

MINUTES
SHARON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
June 3, 2014

The meeting of the Sharon Board of Selectmen was called to order in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at Sharon Town Hall at 6:00pm with Chairman William A. Heitin, Clerk John J. McGrath and Selectman Walter B. Roach, Jr.

Chairman Heitin explained the purpose of the meeting was to interview the finalists for the Town Administrator position.

Town Administrator Interview – Michael W. McCue

The Board welcomed Mr. McCue and Chairman Heitin asked Mr. McCue to tell the Board a little bit about himself. Mr. McCue explained that grew up in Weymouth, worked in the private sector for fifteen years, then got his Master's in Public Administration and was the Executive Secretary/Town Administrator in Medway and is now the Town Administrator in Avon. Mr. McCue believes the Sharon Town Administrator position is a great opportunity and his economic development background would be valuable as he got Mansfield into an economic target area (ETA) as a selectman. He added that Avon is a built-out town. He went on to say that he has considerable experience in 40Bs and is aware of the issue at Rattlesnake Hill. He is familiar with the Town Administrators and elected officials in the area and could engage in regional solutions. He would be interested in reaching out to neighboring communities.

Selectman McGrath asked Mr. McCue to talk about what he knows about the Town of Sharon. He spoke about the bridge issues on Maskwonicut Street, the town's budget, population, Rattlesnake Hill and related conservation issues/traffic impact, the public safety building project, who Sharon's elected officials are and that the school system is very strong and 75% of the budget goes to the schools.

Selectman McGrath asked Mr. McCue what challenges he faced and how he handled them. Mr. McCue explained an issue between the Water Commissioners and the Board of Selectmen in Avon and how he mitigated the rift. Additionally, Town Meeting passed an article to create a DPW – it was done methodically and not done to offend people.

Selectman Roach asked what his management style is and how he handles department heads and the other staff. Mr. McCue replied that he has monthly (or more frequently) department head meetings – he also gives information about long-range issues, like the budget. He likes to be informal in these meetings. He asks for monthly activity reports as well from department heads. With respect to staff, he's not an ogre, but he doesn't let people run willy-nilly. He has had to speak with staff, informally, when an issue arises. He has had to discipline staff and dismiss – he does it methodically.

Selectman Roach asked Mr. McCue to talk about his experience in Walpole. Mr. McCue noted that in Walpole, a lot of the burden was placed on the taxpayers. He looked into the zoning by-laws and tried to streamline the by-laws. He explained that they almost lost Tufts Animal Hospital but the Town put together a special within the annual to rezone an area to keep Tufts in town.

Selectman Roach asked what the relationship was like between him as a Board member and the Town Administrator in Mansfield. Mr. McCue explained that it was a Selectman/Town Manager form of

government and the Selectmen's focus was to form policy. They tried not to assert themselves to the Town Manager and the Board worked harmoniously together. Mr. McCue explained that this position is a great opportunity for him- larger community and more professional growth. He would be extremely comfortable here.

Chairman Heitin asked how he manages constituent inquiries. Mr. McCue replied that that is one of the more important roles and he is the face of the Board, when inquiries and complaints come in. He has an open door policy. He is going to work with people and help to mitigate, but he is not going to promise things he cannot deliver. He tries to find a middle ground and help them to understand the limitations.

Chairman Heitin asked what he likes to do for fun. Mr. McCue replied that he's an avid gardener – his tomatoes and peppers aren't where they should be – and an amateur arborist. He's written several op-ed pieces and articles. He also enjoys spending time with his family and kids.

Selectman McGrath asked what his first priority was in Avon. Mr. McCue said that he needed to immerse himself in the budget to get a better sense of what the budget is all about. Staying on top of the budget, while not letting it dominate you, is extremely important.

Selectman McGrath asked what his second priority was. Mr. McCue explained that there was an abandoned elementary school – it was a wasted asset and it was a liability because it was in disrepair. His immediate concern was to secure the facility and reached out to the Sheriff's Office and was able to obtain manpower from the Sheriff's Office to secure the facility. There were discussions about the reuse but people couldn't get on the same page and they finally tore the building down.

