

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

TOWN HALL BUILDING

8 PARK STREET

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Tuesday, November 24, 2020, 5:00 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 and on Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Board of Selectmen Chairman Hoyt. Present were Vice Chairman Blanchard, Members Duval and Nowak and Interim Police Chief Bacon. Attending virtually was Tammy Daniels of iBerkshires.

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 recording of this meeting is available for anyone who wishes. Rule of 10 in place according to Code Enforcement for the size of the room in accordance with the Governor's order and NBCTC will post a link soon after the meeting.

PUBLIC CALL-IN:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/94974672823?pwd=NHJaRU9ERDUrTytvSXo2U3krZS9tZz09>

Meeting ID: 949 7467 2823; Passcode: BOS1124

Dial by your location: (929) 436-2866 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 949 7467 2823; Passcode: 7720818

There were no public comments.

NEW BUSINESS

Interview Process and Next Steps, Police Chief: It was explained that there were 37 applicants for the Chief of Police position, which were narrowed down to 11 qualified applicants to be interviewed next week. The Town Administrator, Interim Chief of Police and a community member comprise the screening committee. It was explained that due to the travel restrictions in place the interviews will be virtual. The Board of Selectmen interviews will be done virtually as well. It was reported that the Interim Chief of Police read all of the cover letters and applications and did a high-level review via the internet. He noted that the candidates were from many locations and the quality and caliber of the candidates were impressive. Chairman Hoyt noted that she has not seen the applications of the interviewees but had spoken with the Town Administrator and Interim Chief of Police regarding the process. She noted that the applications are available and the Interim Chief would provide applicant evaluation metrics if Board Members wished to have them. It was explained that the interviews would be limited to an hour, and Interim Chief Bacon is working on the interview questions.

Board Members will be provided a copy of the questions asked in the first interview to be aware of what had previously been covered. The distance of the candidates was explained as having been due to Interim Chief Bacon knowing where to do advertising. It was explained that several from out of the area have ties to New England, and it was advertised on specific websites for New England. A few were noted as having been from larger cities but the applicants represented all sized locations. The challenge was noted as being the broad spectrum, of qualified applicants and finding what would fit the Town of Adams. It was noted that the private citizen on the Screening Committee had been asked to serve but had not confirmed yet but was a person that served on other committees. The parameters of what the Committee was looking for was outlined. The importance of covering the topic of policy and accreditation was noted and it was pointed out that several candidates have candidates with policy development and accreditation. Having strong budgetary, community policing and law enforcement experience were emphasized as important. Why a candidate would want to come to Adams was briefly discussed. Retirement rules and pension complications were explained as being a factor. It was noted that Interim Chief Bacon was giving the Town a gift by leaving the Town with a good road for the future. Concern was expressed that with four members there could be a challenge if there was a voting stalemate. It was noted that three candidates for interviewing by the Board has been the precedent set but up to six would be possible depending on the quality of the candidates. The number of candidates to interview was debated briefly. The background check was noted as being done on the finalists once chosen. Meeting scheduling for interviewing the candidates ensued.

Hiring Process Update, Community Development Director: It was explained that there were 17 applicants for this position, and the applications were screened by Donna Cesan. Qualified applicants were whittled down to 6 candidates that fit the criteria to be interviewed. There was a reserve pool of qualified candidates also in line if needed. The Screening Committee was announced as Town Administrator Green, Board of Selectmen Chair Hoyt, and Berkshire Regional Planning Commissioner Member Laura Brennan. It was noted that 6 candidates were interviewed, and 4 were advanced to the second round of interviews. 2 candidates withdrew and 2 candidates were left, and were the best fit. December 7th and December 10th virtual interviews will take place for these candidates and interview criteria is being worked out. Board Members will be doing a virtual “Meet and Greet” of these candidates and provide feedback. It was noted that an in-person process was solidified but could not have them travel in the current Covid-19 environment. Scheduling of Board Members for a 15-minute or 30-minute timeframe with the candidates took place. It was noted that all of the interviewed candidates asked about the Board’s vision and engagement. Logistics of the virtual “Meet and Greet” were discussed. It was noted that candidates will be asked to provide a professional writing sample and professional references. Resumes of the two finalists will be provided to the Board Members.

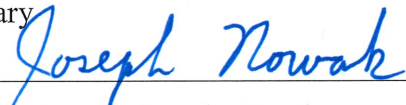
Future Meeting Schedule and Format: Meeting scheduling and format for the rest of the calendar year was reviewed. Chairman Hoyt advised that during flu season and with Covid-19 cases on the rise she would like to have Board Members think about attending remotely whenever possible. She asked NBCTC to use a remote link for broadcasting instead of being in the room. She stated she was uncomfortable having Board Members in the same room as it puts them all at risk. She expressed concern about the health and safety of the Board Members for maintaining continuity. Member Nowak noted that his presence in the room makes him a better Selectman, and would rather attend in person as he is not comfortable with Zoom meetings. He pointed out that he is following all of the Governor’s parameters and wears his mask all of the time. He expressed concern about Town employees not wearing masks. Member Blanchard advised he was comfortable staying home and attending virtually. Member Duval advised he felt it was good to have 3 Board Members in the room for quorum purposes but would be happy to switch off. He noted if Covid-19 numbers go up he will stay home. Additional concern was expressed about the potential for Thanksgiving gatherings to cause an increase in cases, and that the Board may have to go remote in December. Case numbers are being monitored carefully. Town Administrator Green reported that broadband had been expanded, and WIFI routers were purchased because the Town does not have the infrastructure to go remote.

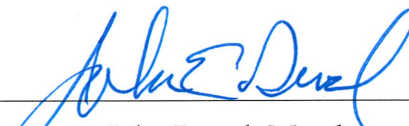
ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GOOD OF THE ORDER

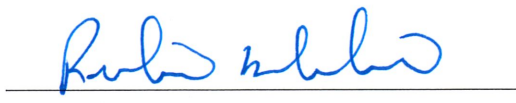
A Police Department letter to the Board of Selectmen was read aloud to commend Officer Samantha Morin for heroic actions taken on November 23, 2020 to provide life saving measures being provided to the victim of a stabbing. Brief discussion took place on how under current circumstances she could be honored. It was noted that the Interim Chief was very proud of her and will get her the proper ribbon. She will be honored accordingly at a televised meeting when possible. Member Nowak inquired about the status of the Police Union contracts and the Memorandum of Agreement for changes made as Members noted they have not received their contract and MOA books. The Town Administrator was asked to look into what the holdup is. It was noted that the Board of Selectmen should also have a copy for reference. Chairman Hoyt announced that she had received communication from, Dr. Bush regarding his intent to play low volume holiday music from Thanksgiving until New Year's Day. She reported that the Tree Lighting will take place on the Sunday after Thanksgiving. The tree has been planted, and a virtual tree lighting will take place with Santa arriving by train and emergency vehicles escorting him to turn on the tree. It was noted that the event will be recorded for viewing on the Town website, Facebook page, and local television. It is not being publicized but will be available virtually. She announced that Town staff have asked to resurrect the Holiday Decoration Contest, and are putting together ways for citizens to register their properties and to vote. Vice Chairman Blanchard reported that a business on North Summer Street has been in touch for other businesses to get an "Elf on a Shelf" initiative going for their businesses. All Board Members wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.


ADJOURNMENT: *Motion made by Vice Chairman Blanchard to adjourn the meeting, second by Member Duval. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 6:21 p.m.*

Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,
Recording Secretary


Joseph Nowak, Member


John Duval, Member


Richard Blanchard, Vice Chair


Christine Hoyt, Chairman