

**MINUTES**  
**SHARON BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

June 25, 2015

The meeting of the Sharon Board of Selectmen was called to order in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at Sharon Town Hall at 5:23pm with Chairman William A. Heitin, Clerk Walter B. Roach, Selectman John J. McGrath, and Town Administrator Frederic E. Turkington, Jr.

**Organization of Candidate Questions**

Chairman Heitin explained that the Board is interviewing three finalists for the position of Chief of Police. Mr. Turkington prepared a schedule of questions for the Board to use. The Board is comfortable with the questions and order of the questions to be asked.

**Police Chief Interview – William D. Kewer**

**Chairman Heitin: Welcome back to Sharon. Thank you for your participation in the screening process and for your interest in serving our community. Since this is the first public interview and we have many residents who watch meetings on our public access cable channels, please begin by telling us what prompted him to apply for the position of police chief of Sharon.**

*Mr. Kewer grew up in Taunton and began his career on the Cape. Sharon is a beautiful town and sees himself being part of the community.*

**Selectman McGrath: Share some details about your current agency – size, organizational structure and significant challenges.**

*Mr. Kewer explained the resident trooper program within the Connecticut State Police, which he has been a part of. He is presently a Captain in the CSP and is the Deputy Director for the Office of Counterterrorism and Emergency Services and supervises approximately 100 personnel.*

**Chairman Heitin: As you know, another candidate is part of the command staff of our police department. If you are selected as police chief, what would you do to forge a partnership with him? What would you do to earn the respect and support of your officers who may be disappointed that one of their own wasn't promoted as chief?**

*Mr. Kewer replied that all of the candidates at the assessment center were professional. He knows that Deputy Chief Kaufman is a great guy. He thinks the Board needs to look at the tangible experience of the candidates. He said he knows the needs of a small community and everyone should check personalities at the door and that he doesn't care what patch people wear. The town and the community is the most important and the bottom line is – mission first.*

**Chairman Heitin: What innovations have you introduced to your current department? Can you give an example of strategies or techniques that you would employ to implement something new in Sharon?**

*Mr. Kewer spoke of his efforts in combating the efforts of heroin.*

**Chairman Heitin: What can a police chief do to ensure that members of the department adhere to the highest ethical standards?**

*Ethics is paramount to Mr. Kewer. You cannot have integrity issues. The Chief needs to let the expectations be known from the chief on down. He believes in ongoing ethics and integrity training and supervision.*

**Selectman Roach: What would you describe as your three greatest personal strengths?**

*Mr. Kewer replied that his strengths are integrity, communication skills and his hard work ethic.*

**Selectman Roach: Tell us what you consider your greatest weakness. What do you do to improve in that area?**

*He calls people to task for not doing their job and likes things done the right way. He believes teamwork is key and wants to get his officer's input, as they may have a good suggestion.*

**Selectman McGrath: What is the most serious problem that exists within your police department?**

*He explained that the idea of consolidated dispatch just did not work. You always want to make things more financially and operationally efficient, but you need to realize when things aren't working.*

**Selectman McGrath: What have you done personally to solve or mitigate this problem?**

*Mr. Kewer was not part of the consolidated dispatch agreement.*

**Selectman McGrath: Compare and contrast your experiences there with what you've learned about the Sharon Police Department.**

*Despite the size, there are similarities between the Sharon Police Department and the divisions within the Connecticut State Police that he has worked in. Sharing of information is key, and Sharon is a part of that information sharing. Actions need to be data driven.*

**Selectman Roach: Tell us about some of the community organizations in which you participate in either your hometown or your employing community.**

*He is very involved in his community; in particular, hockey. In the resident trooper program, his is involved in community service programs, like TRIAD and D.A.R.E. He had yearly open houses for his towns in the Resident Trooper Program. He would be very interested in participating in coaching youth sports here in Sharon.*

Chairman Heitin asked if he would be willing to move to Sharon and he replied yes, without reservation.