Chairman Heitin asked about his budget process. Mr. McCue said that has bi-weekly meetings with the financial team – Assistant Assessor, Accountant and Treasurer-Collector, where they identify issues and look toward future years. During November/December, he'll meet with department heads, look into determining what the Free Cash might be and they try to clear up the books. On the capital side, there was a capital committee but during the lean years, so they put aside capital planning. He has experience putting together capital plans when he was a selectman in Mansfield. Avon is trying to bring back the capital planning process, as they have purchased equipment during the annual town meetings from the operating budget.

Selectman McGrath asked if Mr. McCue met with each department head to discuss efficiency within each department. He met with each department head to discuss their department and needs and when he was more comfortable with understanding the people after a few months, he began looking at the departments in the forensic manner. He didn't want to start off on the wrong foot.

Selectman McGrath asked about long-range planning. Avon didn't have a long range planner – they utilized the regional planning agency. The staff with the Town is skeleton at best. Mr. McCue has written zoning by-laws as needed. He noted that he would be a champion of ensuring we had a long-term plan.

Selectman Roach asked the most difficult situation he has had to deal with in his professional career. He explained that the discipline and termination of staff is very difficult. He was meticulous in his work in dealing with these issues.

Selectman Roach asked Mr. McCue to touch on his experience with union negotiations. Mr. McCue explained that he, legal counsel and a member of the Board engage in union negotiations. They have gone to mediation for grievances but never for contract negotiations. Selectman Roach asked if he would engage in contract negotiations with the school unions or delegate to another individual, as it is time-consuming. Mr. McCue responded that he would not be adverse to it, but would need to get a better sense of the situation here in Sharon. He would sit with the Selectmen and discuss with them.

Chairman Heitin asked Mr. McCue if he had any further comments. Mr. McCue noted that he is interested in regional approaches and enjoys speaking with other communities about engaging in regional approaches. He wants to try to control the future. Economic development issues intrigue him and while he is not a fan of the 40Bs, he would try to mitigate what the town is facing in the future.

Selectman Roach asked what he is most proud of in his career. Mr. McCue responded that saving Tufts Animal Hospital, proud of being the driving force in getting Mansfield into an ETA and the Arbor Day celebration in Avon are at the top of the list. He also takes pride in getting a tree from Nova Scotia donated to build a new flagpole in Mansfield.

The Board thanked Mr. McCue for his time.

The Board took a five minute recess.

Town Administrator Interview – Grady E. Miller

The Board welcomed Mr. Miller. Chairman Heitin asked Grady to tell a little bit about himself.

Mr. Miller noted that he is originally from California, went to San Diego State and worked for local governments in Southern California. He worked for the police department in Burbank, CA and was promoted to an Administrative Analyst I position. He had an opportunity to work in Peoria, Arizona and held several positions in that community. His daughter was in college and he and his wife have family in Massachusetts and North Carolina and the Town Manager position in Narragansett came through. He noted that he and the Council and he separated and went on to explain the political climate in Narragansett. He was asked to do some things that he was uncomfortable with and explained why he would not do it. A big deal was made out of a \$3,000 expenditure and he left in May 2012. He's been working unpaid for the Narragansett Historical Society and is involved with his church's council.

Chairman Heitin asked him what attracted him to Sharon. Mr. Miller said that he drove through Sharon on his way to Stoughton for an interview and he did his research on the town. He said it's a first-rate community; from the schools to the outstanding quality of life, the activism of the community and these things interested him.

Selectman McGrath asked if he has visited since his accidental visit and Mr. Miller noted that he has been here six times. He's reviewed the town's bylaws and did a search of different issues facing the town. The beach is great and the lake is great and noted all of Sharon's open space, forested areas and farms are incredible features. Having a MBTA station in town is terrific as well. The Town has a lot to offer, from a resident stand-point. The quality of life is important, as he would intend to live in town. Selectman McGrath noted that he is a history buff and Mr. Miller noted that he is one too. He would get involved in Sharon's Historical Society as well.

Mr. Miller added that he was involved in the Narragansett area's Chamber of Commerce, was active in the Lions Club, and has worked extensively with boards/commissions in Narragansett. He attended Finance Committee meetings and made a point of attending each board/commission meeting to introduce himself and become more familiar.

Selectman Roach asked what his management skills would be to department heads as well as staff. Mr. Miller has worked as a staff person and come up through the department heads. He has an appreciation of department heads and how they run their department heads, but doesn't want to micromanage. He meets with department director every three weeks or so. He tends to work on a collaborative basis. He encouraged interdependence. He holds department heads accountable but lets them do their jobs and not get in the way. He also has one-on-one meetings with department heads. He noted the vacancy with the Finance Director position in Sharon and likes to look within the organization and utilizes succession training.

