town to go over this plan and the rules for Phase II, Part II to review how it will go into effect as the rules are pretty strict. It was noted that Pittsfield and Dalton started to move forward as well. It was explained that the Town Administrator had tentatively indicated July 6th as an initial date for when he would like to see the plan from the Board of Selectmen. Signs need to be purchased and placed at all playgrounds and sports fields and each organization will have to develop a plan to be reviewed. One Little League organization decided not to move forward because of the limitations and rules that need to be followed. Town Administrator Green advised he is focusing on how the field will be used by amateur and youth teams. He explained a two-prong approach for open spaces and playgrounds and around July 6th a "use at your own risk" scenario would be considered as there is no way for the municipality to monitor use for compliance of the stringent limitations by the state. He noted it will need coordination but much of it will be self-regulated. The Town did not take down basketball hoops and occasionally sees pickup games but is challenged with how to police it. He pointed out that if the Town keeps the facilities closed it will fully protect public health and enforcement and regulation of

it are the biggest challenges. *Lou Moser of ACS Girls Softball advised he is in and doesn't want to go backwards so they are educating themselves to be able to offer late summer and fall activities the right way.* Donna Poulton of ACS Girls Softball agreed. She noted that the kids are anxious and safety is of the utmost importance.

A brief recess took place at 5:44 p.m.

Interim Police Chief Interviews

6:00 p.m. Erik Josephson: Mr. Josephson was introduced to the Board of Selectmen Members. The interview format was reviewed.

Question #1: How do your professional experiences and skills line up with the duties and responsibilities of the Police Chief for the Town of Adams? What specifically makes you the right fit for our community?

*Mr. Josephson reviewed that he has been in this field for 33 years and worked his way up from the position of Patrolman. He gave his personal background and education and noted it is difficult to work in the town he grew up in because he knew everyone. He recalled his training and mentors and noted that he was the Operations Commander in one department, and worked in Woonsocket, RI. He explained his experience in running day to day operations of the department, and handing out internal discipline. He outlined a time he put his career on hold with the goal of going out to Colorado for an opportunity with a Sheriff's Department. He advised it was a great opportunity to go back and start over. He went to Vermont and handled gang problems, which was his background since he had been dealing with Rhode Island street and motorcycle gangs. He explained that he received his Bachelor's Degree in his 50's because he felt it was important. He explained he had an opportunity to become a Chief in Massachusetts and was there for a brief time. He advised he has a strong connection with the Council on Aging and he explained that he started the *Good Morning Senior* program which wasn't just a check-in but an opportunity for conversation with those who live by themselves without any contact. He explained that he left the department because he was conflicted with personal and professional ethics so it was not a place he could stay. He noted that he took a month off but then realized he needed to go back to this work. He advised that he went through the North Adams and Pittsfield area and felt it would be a nice step to be in this position.*

Question #2: In light of ongoing protests throughout our nation and abroad regarding the death of George Floyd by overzealous law enforcement personnel, do you see policing tactics and racial stereotyping continuing? A. Will the powers that be relent or will the same situation arise again? (I ask this because there have been other racially charged and egregious actions undertaken by police officers resulting in the unwarranted deaths of black Americans, still nothing has transpired to curb these happenings.) B. Please expound on your views and discuss how racial profiling can finally be put to rest. (I strongly believe that All Lives Matter regardless of the color of one's skin or any other attributes which one possesses. The world is big enough to accommodate everyone if the blinders are allowed to be removed.)

Mr. Josephson advised that he saw it on television being retired and it was one of the most disgusting things he had ever seen. He noted that it is an internal problem that needs to be addressed and that it is something they can control. He stated that minority communities as a whole have gotten better over the years dating back to Rodney King, when he was new to the job. He pointed out that this is not how he was raised. He noted that there have been bumps in the right direction over the years but he understands the frustration from the black community and major moves forward are needed to correct

this. He recalled one union was too strong, couldn't get people out of there and allowed nepotism. He advised it is important to hire the most qualified person for the position and that departments don't recruit enough from minority communities. He referenced the movement in the 1990's and early 2000's which was looking to bump up numbers from minority communities and the answer at the time was to lower the educational and misdemeanor standards. He pointed out that this gives the indication of people of color that made a statement that they are not smart enough. He expressed that departments need to keep reaching out and having contact with minority communities. He noted that departments as a whole should reflect what the community is and should connect with the community as well. He stated it is all about transparency and accessibility. He pointed out that gang activity takes place in low income areas and he treats everyone respectfully and equally, even those arrested. He stated that he doesn't think the movement to defund the police is the answer. Random drug tests of the officers were briefly discussed in respect to the union contract.

