

**TOWN OF WEBSTER
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
DONALD BOURQUE, CHAIRMAN
RANDALL BECKER, VICE CHAIRMAN
ANDREW JOLDA
MARK DOWGIEWICZ
ROBERT MILLER**

A Board of Selectmen's Meeting was held in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at the Town Hall on Wednesday, September 28, 2016. Selectman Bourque called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

Attendance: Robert Miller, Mark Dowgiewicz, Andrew Jolda, Randall Becker and Donald Bourque

Pledge of Allegiance: Chairman Bourque led the Selectmen in the Pledge of Allegiance.

James O'Mara

Chairman Bourque stated the Board will recess until 6:00 p.m.

William Ralph

Chairman Bourque thanked Mr. Ralph very much for coming. He stated the Board will give 5-10 minutes for Mr. Ralph to introduce himself. Mr. Ralph stated he attended Providence College and worked for the Federal Government. He stated is worked as a small group that protected depositor's money. He stated he decided to leave and got a job with Bay Bank. He stated the position at Bay Bank was a similar position. He stated he worked ten years in the banking industry when he decided to take the Police Exam. He stated he became a member of North Star (SWAT Team). He stated his main interest was in computer crimes. He stated he worked on grants and budgetary things. He stated he came up with a budget spreadsheet. He stated the form is still in use. He stated he worked 6 years at the Police Department and had to make a decision to leave policing because of an injury. He stated he worked 8 years in computer programming. He stated he started working for the Town of Dedham in 2011. He stated they wanted him to work on improving the Towns bond rating. He stated in 2012 they received an Aaa+ positive outlook. He stated he helped develop financial policies. He stated he helped with the Town's health care reform. He stated Dedham decided not to go with the GIC but a product similar. He stated that saved the Town money. He stated he instituted energy saving measures. He stated he has worked on substantial projects. Selectman Becker asked what his top five goals would be the first 30 days in office. Mr. Ralph stated he would need to develop what the important issues are in town. He stated he would need to sit down with Boards, Committees and Board of Selectmen. He stated he would use this time to gather facts. He stated he has read the Telegram and Gazette and there are a number of issues in Town. He stated he would do performance management. He stated this will put out what is expected, offer help to learn how to do the job and see what happens if they don't comply. He stated most employees want to do a great job. He stated the Town has financial challenges. He stated the town is late on filing and Free Cash Certification. He stated he would provide tools to help employees do their jobs efficiently. He stated he would like to take a look to see what is required to get Webster an Aaa bond rating. He stated he would like to also find ways to save the town money. Selectman Dowgiewicz asked what Mr. Ralph experience was with grants, budgets and contract negotiations. Mr. Ralph stated he has worked on many grants. He stated the budget process was the main thing he worked on in Dedham. He stated he met with Department Heads and bargaining units. He stated they looked on what the town could afford when negotiating. Chairman Bourque stated Webster does not have a HR Department. He asked how would he deal with coming up with job descriptions and an employee manual. Mr. Ralph stated he would have those job descriptions defined in a short amount of time. He stated he would involve employees in that process. He stated most employees want to do a good job. He stated he will know who is capable of doing the job after 30 days. He stated he would get permission or bargain for certain things in a union. Negotiation and education involves every member of the union. Selectman Miller asked why Webster. Mr. Ralph stated he has family here in Webster. He stated Webster represents a community to him. He stated Webster is a great town and would like to bring back the glory days. He stated people want to make their community better. Selectman Jolda stated communication is essential. He asked what Mr. Ralph would do to have an open communication with the residents. Mr. Ralph stated communication helps avoid problems. He stated he has an open book. He stated he believes in transparency. He stated he would have focus groups. He stated taxpayers in Dedham wanted to pay taxes online so they looked at programs in order to get the information out quickly. Selectman Becker asked for Mr. Ralph to briefly describe his departure from Dedham.