Selectman Roach asked how he would handle resident concerns. Mr. Miller noted that the Town Administrator is the person that people would go to. He always made himself available to the public and has an open door policy. He always followed up with the resident – saw the issue all the way to the end.

Selectman Roach asked if he would be able to commit himself to evening meetings and Mr. Miller replied that his wife can attest that he wasn't home often in the evenings. He has done research on how annual town meetings take place.

Chairman Heitin asked about his budgeting process – operational and capital. Mr. Miller noted that it's a little different here in Massachusetts. In the fall, he would have a working session with the Council, and discuss how they closed out the previous year and what the revenue projection would be for the next five years. The Council provided direction as to what they saw in terms of priorities. It was his budget recommendations to the Council, the departments presented their budgets. They had a series of public hearings and the Council made the decision what to do with the school department budget. Narragansett had a funded capital improvement program.

Chairman Heitin asked about his thoughts on municipal planning, in general – land use planning, development planning, goal setting. Mr. Miller said that with respect to goal setting, they had a series of public forums, asking residents what they wanted. He assisted in strategic planning in Peoria – they had a series of meetings and the Council prioritized.

Selectman McGrath asked what his first priority was in Narragansett. Mr. Miller replied that the first priority was the budget. They were faced with a \$2 million loss in state aid and were looking at the possibility of layoffs and trimming the budget as well as revenue enhancements. The other issue was the OPEB liability and the town had not set aside any money in a trust. The town had their own pension plan and it was underfunded by \$36M. Mr. Miller brought in actuaries to look at these issues and was able to get some concessions in union negotiations.

Selectman McGrath asked if he sat down with department heads and assessed their departments. Mr. Miller explained that he met with each department head and the Finance Director to review each budget. He stopped the practice of drawing down on the reserves and it the fund is back up to \$3M.

Selectman McGrath asked if he had to eliminate any departments or staff. Mr. Miller noted there was a hiring freeze, with the exception of police and fire, and he felt that the Department of Public Works was understaffed.

Selectman Roach noted that he has never held a position in Massachusetts. Mr. Miller noted that a lot of the procurement codes, financial situations and labor issues are very similar between Massachusetts and Rhode Island. He added that he has not found many surprises in the Massachusetts General Laws.

Selectman Roach asked about collective bargaining. Mr. Miller noted that he has had experience with collective bargaining – 4 unions. In Arizona, elected officials were not at the negotiating table. In Narragansett, they did have an elected official as well as the solicitor there as well as the fire chief or police chief (for the public safety unions).

Chairman Heitin asked about his biggest accomplishment. Mr. Miller replied that financial issues were the biggest – keeping the bond rating stable, having an economic development plan established, which had clear priorities and actions, was a big issue as well.

Chairman Heitin asked what Mr. Miller what he likes to do for fun. Mr. Miller said that he and his wife enjoy hiking, going on walks, beach, reading.

Selectman Roach asked Mr. Miller where he would look for revenues. He replied that the personnel expenses are growing faster than revenues. He noted that regionalization or delivering services at a lower cost. He drove by the capped landfill but he sees it as a resource; perhaps a solar array would be an option. He noted that putting cell towers on water towers is an option and school buildings have some good roofs for solar panels. Windmills are an option as well, provided they are hidden by trees.

Chairman Heitin asked Mr. Miller if he has any questions or would like to make any further comments. Mr. Miller noted the huge sense of community – he was here over the Memorial Day weekend – and would love to work and live here. His vast experience would be an asset. He noted that the finances are going to be critical in the next five years or so.

The Board thanked Mr. Miller for his time.

The Board took a brief minute recess.

Town Administrator Interview – Frederic E. Turkington, Jr.

Chairman Heitin asked him to tell the Board about himself, his background and why he applied for the position. Mr. Turkington noted that in Wayland, he was the first Town Administrator. There was considerable discussion over his tenure about the authority of the position and there was a contingent in town that felt there was too much free cash and his employment agreement was bought out. He is interested in Sharon – good demographic, engaged citizens, active boards/committees and the schools are valued. Sharon seemed to be a good fit. Mr. Turkington noted that he met with several department heads yesterday.

