

BOARD OF SELECTMEN & SEWER COMMISSIONERS'
MINUTES

Faulkner Room, Town Hall

November 15, 2007

6:00 PM

Present: Chairman Hunter, Selectmen Rosenzweig, Magee, Knibbe and Berry, Recording Secretary Maryjane Kenney

I. CITIZENS' CONCERNS

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND APPOINTMENTS

6:00 INTERVIEW OF CANDIDATE ANDREW MAYLOR

Mr. Maylor is 45 married and has 3 children. He is excited and greatly interested in the opportunity in Acton. It is a great town and residents have a high expectation with a great school system. Swampscott is a very similar town in that it has a very involved community, yet it is smaller. He brings 20 years of experience, starting with participation in Fincom and then became a tax collector and then moved on to become town administrator. He brings a broad width of experience starting with Department Head that will benefit my position as Town Manager.

Chairman Hunter asked what he thought the most important trait for a Town Manager. He stated that it should be communication, even if it is varied from person to person; still the main thing is effective communication. How would you answer the same question in regards to citizens? He replied that really the answer is the same. He receives numerous calls from interest groups concerning service delivery. Communicate an effective clear answer and be available. How would you go about preparing a manager recommended municipal budget. Traditionally I ask managers for priorities and then meet with each department and challenge those numbers. Every dollar should be challenged. Then I hand the budget off to Fincom. In preparing what would you do to make equal school and municipal funding? He does have that responsibility of providing schools with funding up until it goes to Fincom; it should be fluid and balanced. I need to articulate clearly if and why it should change. Schools have a demand, but for good reasons it might need to change. The Chairman asked are there any Senior Citizens projects with which you have been involved. He was involved in the building of the senior center in the high school. The value of their homes in taxes ate all their funds, so now they integrate and get some payback. The programs lend themselves to shared facilities; it has worked out very well. The Chairman asked what programs should be incorporated in the new center. They are varied and specific things should be aimed at new groups; for example, they made a men's group as men tend not to be as involved as the women in senior programs. They also are aiming some programs for a "younger" group. He was asked what staff mentoring has been accomplished. Mr. Maylor replied that it is ongoing and he holds department meetings, encourages professional development by attending professional organizations in the Commonwealth and try to make training available. The Chairman asked about his use of Regional delivery of services. His reply was we do not do enough, but we should do more. We do have a steering committee. I am on for regional dispatch. I feel that there should be an intergovernmental agreement to bring regional health services to communities and any other purchasing of common services. Have you visited our web center? I have

and it looks fairly good. I can see additional services such as assessed property value, GIS, links to town newspapers, link to Chamber of Commerce and other important town organizations are all considerations. On line registrations and payments, he would like to add. If selected will you move your residence. Not immediately. I would have to decide if this will have long term conditions. The Chairman asked how long his commute will be. Mr. Maylor said it would be 25 miles.

Selectwoman Rosenzweig asked Mr. Maylor to tell the Board about someone he admires. Mr. Maylor replied Charlie Baker, a substantial person and a Selectman in Swampscott. He admires how he challenges him. She asked him how he retains experienced staff. He stated there are two factors: pay and work environment. If pay is competitive it comes to ones work environment. He gives them tools to be successful and to be independent. It empowers them. Open work environment is key. She asked what qualities he looks for when hiring good staff. He looks for someone who wants to strive to do more than is being asked; the person has to like government and show interest in learning. Government is his job, but also his hobby. He likes what he does. What steps would you make to make a Town Center in Acton a reality? Mr. Maylor stated Acton is not alone in wanting to accomplish this issue. Zoning for mixed use residential and bringing more cultural activity to the center and will make people gather. Things happening in Acton's center are very positive. The crosswalks being placed for calming traffic is so helpful. Define with a signage program the difference between the 5 different villages. Bring things into the center, for example a pumpkin contest etc. What are your thoughts on 40Bs? He thought some people think of them in a negative way. It has not always helped to get affordable housing. The permitting process requires attention to the details of the proposal. The applicant must provide consultants depending on the needs for example a study on the impact the development will have on the community. How would you encourage regional planning and why is there resistance to the planning of water, sewer and trash, transportation in this manner. There has been a good job in planning, but implementation is the real challenge. We have been too idealistic. Managed traffic flow is the most discussed and is a difficult thing; it is a natural inclination to get in a car, but to not get in that vehicle is more difficult. Alternative transportation is what needs to be encouraged. How would you encourage a business friendly environment? Zoning really regulates business; it has to be clear and efficient. Special permitting has to allow for a clear process. You owe a process that gets an answer quickly.

