

MINUTES
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
SEPTEMBER 26, 2017 at 5:00pm
TOWN HALL, SELECTMEN'S CONFERENCE ROOM

CALL TO ORDER/OPENING

Chairman Brooks called the meeting to order at 5:11pm. Chairman Harry Brooks, Vice-Chair Dianna Provencher, 2nd Vice-Chair Sandy Wilson, Selectman Douglas Belanger, Selectman Brian Green and Assistant to the Town Administrator Kristen Forsberg were in attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

No members of the public provided comment

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEWS

The Board discussed the interview questions and which questions each member will ask. Mr. Belanger asked the Board if they change the questions at all to ask each candidate that question the same way. The three candidates are Andrew Scribner-McLean, Patrice Garvin and David Genereux. A motion was made by Ms. Provencher and seconded by Mr. Belanger to recess until the first interview at 5:30pm. The motion carried unanimously.

Each interview is summarized below.

Andrew Scriber-McLean

- 25 year professional in public administration; 14 years in higher education and 11 in municipal government
- Leicester "feels right" and his current Town is similar in size
- Likes to get out in the community and meet local businesses, landlords and property developers
- Spends time building relationships with staff
- An organization needs to know what direction it wants to move in and the staff need to do what it takes to get there
- Making decisions are important but delegation to appropriate staff must occur along with follow-up but not micromanagement. Likes to meet with staff at least weekly.
- Big fan of succession planning with staff
- Financial management is so critical and is generally tight on budget; reviews monthly reports to see if there are issues based on spending trends to eliminate surprises
- Believes in regionalization, growing the local economy and stretching dollars by being creative
- Taking care of our facilities is important; should be clean and well-lit when the public comes in as the condition of the building is important for staff morale and public perception. The capital plan is a never ending document and has quarterly meetings to discuss it as it is a living document
- Master planning and charrettes conducted by the Town are important to come to understand what the Town really wants and to inform economic development
- There are relatively easy opportunities for growth in economic development in certain areas, particularly in entertainment; good restaurants and good music draws in the community and businesses
- Would like to pursue indoor recreation opportunities as there is a huge demand for athletic fields and sports facilities and communities can't provide them
- Wants to take a good look at our zoning and target what property owners are trying to develop; would like to bring business to our downtown district and meet with business regularly
- Has regular contact with legislative delegation so you get reps to call you when something comes up

- Relationships with the Board are vital to provide input and feedback in direction the Town should go in; will undoubtedly agree on some things but can state professional point of view and will fulfill the obligation that the board directs even if different
- Use Town Meeting guides to provide insight for the community; use weekly email blasts to staff because can't have too many meetings or can't get the work done
- Proud of track record with collective bargaining; negotiations are very respectful and based in fairness; fan of getting rid of nonsensical things in contracts
- Has a few office hours per week for the public to come in and puts department contacts on the back of business cards
- Staff development is important to his work; attends workshops and conferences on a regular basis and expects staff to do so as well as laws, best practices and regulations change and people need to stay on top of it

Patrice Garvin

- Has been the Town Administrator in Shirley for 4 years; believes in family and hard work; puts full effort into everything she does; get knocked down and get back up and try again; build consensus and always put the Town first
- Would listen in the beginning to the staff and board and make a 30, 60 and 100 day plan; go to every board and committee meeting; get out in the community and go to events
- Has an open door policy and is a big proponent of training
- Comes up with creative solutions to low pay like flexibility
- Proponent of regionalization but it is not a one size fits all model
- Has individual and monthly department head meetings so department heads can hear from each other about what they are doing
- Attends finance meetings and has had 4 budgets unanimously approved by the Finance Committee and the Board because she built consensus from the beginning of the process. Finance Committee meets regularly to review the budget and Department Heads come and justify their budgets. Has made public safety a priority and built the Town's fleet over 4 years
- Has worked on a variety of infrastructure projects including bridge repair
- Goes to every economic development committee meeting, discussed plans with them and tried to rezone parcels to promote economic development; built a toolbox of business and utilized the wealth of the community next door; used Complete Streets funding to revitalize the downtown; obtained a grant to develop a permitting guide for developers and residents to make it easier to go through the process
- Builds relationships with State representatives; reaches out to their office frequently; builds relationships with the community and talks to colleagues about issues
- Job is to serve the Board by making recommendations and implementing their proposals and plans even if she doesn't agree with it; makes sure the Board is never surprised and makes sure all board members are notified of issues; communicates to the whole board to gain the respect of the board
- Always thinking outside of the box; builds relationships with unions by having follow through and consistency to build trust
- Uses technology to inform residents; appears on local cable program, gets out into the community, likes to get out, see people, talk to them and hear their concerns
- If I heard "that's the way we've always done it" that is her cue to look at the issue and see how it can be improved
- As people have a natural mistrust of government, it is important to make Town Meeting understandable; has had very successful budget presentations; puts board packets and minutes online and encourages boards and committees to put their minutes online