Question #3: Identify and discuss your experience in creating, reviewing, and assessing law enforcement policy and procedure, agency directives or General Orders.

Mr. Josephson advised that he worked on CALEA standardized best practices for police departments and said it is vital to make sure staff knows the best things to do and has the tools and policies to cut down on racial issues, nepotism and other issues. He noted that staff needs to think for themselves and having guidelines and a certification is good for every department. He explained that he went over the policy in Lincoln, and the policy is reviewed every three years to make sure best standards are in place. He uses the Chiefs of Police as a reference to make sure the changing state laws are met. He pointed out that this reduces liability. He noted that he started this in Egremont and the officers need to know what is expected of them so there must be a policy. He advised that he is an advocate of Rules and Regulations. He clarified policy versus rules and regulations and noted that one tells you how to do something and the other tells you what needs to be done. He emphasized that it is important to have both.

Question #4: How much experience have you had working with a collective bargaining unit? What do you consider the essential elements of effective labor-management relations?

Mr. Josephson noted that both sides need to be heard. He explained that Rhode Island had a fantastic policy and though he never served on the board he was a voting member. He explained from an administrative end in Vermont he had to consult on the contract and took the time to understand it and to see where everyone was coming from. He noted that the contract in Adams is well written and protects both sides. He stated he recognized that unions are supposed to protect those being taken advantage of and in his experience, they spend too much time protecting the bad ones and the good ones lost in the shuffle. He noted that in a larger agency there will be some holes and there needs to be something in place to take out the staff that need to be removed.

Question #5: What training and experience do you have in developing and implementing services and programs, courses, and/or learning objectives that incorporate diversity?

Mr. Josephson explained that approximately 30 percent of his officers were minority and he has experience with this. He pointed out that conversations can be had to open people's eyes. He noted that Burlington was a very diverse community, and that racism is alive and well in Vermont. He explained that Burlington, Rutland and Bennington are doing very well but still need to open their eyes. He emphasized that it is important to understand that the person next to you will probably save

your life and they don't care what you said to them. He recalled being called all kinds of things and found it infuriating to watch it on television. He noted that people have a right to be heard and to protest. He stated he took a lot of pride in the fact that he was able to open officers' eyes because he doesn't want people hesitating because a comment was made that was racist so it is better to learn how to deal with people.

Question #6: Identify and discuss your budgeting experience, knowledge and skill.

Mr. Josephson explained that he spent a lot of time negotiating in front of the Board of Selectmen. He noted that if he asked for \$120 and only needed \$100 that would be cheesy and he is not a big fan of that strategy. He gave an example of recommending two new cars and he was told to change it, which he did not agree with. He emphasized that he only asks for what he needs though there are a lot of things he would like to have to make people's lives easier and expand a person's career but it may not apply to the department as a whole. He gave examples of this in search and rescue category. He noted that in his final year he came in under budget because he kept an eye on it and as the overtime budget was used up quickly so he had to try to creatively utilize the contract. He stated if he is given a tool he is going to use it. He pointed out that he wrote the budgets in New Hampshire and in Egremont.

Question #7: As a lifelong resident of Adams, I have witnessed the evolution of our Police Department. I vividly remember as a young man the officers walking the streets and addressing you as you passed by. The nightly rounds to stores to check on their security. The writing of tickets for expired parking meters. In short, the Adams Police had a visible presence and you knew who they were. Times have changed; they always do. No longer do the Town's Police Officers walk the beat. They drive their cruisers to accomplish their tasks. No longer do they check stores after closing. They shine a spotlight on the business façade and move on. No longer do they write parking tickets for meter violations. We needed to add a Town position to make this transition. I must admit that I cannot put a name to a face of all of our Police Officers. What is your take on policing, which I term "resident friendly"?