Selectman Magee the community is very concerned that the town operate in a "green" environment, what things have you done or would you do to live up to this challenge. He has submitted a grant for studying wind turbines, which is an efficient renewable source of energy. And we have applied for a grant for a solar powered trash compacting item called BIG BELLY, in which the barrel does not need to be replaced and emptied as often. In his community they have a committee to focus on reusable energy. Simple changes such as light switches that automatically go on and off as you go by could be used in municipal buildings. Meaningful ways in Acton can be implemented it is not as intrusive as it seems. In all projects one of the first questions should be what is an energy efficient way of making this happen. Some things like changing the heating systems, replacing windows, etc.; if 7 years to pay for the update of municipal building it clearly pays off to make those changes green. Selectman Magee asked what experience he has had with land acquisition and protection. His most significant town purchase was for a three acre site. Selectman Magee asked what he would do as Town Manager if a staff member or committee was not in line with the Boards directive. Mr. Maylor stated that if his role was oversight. He would really need to see, is it a policy issue or is their responsibility clear cut. There should be a

discussion on responsibilities. We have more stringent wet land protection than the state requires, what is your feeling about regulations that are more stringent than state or federal regulations? Additional restrictions can be problematic, but in some incidences it is very important to be sensitive. Control should be community by community. Have you had any experience with a solid waste facility or transfer station? No, to both. Swampscott has always been 3rd party contract collection town. What about hazardous material? In Chelsea he did have some areas (21E type issues) that had been left from 40-50s industrial waste dumped on land and into oceans. They had to cap land along the mystic river, but nothing in Swampscott. Swampscott did not adopt Community Preservation Act (CPC). Was that positive or negative in your opinion? The negative vote was due to the tax increase, they were asked for an override and the CPC at the same time. He was in favor but the voters said no.

Selectwoman Knibbe asked what he envisioned his role to be as Town Manager. It is to carry out the policy of the Board of Selectmen as efficiently as possible; it is like working for a Board of Directors. If it is obscure it becomes difficult, there should be a clear roadmap. The board should have a synergy and have common goals them come up with to track the progress the Town Manager has accomplished. How would you interact/cooperate with other groups that you do not have direct control over such as The Schools in Acton? It would be the same as interacting with regional groups of my peers to address common things and experiences. Coordinate aggressively such as we have with a neighboring municipality in Lynn to collaborate on dispatch services. Find things that you have in common. Communicate constantly on management items. What long term strategic objective have you been involved in carrying out? In Swampscott my initial meeting showed that they had deferred municipal maintenance and handicapped issues. I was met at the door by police saying the BOS could not meet in town hall. For 8 years they had let repairs go and it was no longer able to be used for meetings. The water lines had never been touched in decades. So they made a long term plan for all facilities in the ground: water lines, sewer, and buildings and municipal properties. Then we had to bring in the specific disciplines that could deal with the issues and involve the right people to make decisions. We appointed a capital improvement committee. It happens that the plan gets carried out, not as fast as most like, but still gets moving. We had a capital plan with capital funding. Additionally we had a property assessment done by engineers on every town project as part of this project. So now we have a twenty year road map on priorities. What is your email policy as far as interactions with the public and the Board? Email is a fact of life. Internet and email use policy is something we need a very clear policy on. Decisions need to be clear on how to manage and make the rules, what is acceptable. Explain a complicated piece of your budget and explain it to us. Free cash is the amount of available resources left after expenditures taken out of your revenue. It is perpetual.