David Genereux

- Has worked in municipalities since 1991; was the Treasurer/Collector in Sturbridge and Billerica then became the Treasurer/Collector/Finance Director in Uxbridge in 2006 and was promoted to Town Manager in 2014. Leicester is very similar to Uxbridge as it is an old mill town. Stabilized Uxbridge financially and increased stabilization from \$50k in 2006 to \$3.2M today with \$200k in the OPEB Trust. Free cash policy is to put everything into stabilization then spend up to \$700k annually for capital. What the Town used to borrow for they just buy and there are no longer any lease/purchase agreements. Is aggressive with tax collections and embraces tax lien sales but does work with residents, giving ample notice and ability to pay.
- Believes Department Heads must be trusted and empowered to do what is in their best judgement as long as they are reporting back to the Town Administrator and ultimately the Board of Selectmen; coaches employees through mistakes and looks to promote from within.
- Believes the attitude you project is important and creates an atmosphere where Department Heads are welcome to speak up and encouraged to better themselves
- Plans for Leicester include internal management of finances by identifying funds that serve no purpose and closing them out to financial reserves; cleaning up the balance sheet and generating more free cash by working on all receivables; timely collections and understanding land inventory and what can be marketed to make it more attractive to developers. Noted there is a wide area on Route 56 where business can be brought in without affecting a neighborhood or the character of the Town.
- Must put money aside to fund the capital plan; time debt exclusions so they have as little of an effect as possible on the taxpayers. Use MassWorks and reach out to local delegation for funding. Must reach out to developers about available land and try to get businesses interested in Leicester
- Board should receive all information; gets the Board packet out Thursday prior to a meeting and creates a "read file" in one central location that is also emailed out to the Board containing all information not appearing at a meeting.
- Puts great effort into having an active website with information on Board and Finance meetings; not huge on social media as it can be a good tool but can also be a very negative tool. Most important thing is to have an open door policy and be open to resident issues and try to resolve them.
- Has gone through 2 rounds of collective bargaining with no issues; tell the unions up from what you are willing to do with a COLA, don't play games back and forth; mutually discuss concerns; uses basically a 2% increase and believes in doing increases fairly uniformly across unions.
- Put a high deductible medical plan in place and increased copays but the Town picks up the copay and high deductible and ended up saving money
- Can't improve services without evaluating them; most of the time it comes down to customer service; work with staff to improve technology and communications across Town. Really identify where issues are and solely chip away at them through the budget.
- Is working on electronic permitting which saves people time and makes Town Hall more business friendly
- Keeps his office door open, don't turn people away or make them have appointments; important to return phone calls and let residents know who you have sent them to in order to resolve their issues
- Is always at weekend activities and a lot of communications come out of these events
- Feels that his title doesn't matter but is more of a quality of life issue as he wants a little more balance than he has right now as a Town Manager; feels there is a big advantage to being so close to Town and going to events and doing outreach
- Brought out a copy of his current budget and showed the Board; it is available online, at the library and the senior center; includes everyone's salary for the year; there is no hiding anything; the budget message explains any changes to the budget including staffing changes, wage increases etc.
- Has a great relationships with the schools and works to understand how to best make the budget work and split revenues how they need to be split

The Board discussed getting Department Head feedback and making a decision at next Monday's meeting.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Belanger and seconded by Ms. Provencher at 9:15pm. The motion carried unanimously.