Mr. Josephson advised that when he started his career he walked the main street in Woonsocket. He noted the importance of learning how to do the job properly and getting to know the people, what they are doing and why they are doing it to learn the community. He explained that he is a big proponent of walking the beat and recognized that Adams doesn't have enough staff to dedicate a full-time walking beat but it could be done some of the time with grant money. He emphasized the importance of getting out there on the streets and having a conversation with citizens. He explained that the number of officers has been reduced but the call numbers have gone up and staff doesn't have a lot of time to get out of the car and walk because they need to keep moving. He pointed out that sometimes there is a need for officers to have some downtime to have a conversation with another officer. He noted that as a supervisor that is how to get to know the officers and keep an eye on them. He stated there is a responsibility to keep an eye on the officers to be sure PTSD is not a problem. He explained that Community Policing over the years is the way to get out and meet the public and it means different things to each person. He pointed out that he was in certain areas on a regular basis and in the gang unit everyone knew who he was.

Question #8: The Adams Police Department works closely with the Adams Fire Department, Adams Forest Wardens, EMS, regional emergency management, and State Police, as well as community-based organizations. What has made you an effective collaborator in your current or past jobs?

Mr. Josephson stated he always enjoyed talking to other agencies. He explained that he would visit the firehouse in Woonsocket and would talk with them at beginning of shift. He noted on Thanksgiving he had an open invitation and was welcome to bring his family if he wanted. He emphasized that they had a great relationship and building relationships is how you get things done. He recognized the importance of a working relationship with Public Works in the event, for example, flood barricades are needed. He explained that the agencies need to be one big team, and it is important to reach out beyond the Town of Adams to include state police and other agencies. He noted that when State Police is able to come it is a win as it is a free car and it is nice to have the extra manpower to serve the public as it is needed. He complimented Chief Tarsa and recognized that the Town is facing a loss with him leaving. He explained that relationships with the local churches and the fire department to join them for pancake breakfasts and steak bakes. He noted that when command staff is seen there and it is a win/win for everyone.

Question #9: In thinking about the regional and collaborative nature of the Police Chief position, what is your experience working with a District Attorney's office?

Mr. Josephson advised that he worked with District Attorney Caccaviello on an issue for Egremont, and the interaction was short-lived but he was fantastic to deal with. He recalled that he felt he had a solid head on his shoulders and frequently he would answer phone himself. He pointed out that laws are different in every state. He noted from his Vermont experience that they worked closely together, reviewed reports, and came and went as they pleased. He recognized that both have to work closely to get things done especially for large crimes, unattended deaths, and other situations. He stated he found it nice to pick up the phone and get their response. He explained that District Attorney Caccaviello had a strong CPAC group and as they are the ultimate law enforcement authority it is important to have a good relationship to get things done.

Question #10: The position of Police Chief requires a high degree of accountability. What does accountability mean to you in a legal sense? With regard to data and metrics? In terms of relations with the community?

Mr. Josephson noted that if no progress is being made it is going to show. He advised that data and metrics give the ability to predict problems and problem areas to move staffing into certain areas such as for break-ins, or predictable crime areas. He noted it is used for a prediction model. He explained that if it doesn't work things will show. He noted that accountability as a whole stood up for everything he has done and what his people have stood up for. He pointed out that if staff does not want to do their job it is on him and he takes accountability. He noted that staff is young and if they are trying he will work with them.

Question: #11: Is there anything that we didn't ask that you would like to be sure to share with us?

Mr. Josephson advised that he is an open book and willing to answer questions any time. He invited Board Members to call him if they have any additional questions. He noted that this is a great opportunity and he has been happy to pursue it. He explained that he tried retirement for one month before realizing he wanted to get back into it. He noted that his goal was to do 40 years and he would like to do another 10 years. He stated this has been a good opportunity to get to know each other. He advised that he wants to be part of helping another community and the younger officers.