Peter Berry asked what his was his experiences and skills in labor relation activities. In Chelsea he was responsible to oversee as CFO all human resources. He has been the sole person responsible in Chelsea and Swampscott for all labor negotiations. He would have town counsel available in Swampscott. He has negotiated 6 union contracts twice. He negotiated with a coalition to get into GIC. It did not go, but was a good professional experience. He wrote with his Human Resource person the Swampscott personnel policy by law. On the Budget cover sheet you provided the committee what is the role you play in the school budget. On November 15th he presents a 5 yr forecast, and provides a balanced budget with standard model. He then asks School Committee and the boards to present a budget in January again using a standard model. Those are always higher than can be afforded; he takes the numbers with the Town Accountant and makes the town number and

the school numbers balance. In February he presents a balanced budget with existing revenues based on the House One Governor Model. The Selectmen have always approved that product and then the Fincom can alter the product. It leaves Fincom and goes to town meeting and usually doesn't change by more than 1%. The School Committee advocates for more usually, but it also is adopted by Fincom to within 1%. The Fincom budget is the one that goes to Town Meeting. Selectman Berry note that a cut of 6% or \$5M dollars of the schools budget was presented to Fincom by Mr. Maylor. How is your relationship with the Superintendent. He would use him as a reference. You have said you needed to make staff cuts. How did you choose and how did you keep moral up. With the cuts he had you make it is hard to maintain morale. He closed an elementary school, reduced Public Safety, reduced library hours, etc. It does not mean all of those things will happen; they could choose an override or find some others monies. But they try to be equitable and he has no good answer to how to keep moral up under those circumstances. Most towns aren't successful with overrides. Is how do you do it. He does exactly what he says. He is credible, if there is no override and you said you will lay off 10 people, he will lay off 10 people. No exaggeration; honesty is the best way to go. If the town succeeds with an override, he will provide those services promised in the override. Receivership in Chelsea had just ended. Selectman Berry asked what your questions are. Mr. Maylor responded that he would like to know what the Board's expectations are. Will they be looking for a continuation of what was or change?

The Chairman said we are looking for a basic continuation. We are not particularly weak although there is an unfair salary structure and money issues which are common to other towns. Operations could always be improved. We do act toward consensus as often possible. We have had a cordial and close relationship with the Town Manager and it has been very nice and we might lose that. There may be a new or different relationship. We aren't hiring a clone.

Selectman Berry is not looking for status quo; fresh eyes are good. The Budget process here is good. The ALG is working well and the relationship is good. But top to bottom look and bring new ideas. That position is the guy that makes the town run. They need financial skills, communication, creative ideas and to be a problem solver. They need to be a collaborative worker. Certainly not some one who will put up road blocks.

Selectwoman Knibbe would like a new and different approach; it is a different town from when Don Johnson started. It is not just the physical way the town has changed; it is the way we relate to the new people. We need to find a way to incorporate people and the diversity into the town. These are big challenges. What you see in this room does not represent what is outside the door in terms of the make-up of the town.

Selectman Magee would focus on the staff. They should be compensated and recognized. More globally it is a transition time, there is much change and we need to be sensitive, so lets deliberate and decide as soon as possible. The growth is not new, so the pressing question is what we need to do going forward. Address zoning in the growth and character we want for Acton.

Selectwoman Rosenzweig We are a very involved community and our citizens' demand a lot from the Board and the Staff. The staff needs to be valued; many citizens only see what goes wrong, but they don't see all that gets done everyday to keep things going. Public safety is visible, but not so much the rest of the departments. The Manager has to be able to impress the value of the staff to the staff. Being in touch with the community and getting our message out to the community.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS – Charlie Kadac, you said you had a deficit how did you handle that with staff. They understood the budget and they knew it was coming; people had an opportunity to look. We did some reshuffling with lateral transfers. It was equitable. Did

you run into problems with the contracts? We have six town unions and three school unions. Some things we had to handle differently. Dick Obrien- being concerned with leadership, how do you see your relationship with staff? Management is what you do operationally everyday. Leadership is interactions and relationships, what you do to communicate effectively, examples that you set and ideas that you throw out. I might know first what goes on in the building, but there are five Selectmen and you might know what goes on outside of here first. So how do we effectively manage that?

