

Board of Selectmen
October 6, 2014

A Board of Selectmen meeting was held on Monday, October 6, 2014 at 7:30 pm in Conference Room A in Town Hall with five selectpersons and the Town Administrator.

Interviews with two individuals for the interim Police Chief position are on the agenda.

Chairperson Wilkinson explained the process for hiring the permanent police chief. She said BadgeQuest will narrow the field down to eight to ten candidates to interview. The Board of Selectmen will be taking volunteers for the interview committee.

Chairperson Wilkinson said in order to be eligible for the interim position, the candidates must have been a chief of police in the past and cannot be a candidate for the permanent chief position.

Selectperson Murphy said he would like the interim candidate to be a resource for the town, advising us through the process for perhaps 4-6 months.

Michael Lane:

M. Lane said he was born and raised in Gloucester. He said he went into policing directly from High School. He took the test while in college, and worked in Gloucester 33-1/2 years as a patrolman, sergeant, detective, and interim chief. When the predecessor retired, they included the option to go outside civil service. They conducted a series of interviews; M. Lane was interim for three years. He said the city had just completed a public safety audit, so there was a list of what needed to be done; they went right to work. He said no chief operates alone; he relies on staff, patrolman, city hall, and the DPW. He said they accomplished a series of improvements; upgraded the cells, rewrote policies and procedures, as well as rules and regulations with the cooperation of the union. They were fact based and data driven. They completed EMD dispatch training in a timely manner; he left before everyone was certified. They created a 2-canine, canine unit, with one officer (two canine officers on different shifts). The paperwork system was upgraded to include incorporating crime scene photos. He said he has an open door policy, he's in his office 40 hours each week; he's always available to talk to anybody, and he's not afraid to be in charge. He said he doesn't beat anyone with his authority, but mentors. He uses progressive discipline, but uses the least amount of negativity to gain cooperation. His approach is never personal; it's for the good of the department. He said he took a year off after retiring, and he is still healthy enough to do the job.

Selectperson Sheedy asked, as interim, what would be his top three objectives for the department. He said he doesn't see anything needing rebuilding; it appears to be a good department. He said a priority is to keep accreditation; he would work to keep them productive. He predicts after a month or so he'd see some issues.

Selectperson Murphy said Chief McCarthy was with the Rockport Police Department for 37 years, 17 as chief; he asked what steps could assist through this challenging time. M. Lane said he doesn't think of himself as a foreign entity. He said he is fair, reasonable and transparent. He said he would sit with each officer and see what they expect.

When asked about his Community Policing approach, he said crime is lower in Rockport than Gloucester and Community Policing is a big part of a small town. He spoke about medication disposal, identity theft

trends, and alcohol enforcement training. He said in Gloucester he went to the elderly housing projects to reduce the availability of prescription pills.

Selectperson Battistelli asked what techniques would he employ so the Board of Selectmen and the Town Administrator are informed about projects, issues and things going on in the department. He said the Town Administrator would be his immediate supervisor. He said Mayor Kirk wanted a team player. He said he would have no problem keeping the Town Administrator informed about issues she needs to know about it. He said if he knows it; she'll know about it.

When asked what his first week would look like, he said he would look at the records management system; he would want access to police reports. Every day he would typically review reports from the prior 16 hours, approve overtime, and it wouldn't be unusual for him to hop in a cruiser and see what the patrol officers are doing on a day-to-day basis.

Selectperson Lucas said Chief McCarthy was respected, she asked outside of law enforcement what other leadership roles has he held. He said in sports roles and as a liquor board member. He said he is not seen as a pushover and he doesn't believe he is seen as a disciplinarian either.

Chairperson Wilkinson asked what he sees as the challenges of an interim chief. He said he would advise the permanent candidate about what parts of the process are good; inform them about equipment and facilities. He would make an evaluation of the department.