Mr. Ralph stated he was involved in a whistleblowers case. He stated purchase order should have been used. He stated according to M.G.L. an inappropriate rate was being used. He stated everything was very well defined. He stated there was a potential to fraud and wanted to take steps to eliminate that potential. He stated there was concern from other people. Selectman Dowgiewicz asked what one of Mr. Ralph's major accomplishments and one of his disappointments. Mr. Ralph stated jokingly that getting interviewed for this position was one of his major accomplishments. He stated a major accomplishment was achieving an Aaa+ bond rating. He stated one of his disappointments was the outcome in Dedham. He stated he did so much while he was there. He stated Dedham hired a new Town Administrator and Town Accountant and they didn't know how much they worked. He stated he was disappointed how things went down. Selectman Bourque asked how many people were in the Finance Department in Dedham. Mr. Ralph stated there was 13 full time people. Selectman Bourque asked the status of the 2015 and 2016 Free Cash. Mr. Ralph stated 2015 was completed by January. He stated it should be submitted by November but didn't always get it submitted by then. He stated the money doesn't disappear you just have to wait until the end of the next following year. Selectman Miller stated he would like to town to be more business friendly. He asked what improvement he would make to make the town more business friendly. Mr. Ralph stated businesses pay real estate taxes. He stated studies show that having businesses pay less in personal property taxes help the business and would attract more businesses to town. He stated he would set up a channel for the business community to communicate with the town. He stated he would also look at tax incentives. Selectman Jolda stated the Lake is Webster's biggest asset. He asked Mr. Ralph if he had any ideas to promote the usage. Mr. Ralph stated he would need to figure out how it can pay for itself. He stated he would hire a consultant and try to figure out what is the best way to make it self-sufficient. He stated people have some good ideas. Chairman Bourque thanked Mr. Ralph to coming to Webster and sked him if he had any questions for the Board. Mr. Ralph stated it was a pleasure to interview for the position. And is very excited to be in Webster. He stated he did a tremendous amount of research and wants to bring Webster into the future. He stated he would like to engage the community and make Webster great again. He stated he would be honored to be the next Town Administrator for Webster.

Chairman Bourque stated James O'Mara will interview at 9:00 p.m.

Pamela Leduc

Chairman Bourque stated the Board will give 5-10 minutes for Ms. Leduc to introduce herself. Ms. Leduc thanked the Board for the opportunity to interview. She stated she has worked for the Town of Webster for sixteen years. She stated she has been the Acting Town Administrator for the last sixteen months. She stated she started working for the Town of Southbridge and then the Town of Needham before coming to Webster. She stated she learned from the bottom up. She stated she started working in the Town of Southbridge in 1986 and worked in every single office to know how each office works. She stated she is uniquely qualified for this position. She stated she has worked for the Town for many years. She stated she has been very active in the Town's retirement system. Selectman Becker thanked Ms. Leduc for the sixteen months she has been the Acting Town Administrator. He stated there has been some criticism over the free cash situation and the lack of accountability in the Accountant's Office. He asked her to address this issue. Ms. Leduc stated the FY15 Free Cash Certification has been submitted. She stated when she agreed to be the Acting Town Administrator that nobody knew the process was going to take this long. She stated the decision to apply for this position did not come lightly. She stated she had many conversations with employees who encouraged her to apply. She stated everything came to a head in March. She stated one of her faults was that she takes on too much. She stated she is getting better at delegating. She stated the Finance Team and the employees are in a good place. She stated she is looking ahead and moving forward. Selectman Dowgiewicz asked what her priorities would be if she was chosen for the position. Ms. Leduc stated her short term priorities would be to do things that have been placed on hold. She stated she would replace the Town Planner. She stated she would move forward with the Community Compact Agreement. She stated she has already provided this information to the Board of Selectmen and Department Heads. She stated she would implement the View Point software and the CodeRed system. She stated her six months goals would be to have the Board of Selectmen to go paperless and have online property record cards. She stated she would also like to fill the Town Administrator's Secretary's position and the Town Accountant position. She stated her future goals would be the Fire Department collective bargaining agreement and the Municipal Modernization Act. Chairman Bourque asked when Free Cash for 2016 will be filed. Ms. Leduc stated she needs to get some additional information over to the Town Auditors. She stated this information will be