Chairman Hunter gave Mr. Maylor some history about Acton's previous Town Managers. We had a 3 year manager and 2 yr manager, and we hope not to have that kind of turnover; that someone would not leave at the first sign of more money. If the Town Manager's recommendation is rejected you would never know they go on and help with the decision made. He does personalize a bit because he will take responsibility. But he can let it go. In terms of the staff, change is different, people will react different. Some people will leave, but still some really great people should stay.

CLOSE – Mr. Maylor thanked the Board; he is still strongly interested in the position and feels that I would be a good fit. The Chairman stated that the Board will continue with the background check and they will meet and deliberate.

III. SELECTMEN'S BUSINESS

The Board discussed a list the Chairman handed out of references for all the candidates. They decided if they knew other people in the communities where the candidates worked that it would be helpful to also get their input. The Board members could contact whom ever they might know to get information, not just the ones listed. The references are basic we need to go beyond the list. See attached sheet outlining reference checks.

They spoke about if they should allow withholding of background checks on the spouses, and decided at this point to let it go. Selectman Magee noted the cost is large but this is a large decision and it was felt the background checks well worth the expenditure.

Selectwoman Rosenzweig has been strongly urged out side of this Board to get all four candidates checked. Expensive lessons have been learned the other way. You need to know what shows up. We really only need records since the Selectmen are doing reference checks and possibly the cost could be lowered. Selectwoman Knibbe asked at what point will we disclose the Committee's ranking and when will deliberate? Selectman Magee said out of 51 responses these four are the A students. The issue of the Committees's ranking is really being blown out of proportion, it is such a small piece of data. All agreed, the ranking of the Committee was as follows, Murray was 4, Delaney was 3, Ledoux was 2, and Maylor was 1.

After deliberations if no unanimous vote then we might have to call the candidates in again for further interviews. It was stated that if there is any more citizen input we would like to hear from them. Public input is not closed.

OTHER BUSINESS

Selectwoman Rosenzweig stated that the fact they have not had time to discuss the compensation proposal is by no means a statement that they are not committed to going forward. As soon as they can they will pick it up again.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

NONE

V. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

No report at this time

VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There will not be a need for Executive Session.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Enclosed please find additional correspondence that is strictly informational and requires no Board action.

FUTURE AGENDAS

To facilitate scheduling for interested parties, the following items are scheduled for discussion on future agendas. This is not a complete agenda.

November 19

December 3 – Special Use Permit, Rink Development, LLC, 10B Craig Road
(HUNTER)

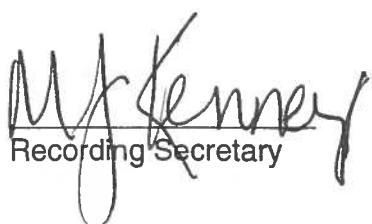
December 17

MINUTES PENDING VOTES

September 29, Special Meeting, October 9, Regular and Executive Session,
October 11, 2007 Special Meeting, October 22, Regular and Executive Session

PENDING COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Mike Fisher, TAC (still with VCC), Reshma G. Singh, ABCC to fill the unexpired term of Elaine Sisler who recently resigned. Barbara Estabrook, ABCC, Sumar Adiseshu, ABCC. (*Ms. Estabrook and Ms. Adieshu's applications are at VCC for Interview and recommendation*). Ryan Bettez, Associate Member of the Planning Board


Recording Secretary


Andrew D. Magee, Clerk


Date

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November 14, Town Manager Interview, November 15, Town Manager Interview, November 19

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