James Mulligan:

He said he grew up in Lowell, his father was a cop; he used to walk the beat with his dad. He said his twin brother is a police chief. He was a Nashua patrolman for about five years, then a detective; then he was promoted to street sergeant. There were no unsolved homicides. He worked with the Juvenile Division and worked to get kids back on the road again. He was promoted to uniformed captain in Nashua. He said he is very hands on, worked days and nights; he attended as many roll calls as he could. He said he believes it's important to be visible. Under his leadership the bomb team was the only accredited team in NH with a robot; he is extremely proud of that. He was Deputy Chief of Operations, has a Master's Degree, and graduated from the FBI academy. He said he was popular with the officers. In 2003 Georgetown was looking for a Chief, he left Nashua and took the job. He went from a state-of-the-art system in Nashua, with 200 officers, 50 support people, and a state of the art building to an old-fashioned department in Georgetown. They had no computers, he partnered with the Town Administrator, the Town Accountant and the Board of Selectmen. They were able to bring in a computer firm and automated the system. They had a tiny building, with small offices, no central air, and the roof leaked. He went to the citizens, partnered with the fire department and the DPW to make upgrades. He was a member of the Georgetown Rotary, went to 3rd graders with the Dictionary Program. He mentored the current Georgetown police chief, and existing staff members. He said police officers do the same job wherever they are, dealing with people and helping people. It's a team effort, because people come together. They achieved certification and accreditation within one year. They developed a brochure that went to every citizen in Georgetown. Georgetown had eleven officers and sixteen reserve officers.

Selectperson Murphy asked if it was difficult going from Nashua to Georgetown. He said no, people are people, we have a mission.

He commented on Community Policing, he said partnerships with the schools are critical, under his leadership they installed cameras in the schools, locked the doors, and conducted daily tours of the schools. He said youth and seniors are the most at risk. Partnerships with the Council on Aging are

important; his door is always open and he returns all calls. Under his leadership all five cruisers were at the schools in the morning. He said you need to be open to listen to those that might be criticizing you.

Selectperson Sheedy inquired how much he could accomplish in such a short amount of time. He said he could find out what the needs are. He said he is a consultant; he goes to police departments and evaluates them. He reviews policies and procedures and would make a report to the Board of Selectmen. He would initiate checklists for police cruisers, if they don't currently exist. It's a matter of risk management; if it's predictable, it's preventable. He said he would work with command staff and see what needs to happen.

Selectperson Lucas inquired what it would take to change his life like this. He said he owns a home in Bradford, and would commute from Bradford, not the White Mountains. He said he thought they could work out the hours. He said he's been a police officer his whole life. He said he hopes to make a positive difference; you'll hear good things when you hear my name.

Selectperson Battistelli said Mike Lane did a good job in Gloucester and Jim Mulligan presented himself well too.

Selectperson Murphy said both candidates could do the job and he liked the energy of both candidates. We need to find the right fit for Rockport; both had distinguished careers. We really can't go wrong either way. Chief Mulligan would be Selectperson Murphy's choice, given that he's working on evaluating police departments. He said Rockport could use that. His energy is conducive to our department. His references were outstanding; he would be a good fit.

Selectperson Sheedy said either would be good fit for the interim chief. She said the evaluation piece would be helpful in this position and his community involvement comments were positive. She said she would favor James Mulligan; both candidates have open door styles and both are team players.

Selectperson Battistelli said J. Mulligan has more budgeting experience because he's had many years in the chief role. She said Mike Lane knowing the Cape Ann area is a plus as well.

Selectperson Lucas said J. Mulligan's philosophy hits home with Rockport. She said her initial reaction is to favor J. Mulligan.

Chairperson Wilkinson said she is comfortable with J. Mulligan; he would bring a fresh approach and fresh ideas. She said it wouldn't hurt to have someone with such energy and ideas.

The Town Administrator said J. Mulligan would have no arrest powers in Rockport due to the forced retirement at age 65. She said he can direct, mentor, manage, but he cannot arrest.

Selectperson Murphy moved that the Board of Selectmen enter into contract negotiations with James Mulligan for the position of interim Police Chief, Selectperson Sheedy, seconded, Vote: 5-0.

9:10: Selectperson Sheedy moved to adjourn, seconded by Selectperson Murphy, Vote: 5-0.