submitted prior to January 1, 2017. Chairman Bourque asked about job description and employee manuals. Ms. Leduc stated 85% of employees have a job description. She stated elected officials are done by statute. She stated the secretary of the Town Administrator should have a Human Resource background in order to address these issues. She stated she is not a fan of longevity. She stated she would like performance based raises. Selectman Miller stated he would like to see town policies updated. He asked how she would address that issue. Ms. Leduc stated she completely agrees that some of the town's policies are outdated. She stated the Board has recently adopted new polies and would like to purge old policies that are not current. Selectman Jolda stated communication with residents is essential. He asked how she would communicate with the residents. Ms. Leduc stated she has an open door policy. She stated she is always available. She stated she would put out needed information to the public. She stated they use a sign Board and put more notification out. She stated she would like a more self-service system. She stated she would like Departments to have their own cable access show so that the Department heads can get involved. Selectman Becker asked what management attributes inspire her. Ms. Leduc stated she admires a positive attitude. She stated everyone has a bad day. She stated she also admire honesty. Selectman Becker asked what attributes she detests. Ms. Leduc stated she does not like public speaking. She stated she does not feel very eloquent while speaking. She stated she is also known for seeing white or black. She stated she is trying to see that there is a grey area. Selectman Dowgiewicz asked what her experience is with grants, budgets and contract negotiations. Ms. Leduc stated the Town Planner is usually the grant writer. She stated Carol Cyr also assists at grant writing. She stated she knows the nuts and bolts about every line item. She stated she has been doing the budget since taking over the Town Accountant position. She stated she has successfully settled three union contracts while the Acting Town Administrator. She stated she has a mutual respect for the bargaining units and they set realistic expectations. Chairman Bourque asked what Ms. Leduc believes are the three most important issues facing the town. Ms. Leduc stated the water quality is an issue. She stated there are legitimate concerns from residents. She stated there is now a plan in place to address this issue. She stated the town has an opioid crisis. She stated it is a community issue. She stated the town needs to partner with outside sources. She stated the Town has limited financial resources. She stated the town is limited on how it can raise money. Selectman Miller asked how Ms. Leduc would attract more businesses. Ms. Leduc stated they recently put together an Economic Development Committee. She stated she would make the process easier and have less red tape. She stated she would streamline the permitting process. Selectman Jolda asked is Ms. Leduc had any thoughts about increasing the use of Webster Lake. Ms. Leduc stated the town needs to be very cognizant of the environmental attributes of the lake. She stated Memorial Beach is key. She stated the Board will be hiring a Recreation Director soon who will be able to start promoting the beach area. Chairman Bourque stated he would allow Ms. Leduc to give a closing statement. Ms. Leduc stated she was fortunate enough to be chosen for an interview. She stated this would be a partnership between the Board of Selectmen, Department Heads, residents and herself. She stated the employees are the greatest asset. She thanked the Board of the opportunity.

Chairman Bourque stated they will recess until 8:30 p.m.

Doug Willardson

Chairman Bourque stated it was very important to bring Mr. Willardson back since his interview was over a week ago. Mr. Willardson stated he is very happy the Board invited him back and he stated they had a very good discussion at the last interview. Selectman Miller stated the town is facing some issues with Free Cash Certification filing and other items that were not filed on time. Mr. Willardson stated the Town of Grafton and the Town of Somerville always had free cash filed on time. Chairman Bourque stated Webster is no different than any other town. He stated communication is key. He stated they are not looking for someone to fix the problems overnight but can see a long term goal of moving the town forward. He stated everyone wants what is best for the town. Selectman Becker asked where Mr. Willardson sees himself in five years. Mr. Willardson stated he sees coming to Webster and making a difference. He stated after five years he is not sure. He stated his goals is to keep moving up.

Chairman Bourque stated the Board will take a five minute recess.

