

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

April 11, 2022

Town Hall, 139 Main Street, Rowley, MA

10:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Cliff Pierce; Vice Chairman Deana M.P. Ziev; Clerk Robert Snow; Joseph Perry; David Petersen (Town Administrator Deborah Eagan; Assistant Town Administrator Natalie Lovett)

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chairman Pierce called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m. He said the meeting is being audio and video recorded by Rowley Community Media.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Review Annual Town Meeting Warrant and vote to sign the warrant

Town Administrator Debbie Eagan said that there are several articles that the Board needs to vote to approve.

Dave Petersen made a motion to approve Article 6, Bob Snow second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

Joe Perry made a motion to approve Article 7, Bob Snow second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

Dave Petersen made a motion to approve Article 8, Bob Snow second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

Eagan said that under Article 38, Town Counsel provided revisions to the text that adds new language allowing time for the plastic bag ban policy to be implemented if it is approved at Town Meeting.

Dave Petersen made a motion to approve Article 38 with the revisions, Bob Snow second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

Eagan said that Town Counsel pointed out that the Town's past warrants have included an article with a list of the open seats that will be on the election warrant. Town Counsel stated that the election information cannot be a Town Meeting article, as a result it has been moved to the end of the warrant and is identified as election information. She stated that a revised warrant, for the Board to sign, is being printed which adds a missing Housing Authority seat to the election information. Eagan also pointed out that the warrant delineates which articles pertain to which fiscal year (FY22 or FY 23).

Dave Petersen made a motion to vote to sign the warrant, Bob Snow second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

2. Review Fire Chief resumes and set date for interviews

Dave Petersen stated that they have a good internal candidate for this position. The Fire Department is currently in turmoil from rapid turnover, which is an issue for all Fire Departments right now and no fault to anyone. He said that, if approved at Town Meeting, there will be two new Firefighter positions to fill. In addition, one current firefighter that is leaving on July 1 and Captain Merry will be retiring. Petersen said he believes that stability of the Department is more important than anything else. Mark Emery has worked there for more than 30 years and has served as acting Fire Chief several times. Emery has worked well with the Board and, being a Town resident, is always available. Petersen said that he reviewed the resumes of the other candidates but he believes it is important to have continuity and Emery will be able to get to work right away.

Chairman Pierce agreed with Petersen. Emery is a strong internal candidate. The Department needs stability and there is no benefit to dragging out the process.

Joe Perry stated that he also agrees. He is glad to see the Fire Department operating on a 7 day schedule. He thinks Emery is doing a great job as acting Chief and he would support Emery as Chief.

Bob Snow said that he reviewed the Finance Committee meetings from the last few weeks. He said he was impressed by Mark Emery's ability to answer the Committee's questions about the Department's Finances.

Vice Chair Ziev said that she agrees Emery is very experienced and a great candidate, but there were also two other candidates that she feels deserve the opportunity to interview for the position. She said that continuity is important, but a different perspective and leadership style has advantages.

Petersen said he would agree with Ziev were it not for the current personnel crisis, with 5 positions to potentially fill. He said that right now we are looking at the basics, sometimes only one call firefighter shows up for a call. He said that Emery has shown leadership and availability.

Ziev said that Emery is an unparalleled benefit to the community, but questioned the purpose of only interviewing one candidate. Petersen responded that it would give Emery an opportunity to express where he sees the Department going. If the Board is not happy with his responses, they can look at other candidates.

Joe Perry made a motion to interview Mark Emery for the position of Fire Chief on April 20th at 10 a.m., Bob Snow second, all in favor – aye (4-1). Deana Ziev - NAY

ADJOURN

Deana Ziev made a motion to adjourn, Bob Snow second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

Meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Natalie Lovett
Assistant Town Administrator

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Warrant for May 2, 2022 Annual Town Meeting
2. Letter from Town Administrator Debbie Eagan to the Board of Selectmen re: Fire Chief applicants and interviews
3. Cover letter and resume for Stephen D. Abell, Jr.
4. Cover letter and resume for Mark Emery
5. Cover letter and resume for Kevin P. Farrell
6. Cover letter and resume for Michael P. Gonynor
7. Cover letter and resume for Robert James-Henry Serino
8. Cover letter and resume for Donald Matheson
9. Cover letter and resume for James T. McNeilly
10. Cover letter and resume for Russell T. Ricker
11. Cover letter and resume for Robert E. Valentine