Selectman McGrath asked Mr. Turkington what he knows about town – the history of the town, recreation, open space, etc. Mr. Turkington spent some time researching the issues but learned about the history of Lake Massapoag, good school district, strong civic culture.

Selectman McGrath asked what his first priority was in Wayland. Mr. Turkington replied that he spent a lot of time with the chairs of the boards/committees, Board of Selectmen, Finance Director, and tried to get acquainted with the issues. He was brought to help enhance the customer service to the town and reinforce the customer service aspect.

Selectman McGrath asked when he met with the department heads, was evaluating their efficiencies part of the conversation. Mr. Turkington met with the department heads individually and discussed where their budgets are. Selectman McGrath asked if any of the departments were merged and if staff was reduced. Mr. Turkington noted that staff was cross-trained for various departments, the Town went to bi-weekly payroll and they reduced the headcount in DPW.

Selectman Roach asked about resident complaints and how he would interact with the citizens. Mr. Turkington commented that he has an open door policy and keeps the Board apprised of the issues in case there is a pattern. Selectman Roach noted that we have skilled department heads and asked what his management style is with department heads and staff. Mr. Turkington responded that he utilizes training. He has monthly department head meetings and encourages his staff to be professionally engaged. He tries to not get involved in the day-to-day operations of the departments.

Selectman Roach asked about ideas for bringing new revenue into the town. Mr. Turkington wants to understand the community's needs and desires. He would look at other non-tax revenue sources and would look at the town's investments. He would work to control costs by aggressively looking at OPEB, health care costs, etc.

Chairman Heitin asked how he handles the budgeting process – capital and operational. Mr. Turkington believes a consensus needs to be reached by staff and departments and boards/committees. He thinks a 5-10 year capital plan and building needs need to be analyzed. He would communicate this to staff and boards/committees.

Selectman McGrath asked if he had any creative ideas to keep seniors in their homes, etc. Fred said that Wayland has a senior tax write off program and property tax exemptions for seniors, age-restricted housing.

Selectman Roach asked what the toughest issue he has had to face in his career. Mr. Turkington replied that a graduated senior in high school was murdered by her boyfriend and her father was a member of the School Committee. The spirit of the community was torn and it was a difficult time in the community. While he was working in Connecticut, the community lost four police officers due to illness and accident. In terms of problems, there was major flooding on Route 20 due to a flooding river. In terms of management problems, there were some employees who didn't understand the customer service skills and they were terminated.

Chairman Heitin asked about his biggest accomplishment. Mr. Turkington replied that building a sense of community is his biggest accomplishment in terms of building projects.

Chairman Heitin asked Mr. Turkington what he does for fun. He noted that he plays a little bit of golf, likes to cook, enjoys trying out new restaurants and spending time with his four kids.

Selectman Roach asked if he would travel to Sharon each day. Mr. Turkington said initially yes, he would commute and would not rule out moving to Sharon.

Chairman Heitin asked if he has any questions or have any additional comments. Mr. Turkington is very interested in the position – it's a good fit for him and the community. He sees a real sense of community here in Sharon and would like to be a partner with the Board of Selectmen. He has been involved in the Massachusetts Municipal Association and has a great network to rely on. Building a team that will serve the community is a priority.

Mr. Turkington asked what the timing is. Chairman Heitin replied that the Board is going to dialog at next week's meeting. Reference checks will need to be done but added that we have been without a Town Administrator since February and the Board wants to expedite the process as quickly as possible.

The Board thanked Mr. Turkington for his time.

The Board took a brief recess.

Town Administrator Interview – Timothy J. King

Chairman Heitin asked Mr. King about his background and why he applied in Sharon. Mr. King has over twenty years in municipal government and is presently the Assistant Town Administrator in Wellfleet. He is interested in Sharon – his aunt lived here and had some good memories here in Sharon and his wife's family is in Hopkinton and they would like to live closer. It's a beautiful community.

Selectman McGrath asked Mr. King what things he's noticed since the 60s, when he used to visit here. Mr. King replied that it's more developed, more traffic, more homes and Sharon may be experiencing some growing pains. He added that there is too much reliance on property taxes and not enough industrial/commercial development.

Selectman McGrath asked what his first priority would be. Mr. King said that he would like to meet and talk with the key stakeholders in the community, including members of the Board of Selectmen. He would like to develop a rapport with the staff. He likes to immerse himself in the community – he would like to meet with boards/committees. Selectman McGrath asked about his involvement in volunteer boards/committees and Tim said that absolutely, he would get involved in the boards/communities.