James O'Mara

Chairman Bourque stated the Board will give 5-10 minutes for Mr. O'Mara to introduce himself. Mr. O'Mara stated he is celebrating is thirty three wedding anniversary on Monday. He stated he

has four children. He stated he currently serves as the Town Administrator for the Town of Amherst, New Hampshire. Selectman Becker asked why he was interested in coming to Webster. Mr. O'Mara stated he was born and raised in Dedham, Massachusetts. He stated his children are now all grown and he would like to relocated back to Massachusetts. Selectman Dowgiewicz asked what Mr. O'Mara priorities would be. Mr. O'Mara stated a person typically leans a lot by keeping his mouth shut and his ear open. He stated he would have Department Head meeting to gather more information. He stated he would be focusing on the budget within six months and at twelve month would develop a level of trust with employees and they would work together for a common good. Chairman Bourque asked if he had a Human Resource Department in Amherst. Mr. O'Mara stated no. Chairman Bourque stated the town need to have clear job descriptions and an updated employee handbook. He asked how Mr. O'Mara would handle these issues. Mr. O'Mara stated he would hire a firm or call around to other communities and get information. Selectman Becker asked if Mr. O'Mara has looked at the Town Charter, By-law and/or meeting minutes and asked if he recommends any changes. Mr. O'Mara stated he does not recommend any changes at this time. He stated he has a very strong skill with the budget. Selectman Jolda stated communication is key with the community. He asked how Mr. O'Mara would communicate with the public. Mr. O'Mara stated he uses the Town Report as a form of information to the public. He stated he makes it available at Town Meeting. Selectman Dowgiewicz asked Mr. O'Mara his experience with grants, budget and contract negotiations. Mr. O'Mara stated he has experience in negotiating contracts. He stated he was recognized statewide for his budget. He stated last year he received four grants. Chairman Bourque asked about his experience with free cash. Mr. O'Mara stated that free cash is not allowed in New Hampshire. Selectman Miller asked Mr. O'Mara's projection for improving the town to be more business friendly. Mr. O'Mara stated that when there is interest he would reach out and be helpful to businesses that want to come to town. Selectman Jolda asked how he would promote Webster Lake. Mr. O'Mara stated he has a lake in his town. He stated he made the beach more attractive. Selectman Becker asked how much revenue increased under his control. Mr. O'Mara stated revenue went from fifteen thousand to sixty thousand dollars. He stated they focused on the snack shack and upkeep. Selectman Becker asked Mr. O'Mara's management style he liked the most. Mr. O'Mara stated he is a good manager and has a good toolbox. He stated he prefers to be a coach and is flexible. Selectman Becker asked what management style he detested. Mr. O'Mara stated he does not like to correct people in public. He stated he leads from example. Selectman Dowgiewicz asked what one of his major accomplishments was. Mr. O'Mara stated it would be his days as the superintendent in the prison system. He stated he rented beds to the Federal Government. He stated he had a lot of money off of that decision. He stated one of his disappointments as a Town Administrator would be a worker that was struggling with alcohol. He stated he had to put him on leave. He stated three days later he killed himself. He stated he reached out and sought help for his gentleman beforehand. Chairman Bourque asked him why he wanted to leave his current employment. Mr. O'Mara stated he did not have to leave. He stated he feels comfortable to leave. Selectman Miller asked him if he would delegate responsibilities. Mr. O'Mara stated he can't do everything. He stated as the Town Administrator you need to delegate. He stated that is how other people learn. Selectman Becker asked if Mr. O'Mara felt that there should be an Acting Town Administrator in Webster. Mr. O'Mara stated it depend on how much work is put on the Departments. Selectman Becker asked what is position would be if a situation arose if a relative would apply for a command staff position. Mr. O'Mara stated he hadn't even thought about it. He stated he would stay away from the process if they feel it would cause a problem. Chairman Bourque thanked him for coming.

Chairman Bourque stated the Board of Selectmen will meet on Monday, October 3, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. to discuss and vote on the candidates.

Adjournment

Motion: made by Selectman Miller, seconded by Selectman Becker to adjourn the regular session meeting at 9:13 p.m.

Vote: Selectman Miller – yes, Selectman Dowgiewicz – yes, Selectman Jolda – yes, Selectman Becker – yes and Chairman Bourque – yes.

Respectfully submitted,
Courtney M. Friedland
Executive Secretary