Question #12: Do you have any questions of us?

Mr. Josephson inquired about the length of this position and noted if he starts a program now, after five months it will likely fail. It was clarified that this position will provide management of tasks and to help during this time period in the capacity of a full-time Police Chief and working with the Town Administrator and present something to the Board of Selectmen. It was pointed out that the department is young and in need some relief and mentorship. This position will have total disciplinary authority and will be working on policy and updates. Discussion took place on the departure of a lot of command staff already. It was noted that a snapshot of staffing with assessment for a recommended staffing model would be part of the expectation. It was explained that Chief Tarsa had given a six month notice and the Town is doing its best to honor it. It was noted that he is staying a little longer to help out since COVID impacted the public process for candidates to meet the public in the process as envisioned. The Interim Police Chief is able to apply for the permanent position as well. Brief discussion took place on looking at certification or accreditation which is a two-step process and reduces liability and insurance costs.

A brief recess took place at 6:56 p.m.

7:15 p.m. John Mesham was introduced to the Board of Selectmen Members. The interview format was reviewed.

Question #1: How do your professional experiences and skills line up with the duties and responsibilities of the Police Chief for the Town of Adams? What specifically makes you the right fit for our community?

Mr. Mesham shared that he has been in law enforcement for 29 years and was a Master Sergeant in Connecticut in resident trooper towns. He explained that State Police provide dedicated Troopers supervising town officers and stated he is heavily involved in that. He outlined his daily duties which include supervising 37 troopers, 6 resident troopers, 2 clerks, 4 dispatchers and he has the responsibility to schedule everyone across the board and get people into work on short notice. He noted that he is involved in the facilities aspect and with vehicle assignments to make sure day to day operations keep going. He explained he is gearing up for a promotional procedure so he is helping with the screening and questions on that. He explained that as a Resident Trooper Sergeant it is up to him to come up with a scoring matrix and affirmative action. He pointed out that on the administrative side it has put him in a good place to be a Chief because it is relative to the administrative functions on a police department. He noted that he would draw upon his experience as a Resident Trooper in the Town of Essex which has 46 full time officers, K9 officers and upwards of 300,000 people. He explained he was responsible to write his section for the Town Report, he purchased vehicles, oversaw two hiring processes, and has good insight into state requirements to be followed. He pointed out that the Standards and Training Council helped him to fit into the job of Chief. He explained that he doesn't only do operations on the administrative side and he is eligible to work overtime as a sergeant which keeps him on the frontline, do supervision, cover fatal accidents, burglaries, homicides, and investigate a lot of crimes that would normally go to a detective. He explained his investigatory experience and advised he has more experience than some coming in. He noted the accident reconstruction team doesn't always go out and sometimes he had to do it himself. He expressed that the size of Adams is right in his wheelhouse and he needed to interface with the Board of Selectmen and the Town Administrator to build relationships. Town Officers and municipal officers are supervised by the Resident Trooper whose responsibility it is to straighten out anything

that goes wrong and it is complicated to supervise officers that are employed by the town. He pointed out the need to have a relationship with the Board of Selectmen because everyone is on the same team. He noted that his leadership style allows him the ability to hear what the situation is and who he is dealing with. He stated in a critical incident he will be very direct and it falls back on his training to tell people where to go and how to do it. He advised that he knows troopers and their expertise and ability and when to ask for outside help. He noted that he was aware of the number of officers and dispatchers in Adams, and that it is right in line with what he is used to in Westbrook, Old Lyme, and Essex. He explained he is experienced with having approximately 20 staff directly or indirectly that he deals with.

Question #2: In light of ongoing protests throughout our nation and abroad regarding the death of George Floyd by overzealous law enforcement personnel, do you see policing tactics and racial stereotyping continuing? A. Will the powers that be relent or will the same situation arise again? (I ask this because there have been other racially charged and egregious actions undertaken by police officers resulting in the unwarranted deaths of black Americans, still nothing has transpired to curb these happenings.) B. Please expound on your views and discuss how racial profiling can finally be put to rest. (I strongly believe that All Lives Matter regardless of the color of one's skin or any other attributes which one possesses. The world is big enough to accommodate everyone if the blinders are allowed to be removed.)