**Chairman Heitin: You prepared a "first 30 days on the job" work plan which included introducing yourself to various individuals and groups outside of town government. Why did you choose the individuals and groups that you did and how will you engage the broader Sharon community as police chief?**

*Mr. Kewer said that it is vitally important to meet with the Fire Chief and the Emergency Management Director – preparedness is key. He would meet with neighboring chiefs and learn more about the regional training programs. He would work with the District Attorney's Office and believes that honest communication is important.*

**Chairman Heitin: What strategies and techniques would you employ to engage citizens and convey a positive image of the department?**

*Community policing initiatives are important - having officers and the chief going to the schools, meeting business leaders, etc. He believes engaging the youth is very important. People need to see the human side of police officers. You want people to be more inclined to call you in an emergency. School Resource Officers are vitally important.*

**Chairman Heitin: This is your opportunity to make a brief closing statement that touches on any information you had hoped to convey during the course of the interview tonight. Tell us why we should select you to serve as our next police chief.**

*He commended all of the candidates. He started as a local cop and grew up here in Taunton. He wants to work to remain Sharon a safe community. He wants to develop a strategic plan. He has the management skills and experiences to make him a worthy candidate. He wants to make sure the officers have the right equipment and wants to be a part of a community.*

The Board thanked Mr. Kewer for his time.

Chairman Heitin stated that the Board will take a brief recess.

**Chairman Heitin:** Welcome back to Sharon. Thank you for your participation in the screening process and for your interest in serving our community. Since this is the first public interview and we have many residents who watch meetings on our public access cable channels, please begin by telling us what prompted you to apply for the position of police chief of Sharon?

*Mr. Melanson replied that he wants to implement programs and lead a department and work with the community. He looked to see whether Sharon was a good match for him professionally and him personally, as well as his family.*

**Selectman McGrath:** Share some details about your current agency – size, organizational structure and significant challenges.

*Mr. Melanson replied that he is a captain with the West Hartford Police Department, which has a staff of 130. The community has a diverse population; the schools are great; there is a vibrant crowd that comes due to its economic growth, which is a challenge. The department continues to build its relationship with the community and in the schools. Recruiting good candidates is a challenge.*

**Selectman McGrath:** Compare and contrast your experiences there with what you've learned about the Sharon Police Department.

*Crime rate in Sharon is low, but there is a section of West Hartford that has a high crime rate, but overall, the crime rate is low. He was in charge of the Community Services Youth Services and worked to create a support network. They worked closely with the schools and he enjoyed that work. Their officers are deeply involved in the community, which he sees in Sharon.*

**Selectman McGrath:** What is the most serious problem that exists within your police department?

*Mr. Melanson believes the most serious problem is the youth of the department and the lack of experience on the shifts.*

**What have you done personally to solve or mitigate this problem?**

*He works with the new officers and assigns cases to the detectives based on the cases he reviews. He tries to mentor and coach the officers.*

**Chairman Heitin:** As you know, another candidate is part of the command staff of our police department. If you are selected as police chief, what would you do to forge a partnership with him? What would you do to earn the respect and support of your officers who may be disappointed that one of their own wasn't promoted as chief?

*He leads through collaboration and believes seeking input from officers is important. He needs to use the staff as a resource as they have the institutional knowledge. The department is a team – it is not a dictatorship.*

**Chairman Heitin:** What innovations have you introduced to your current department? Can you give an example of strategies or techniques that you would employ to implement something new in Sharon?

*He has implemented several technologies, including automated scheduling. It was a challenge because not everyone wanted to learn new software but it is now a staple of the department and has saved hundreds of hours of manpower.*

**Chairman Heitin:** What can a police chief do to ensure that members of the department adhere to the highest ethical standards?

*Mr. Melanson referred to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing Task Force. He believes that building trust within the community is important and he sees that in Sharon. He also noted that creating a positive culture within the department to serve the people and encourage everyone to give their best effort.*

**Selectman Roach: What would you describe as your three greatest personal strengths?**

*Determination – when given an assignment, he works as hard as he can and is willing to reach out to ask for assistance.*

*Dependability – his chief knows he'll do the task correctly and exceed expectations*

*Integrity – one of 9 kids and his parents taught them the importance of doing the right thing.*

**Selectman Roach: Tell us what you consider your greatest weakness. What do you do to improve in that area?**

*Mr. Melanson explained that he gets frustrated when people don't meet the high level of expectation. The community deserves us to give our best effort.*

