

SELECTMEN'S RECORD
October 2, 2017

ATTENDANCE AND CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at Town Hall by Chairman John Hickey. Also present were: Selectmen Nancy Hyde, Selectmen Michael Walsh, Finance Director Pamela Dukeman and Town Counsel Thomas McCusker. Christine McCarthy record the minutes.

J. Hickey led the Pledge of Allegiance.

J. Hickey asked if anyone wishes to record the meeting and granted permission to Westwood Media Center to record.

SCHEDULED ACTION

Fire Chief Interview

Chairman J. Hickey made a statement that the Town was very fortunate to have high engage professionals in the departments from teachers to DPW to first responders. In this process, the Town conducted a robust process that included a search committee, a recognized consultant and an assessment center to help the Town select a candidate for the new Fire Chief position. He thanked all those who participated in the process including all the candidates

Joan Courtney Murray, Human Resources Director, explained the process and steps the Town used to interview Mr. John Deckers.

The Town engaged the services of the MMA Consulting Group to develop a recruitment and selection process for Fire Chief. Relevant individuals within the town and the fire department were asked for their input on the characteristics they were seeking in our next Fire Chief. From these interviews, a profile was generated, recruitment ads were created, the position was posted, and outreach to promising candidates was conducted by the consultant.

The Town received and reviewed applications from 31 candidates, invited 8 candidates for phone interviews, and ultimately conducted telephone interviews with 7 candidates. The Town then invited the five most qualified candidates to participate in a panel interview before the Selection Task Force and to participate in a day-long Assessment Center.

The panel interviews consisted of questions that sought to determine each candidate's knowledge, poise, enthusiasm, and other relevant factors. The Assessment Center consisted of six exercises:

- Program Planning
- Situation Response
- Citizen Complaint
- Employee Meeting
- In-Tray
- Civic Group

The Candidates' performance were judged and scored by a group of current and former public safety officials and municipal management personnel on factors relevant to each exercise (e.g. reasoning, supervision, decision making, problem solving, communication, etc.).

From the Assessment Center, John Deckers was the leading candidate and the Town conducted its background check and there was nothing that would prevent the Town from moving forward.

M. Walsh stated that he had struggled with the process because there were qualified internal candidates and wondered if a certain candidate was put at a disadvantage because of that process. He added that he was concerned the Town was giving the message that people who do work hard for the Town do not rise to the top.

N. Hyde commented that original foundation of interviewing many individuals in the community included reaching out to the Fire Department personnel and that was a very important element in laying the ground work of what the Town was seeking in a new Fire Chief. She added that the combination of interviewing, recommendations and the assessment center gave a lot of good data to work with.

J. Courtney Murray introduced John Deckers to the Board.

Mr. Deckers stated that he was born in Boston and lived in Hingham. He is a graduate of Xaverian Brothers High School. He went on to attend the University of Connecticut where he graduated with an Education Certificate to teach Business. Due to economic challenges, Mr. Deckers stated a landscaping business after college and worked with many firefighters where he realized his passion was for fire service. He got his Executive Fire Officer certification from the National Fire Service Academy and then attended Anna Maria College, where he earned a Master's Degree in Public Administration.

The Board interviewed Mr. Deckers on a variety of topics including:

- Experience and education and how that qualified him to be a Fire Chief
- Description of his leadership style
- Important issues he would confront if he became the next Chief
- Plans to engage with the Community
- What role data analysis plays in the Fire Department's growth
- How he envisions his first few months and year if selected

*(Full video interview can be found on the Westwood Media Center's website:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ACK9D61_5IU)*

The Board thanked John Deckers for his time tonight.

N. Hyde moved to appoint John Deckers to the position of Westwood's Fire Chief, subject to completing contract negotiations, the physical exam and a start date to be determined by the Town Administrator and staff. M. Walsh Seconded. Unanimous Vote: 3-0

OTHER BUSINESS THAT MAY PROPERLY COME BEFORE THE BOARD

J. Hickey asked if there was any other business that may properly come before the board?

PUBLIC AND PRESS

J. Hickey asked if there were any questions from the public or press?

ADJOURNMENT

N. Hyde moved to adjourn. M. Walsh Seconded.

M. Walsh, aye. N. Hyde, aye. J. Hickey, aye.

NEXT MEETING

The Board of Selectmen's next meeting will be held on Monday, October 16 at 7:30pm in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at Town Hall.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Initial after reviewed



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael J. Jillet". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "M".

M. Jillet
Town Administrator

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Board of Selectmen
10/2/2017 Selectmen's Meeting Room
Regular Meeting

SCHEDULED ACTION

- John Deckers Resume

(PDF)