Mr. Mesham advised that in Connecticut there is a very strict racial profiling law that was enacted. He noted that every motor vehicle stop has a host of age, racial, ethnic and gender questions that have to be answered for statistical review by the state legislature by statute. He explained that certain towns were flagged and looked at for potential racial profiling or consideration for other factors involved. He advised that he likes looking at the data, and noted that burglaries are usually associated with drugs. He noted that there are about a million police officers in the country performing interactions every year that are not in the news and taking a hit. He pointed out that every police department has their own personality and culture and as a chief it is important to ensure there are stopgaps to ensure there are no red flags like racial profiling stops. He stated it is important to identify if there is a culture that is promoting racial bias that has to be upended. He explained that he doesn't know the officers in Minneapolis but it disgusted him and his counterparts and hoped it would never happen anywhere he worked. He shared suspicions that the officer involved has had problems and possibly been disciplined in the past, and things were never documented, or confronted. He noted that as a supervisor there is a need to document and take steps to mediate that behavior and if someone starts to become heavy handed, take care of it. He advised he is more disappointed and disgusted in the backup officers because they failed the officer that was kneeling on George Floyd. He pointed out that it would have been simple and not on the news. He shared further suspicions that the officer would have been doing that to anyone regardless of their race and some people show up when things are calm and when they arrive things are not calm anymore.

Question #3: Identify and discuss your experience in creating, reviewing, and assessing law enforcement policy and procedure, agency directives or General Orders.

Mr. Mesham advised that he has been a big part of that. He recalled that he would receive a complaint through a pretty extensive complaint system in person, internet or in writing which was sent to a supervisor like himself to investigate. He noted that he is comfortable with doing an investigation of personnel as part of the job through body camera footage, recorded telephone conversations, witnesses, complainant, statements, and a trooper or officer involved interview. He advised there are

administrative operations guidelines. He advised he would make a review of the use of force as a supervisor and look at what happened to be sure it was compliant with the policy. He explained that he doesn't get to write policy but just gets to live by the policy. He pointed out that writing policy in his experience would be writing memorandums, and as a Resident Trooper he wrote policy on the use of vehicles or town specific items that are not in the administration manual.

Question #4: How much experience have you had working with a collective bargaining unit? What do you consider the essential elements of effective labor-management relations?

Mr. Mesham advised that the Vice President and President did the negotiating of the contract and representing grievances for unfair labor practices. He advised he is pretty versed in it but did not love that job. He explained that if there are a lot of grievances filed it is an indication of something else going on. He referenced two grievances that didn't involve him at the barracks regarding someone responsible for overtime cards and the details of the miniscule rules such as people get passed over for promotion, which is the biggest gripe. He noted that open communication and being reasonable go along way with labor relations and keep grievances at a minimum and sometimes things come up that have nothing to do with the contract.

Question #5: What training and experience do you have in developing and implementing services and programs, courses, and/or learning objectives that incorporate diversity?

Mr. Mesham advised he tries to be open to programs and to be diverse in the schools of the community. He detailed a program he developed on school violence and stated he got together with the superintendent of schools for roll call and to familiarize himself with the schools so it would not be the first time in the school if there was a lockdown. He said he received a lot of calls from the Public Information Office that asked officers to go to events regarding diversity. He outlined that he went with ten troopers to Bridgeport, which was more diverse, had tight budgets, lessening personnel and undercover cars. He noted the work done there was to support paving pot holes, wrecks that had to be moved, and was left with a terrible looking front of the building. He noted that he found a non-profit organization that specialized in landscape design to beautify the front of the building. He explained that he worked with the community and found that ride-alongs are great for students and interns looking into law enforcement. He clarified that officers are required to take diversity training at the academy, but it has been intermittent throughout his time with the State Police. He advised that at the State Police academy he went to Willimantic into a low-income community type housing complex where he built a playground with the community there and had a good interaction with kids there. He explained that on a personal level he has been aware of diversity and gave details about his extended family being multiracial. He gave details about his family interactions out of the country, and being in the military service. He detailed his time in the Marine Corps and noted all the examples were open to diversity. He outlined his athletic scholarship from Ohio and noted that his experiences have helped him to see that everyone is the same.