**Selectman Roach: Tell us about some of the community organizations in which you participate in either your hometown or your employing community.**

*In his hometown, he has taught youth sports and his son was involved in cub scouts. In West Hartford, he performed child abuse investigations and served on Internet Safety Committee.*

**Selectman Roach: What do you like to do in your off-duty time?**

*He is an avid cyclist, runner, enjoys spending time with his kids and still coaches high school hockey.*

**Chairman Heitin: You prepared a "first 30 days on the job" work plan which included introducing yourself to various individuals and groups outside of town government. Why did you choose the individuals and groups that you did and how will you engage the broader Sharon community as police chief?**

*Mr. Melanson noted that the Chief and the department needs to have the support of the community. Community outreach and in the schools is very important. Every town department has a role. The chief is the face of the department, listening to their concerns. Police departments need to be transparent. He would like to create PSAs on various topics, increase interaction in the schools and develop positive messages for the kids and their families.*

**Chairman Heitin: What strategies and techniques would you employ to engage citizens and convey a positive image of the department?**

*If your department doesn't have a positive image in the community, that's when troubles occurs.*

**Chairman Heitin: This is your opportunity to make a brief closing statement that touches on any information you had hoped to convey during the course of the interview tonight. Tell us why we should select you to serve as our next police chief.**

*Mr. Melanson's philosophy is that police officers are public servants, not just enforcers of the law - we are here to help. He is innovative and always willing to make things better. He wants to bring that mindset to the Sharon Police Department. In response to a question by Chairman Heitin, he would absolutely move to Sharon.*

The Board thanked Mr. Melanson for his time.

Chairman Heitin stated that the Board will take a brief recess.

**Police Chief Interview – Tilden M. Kaufman**

**Chairman Heitin: Welcome. Thank you for your participation in the screening process and for your interest in continuing to serve our community. Since this is the first public interview and we have many residents who watch meetings on our public access cable channels, please begin by telling us what prompted you to apply for the position of police chief of Sharon?**

*Mr. Kaufman explained that he was born and raised in Sharon, rose through the ranks in the Sharon Police Department and has never had any interest in applying for the Chief's job in any other community.*

**Selectman McGrath: Share some details about your current agency – size, organizational structure and significant challenges.**

*The Sharon Police Department is a 31 man department. Sharon was recently named one of the safest communities in the state. The department is an excellent group of people. They have been working hard in the community – PALS (police at lunch with students), Junior Police Academy, etc. The main job in Sharon is quality of life issues, although we aren't a high crime community. Officers are very well versed. He sees the immediate challenge is the moving into the public safety building. He's the E911 coordinator and explained that the database needs to be accurate. The department has over accreditation-ready 80 policies, which he has written, and he hopes to be accredited.*

**Selectman McGrath: Compare your experiences when you entered the department in 1986 versus what it is like today.**

*Policing back then was more enforcement; today, it's more about helping people.*

**Selectman McGrath: What is the most serious problem that exists within your police department?**

*He does not see any major issues; he would like to see each member participate in cross training and be able to do different things.*

**What have you done personally to solve or mitigate this problem?**

*Mr. Kaufman has always mentored the people below him. He would develop a shadowing program.*

**Chairman Heitin: You, among the candidates, have the unique situation of being chosen from among the ranks. What challenges come from rising to a leadership position among long time co-workers and friends? How will you separate your experiences as a colleague from your responsibilities as chief to make decisions in the best interest of the department?**

*He has a lot of internal support; there is mutual respect in the department. People know they have to be held accountable.*

**Chairman Heitin: What innovations have you introduced to your current department? Can you give an example of strategies or techniques that you would employ to implement something new in Sharon?**

*The department tweaks things daily when doing different things. The rapid alert notification system is being re-utilized; they have a partnership with the Sheriff's Office with respect to Alzheimer's patients, etc. Every day something new is happening.*

**Selectman Roach: What would you describe as your three greatest personal strengths?**

*Humble, down to earth, honest, direct when he needs to be; a fair person.*

**Selectman Roach: Tell us what you consider your greatest weakness. What do you do to improve in that area?**

*He believes he is too hard on himself.*

**Selectman Roach: Tell us about some of the community organizations in which you participate in either your hometown or your employing community.**