Selectman McGrath asked about department reorganization/creating efficiencies. Mr. King wants to listen to the department heads and hear their concerns. He wouldn't come in and make immediate changes and would rather listen to the department heads.

Selectman Roach asked how he would deal with the general public. Mr. King wants to be available and open as much as possible. A town official can call him 24/7. He has an open door policy – he likes to get out into the community. The staff would be quite busy. Mr. King likes to get in early and stay late.

Selectman Roach asked about living in Sharon and Tim replied that he would like to reside in Sharon within a year.

Chairman Heitin asked about engaging volunteers and the Town Meeting form of government. Mr. King believes it is important that residents have as many opportunities to be engaged to make informed decisions and feels strongly about transparency.

Chairman Heitin asked about his approach to budgeting – both operational and capital. Mr. King responded by stating that he feels his strongest attribute is financial management. He starts with the projections- preferably a five year projection – and then presents that to the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee, so they have a sense of the challenges coming down the road. He prepares a draft budget message for the Board and sends out his budget documents to the department heads, he meets with department heads and then presents the budget to the Board and Finance Committee. He does a similar process for capital improvement program – a 10 year projection.

Selectman McGrath asked about trying to attract economic development in Wellfleet. Mr. King noted that he is the HR Director, handles bids and purchasing and the staff person to the Economic Development Committee. He believes in developing micro-enterprises, like small businesses. In Ellsworth, Maine, they developed a business park. He believes the town should assist micro-enterprises.

Selectman Roach asked how he would handle increasing revenue. Mr. King believes that Sharon needs a comprehensive plan – good for economic development/revenue growth and some issues that Sharon is confronting, like Rattlesnake Hill. The plan would provide the Selectmen and the community on where the town should be going. He suggests looking at fees, but believes efficiencies/savings should also be considered.

Chairman Heitin asked what his best accomplishment and the toughest thing he had to do professionally. Mr. King replied that the toughest is whenever you have to fire an employee. He made sure he followed the letter of the law to ensure he did it right. Mr. King said that he likes to be more of a mentor/coach rather than a boss. When he left Ellsworth, the staff was top-notch and he is most proud of that.

Chairman Heitin asked what he likes to do for fun. Mr. King commented that he goes biking every day on a hybrid bike, reading and genealogy, and he and his wife enjoy hiking.

Chairman Heitin asked if he has any questions and if he has any final comments. Mr. King asked what the Board is looking for in a Town Administrator. Chairman Heitin is looking for someone who can be a leader, be pro-active, engage in the community and understands the needs/wants of the community. Selectman McGrath is looking for someone with honesty, integrity, someone who is here and doing their job and is willing to address deficiencies. He is looking for someone who can lead us through difficult times and find a balance with development – making Sharon an affordable place to live. Selectman Roach wants an administrator who will take the time to meet with department heads to discuss the issues facing the departments, someone who can handle union negotiations, and someone who will be out in the community and part of the community.

Mr. King asked if the Board sets their goals and Chairman Heitin said that we will likely do so, especially since Selectman McGrath was recently elected. Chairman Heitin added that we set goals for department heads and the Town Administrator.

Mr. King asked what the town has done to address matters such as OPEB. Chairman Heitin noted our reserve is very low and there are some initiatives at the local level to help, but we made some changes to the health insurance plan. We have been very pro-active on debt service. We have really looked at the budget and sought out additional revenue opportunities. Mr. King asked if Sharon has established a debt service policy and Chairman Heitin replied that yes, we do.

Mr. King noted that he is interested in the position and is interested in serving for 7-12 years and appreciates the opportunity to meet with the Board.

The Board thanked Mr. King for his time.

Chairman Heitin noted that the Board welcomes public input between now and the Board's next meeting on Tuesday.

Topics not reasonably anticipated forty-eight hours in advance of the meeting

None.

Executive Session – 9:16pm

MOTION: To enter into Executive Session to conduct a strategy session in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel, and at the end, to adjourn for the evening. Discussion of any of these items in open session would be detrimental to the Town.

Roach: Aye
Heitin: Aye
McGrath: Aye

Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn at 10:00pm

Roach: Aye
Heitin: Aye
McGrath: Aye