Question #6: Identify and discuss your budgeting experience, knowledge and skill.

Mr. Mesham explained that he had to prepare the town budget for Essex and his strategy was to take the current budget and eliminate what was unnecessary. He noted that he looked at surplus and noted that he was down one officer whose salary was offsetting overtime costs. He pointed out that he started out with the basics of what was needed, like salaries, collective bargaining, and items such as cars over 100,000 miles that needed replacement. He noted he likes truth in everything including the

budget as to be otherwise is disingenuous. He explained that he has the ability to assess what is actually needed and to be creative about what can be done to increase morale. He pointed out that if half the lights are not working, the grass is not cut, lockers are not in use and stacked up it is bad for morale. He pointed out that he is the person that gets rid of excess things because it adds morale.

Question #7: As a lifelong resident of Adams, I have witnessed the evolution of our Police Department. I vividly remember as a young man the officers walking the streets and addressing you as you passed by. The nightly rounds to stores to check on their security. The writing of tickets for expired parking meters. In short, the Adams Police had a visible presence and you knew who they were. Times have changed; they always do. No longer do the Town's Police Officers walk the beat. They drive their cruisers to accomplish their tasks. No longer do they check stores after closing. They shine a spotlight on the business façade and move on. No longer do they write parking tickets for meter violations. We needed to add a Town position to make this transition. I must admit that I cannot put a name to a face of all of our Police Officers. What is your take on policing, which I term "resident friendly"?

Mr. Mesham explained the Resident Trooper program and that most people know who that person is. He gave an example of a commercial zone and that he had to check two sections to check. He noted that he got out of the car, rattled doors and checked windows which was a huge success with business owners. He emphasized the importance of getting out of the car to talk to people. He pointed out that call volumes interfered with the ability to do this, but he was happy to sit down to hear people's concerns. He explained that everyone knows where he lives and who he is and he is in support of putting a face on the police. He noted that the news did an introduction to the police and he has a biography and educational background that was made public. He suggested that at the Agricultural Fair there could be a tent with literature, sticker badges, and a way for the community to approach the police and get to know the police better. He noted that he saw there was a bike patrol and took a walk on the bike trail so he would want officers back on bikes. He stated he sent three of his staff to a certified bike trainer in Connecticut for the cost of the uniform to put someone on bikes they already have. He explained the challenges of the shorelines with traffic, speeding complaints and narrow roads and that a bike was necessary. He stated the bikes could attend parades and are a way to get officers out of the cars.

Question #8: The Adams Police Department works closely with the Adams Fire Department, Adams Forest Wardens, EMS, regional emergency management, and State Police, as well as community-based organizations. What has made you an effective collaborator in your current or past jobs?

Mr. Mesham stated he loves to have resources. He noted that the most applicable time he could reference was when he was a Sergeant and there were no predominant fire departments where he worked. He recognized that there is a wealth of resources for police and they have to maintain those relationships. He explained that when people are retiring or there are a bunch of promotions they need tables and chairs and if they say no so and there is animosity it needs to stop and he would need to find out what was going on. He referenced a time that a Trooper got sprayed with a fire hose because the fire department got carried away so when things like that happen it is important to go down there and let them know that was not good. He noted that there are Conservation officers working in the area who rely on the troopers and vice versa. He explained that the regional school systems put an officer at the Technical School. He stated he received a call from the Superintendent asking for the dogs so he set it up but also set up ground rules. He noted that he found networking creates people

wanting to help out. He explained that it is important to have a relationship with the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee for budget concerns.

Question #9: In thinking about the regional and collaborative nature of the Police Chief position, what is your experience working with a District Attorney's office?