*In Sharon, he is a member of Fish & Game and the Historical Society. In Franklin, he has been active in youth sports through the years.*

**Selectman Roach: What do you like to do in your off-duty time?**

*He enjoys working out, collecting things (lanterns, baseball cards), traveling, and chases storms out of state.*

**Selectman McGrath: What community policing initiatives have you been a part of?**

*He attends a lot of community events, like Flag Day, 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events; he is active with Sharon Cable programs, speaks at churches and manages social media for the department. His ideas for community policing: coffee with the chief; bicycle patrol to parks, lake, and be visible and talk to the kids – kids love that*

stuff. He would like to create Citizens Police Academy. He would like to have a storefront – a community outreach office.

**Chairman Heitin: What can a police chief do to ensure that members of the department adhere to the highest ethical standards?**

*Lead by example. He has chemistry with his department; the department is solid. He would move back to town if he needed to, in response to a question by Chairman Heitin.*

**Chairman Heitin: You prepared a “first 30 days on the job” work plan which included introducing yourself to various individuals and groups outside of town government. Why did you choose the individuals and groups that you did and how will you engage the broader Sharon community as police chief?**

*He has a head start because he knows a lot of people in town. He wants to let the command staff know of his expectations. He is not looking to make rash decisions. He would like to establish a five-year strategic plan, and gain input from the Board of Selectmen, other town departments, and the public.*

**Chairman Heitin: What strategies and techniques would you employ to engage citizens and convey a positive image of the department?**

*He would like to continue the good work they are already doing. He would create the Citizen Academy, conduct open houses at the police station, etc.*

**Chairman Heitin: This is your opportunity to make a brief closing statement that touches on any information you had hoped to convey during the course of the interview tonight. Tell us why we should select you to serve as our next police chief.**

*Mr. Kaufman noted that he has risen through the ranks and has a proven track record with his performance reviews/evaluations. It would be an honor and privilege to be the chief of the department – he would do them proud.*

The Board thanked Mr. Kaufman for his time.

Chairman Heitin stated that the Board will take a brief recess.

### **Board Discussion on the Candidates**

Chairman Heitin noted that they completed the three interviews for Police Chief. He thanked the members of the screening committee for their hard work in this important process. He asked if any committee members had any comments; there were none. Chairman Heitin explained the process of finding a replacement for retiring Chief Joe Bernstein.

Selectman McGrath noted the fantastic job the screening committee did in bringing forth these finalists. He reviewed all of the candidate’s materials. Only one of the candidates who made it to the assessment center stage was actually from Massachusetts, and that perplexed him. He noted that there is a learning curve for those candidates coming from out of state. If you have a qualified candidate from within the organization, then that person would almost always be his first choice. The Sharon Police Department has an outstanding reputation for its professionalism. The two external candidates would make outstanding chiefs, but he feels we have an outstanding candidate already in the department. There would be no learning curve for Mr. Kaufman – he can handle the position of Chief. He respects the process and feels it was necessary, but he doesn’t see the need to go outside the department. He has complete confidence that Deputy Chief Kaufman would make an outstanding chief.

Selectman Roach reviewed the assessment center proceedings, as well as the application materials, of all of the candidates. He noted that Mr. Kaufman’s letters of recommendation were numerous and impressive. He has heard from the townspeople that Deputy Chief Kaufman would make an excellent chief. He’s risen through the ranks. Tilden will be his choice for Chief.

Chairman Heitin says that we have found our new chief. He believes the transition will be smoother for Deputy Chief Kaufman. He takes him on his word that education is important for those within the department for success

**MOTION:** To conditionally appoint Deputy Chief Tilden Kaufman as the new chief for the Town of Sharon, pending background check and administrative items  
(Heitin – McGrath) 3-0 **PASSES**

#### **Topics not reasonably anticipated forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting**

None

#### **Executive Session – 8:02pm**

**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 in open session would be detrimental to the Town.  
(Heitin - McGrath) 3-0 **PASSES**

Heitin: Aye  
McGrath: Aye  
Roach: Aye

#### **Adjournment**

**MOTION:** To adjourn at 8:25pm  
(Heitin - McGrath) 3-0 **PASSES**

Heitin: Aye  
McGrath: Aye  
Roach: Aye