Mr. Mesham clarified that there is a State Attorney at each geographical location which is the overall attorney for all of them. He noted he has a great relationship with them because something is going to go sideways somewhere. He pointed out that with Covid-19 there is more reason for things to go electronically. He advised that there will be disagreements sometimes and gave an example of times when an officer thinks they have a solid arrest warrant which is then denied. He stated it is necessary to ask what was lacking so they are on the same page. He noted that sometimes the State Attorney just says no as they have more discretion than the police. He gave an example of doing a memo for an enforcement action and had read the statute and knew he didn't need to know where the property line was. He pointed out that if there is not a good relationship they will potentially get mad at you. He gave further examples of State Investigators working with State Attorneys on investigations with several search warrants and needing internet telephone records.

Question #10: The position of Police Chief requires a high degree of accountability. What does accountability mean to you in a legal sense? With regard to data and metrics? In terms of relations with the community?

Mr. Mesham noted that when you are the Chief the buck stops with you, but a Chief cannot be there to control everything 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. He explained that if something goes wrong it is important to hold staff accountable but also accept responsibility for what happened. He stated he tells his staff that if something happens not to lie to him or hide it. He pointed out that police officers don't work at a work bench using micrometers and if he knows about what happened he can get ahead of it and take care of it. He emphasized that if something goes wrong it is important to have firm relationships so an explanation of what was messed up and what is being done about it can be explained. He outlined that if he worked in Massachusetts he would make a call to a former coworker who is a Chief in another town to get guidance on getting Massachusetts certifications. A comparable analysis would be done and for any hours of training that don't match up he would have to get the class to satisfy Massachusetts requirements. He noted he would have over a year to take online training for different motor vehicle and criminal law requirements. He explained that residence in the community would not be optimal for his family but he would like the challenge. He noted that he has mastered his current position with schedules and overtime and would like to challenge himself which is why he pursued a promotion and continued education. He explained that the position of Chief is the next logical step for him and there are things going on with his agency that contribute to his feeling that it is time to go. He noted there is a change being made to the pensions so the clock is ticking for retirement so he is throwing himself at this position. He stated he felt the position is a good fit and is something he would like to experience especially since promotions are bogged down where he is currently at. He noted that he cannot be promoted to Lieutenant because there is a drastic shortage of Master Sergeants. He explained he would find an apartment, go home every weekend and hopefully his family would want to come see him on the weekend. He clarified that as a military family it is doable and he would certainly want to live in the community he is in.

Question: #11: Is there anything that we didn't ask that you would like to be sure to share with us?

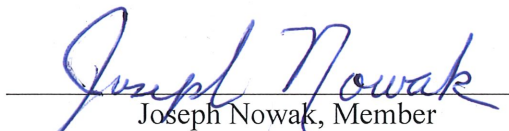
Mr. Mesham asked if there is anything the Board needed verification on or more extensive answers on.

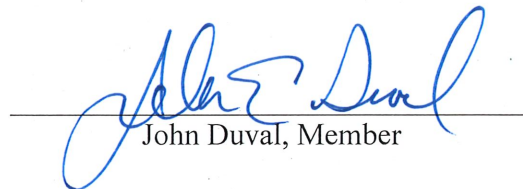
Question #12: Do you have any questions of us?

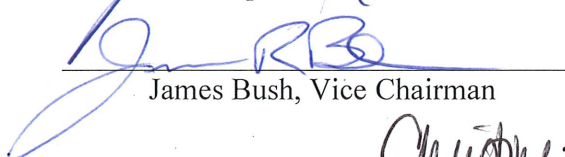
Mr. Mesham recognized that the Board of Selectmen is on a timeline for hiring and that as time ticks closer to the end of the month he has Human Resource requirements. The timeline and process were reviewed with him. He thanked the Board of Selectmen for the opportunity.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion made by Member Blanchard to adjourn the meeting, second by Member Bush. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Blanchard, Duval and Nowak. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm

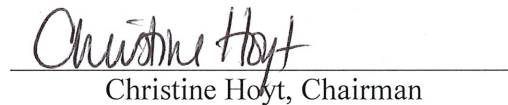
Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,
Recording Secretary


Joseph Nowak, Member


John Duval, Member


James Bush, Vice Chairman


Richard Blanchard, Member


Christine Hoyt, Chairman