

**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 Monday, October 3, 2016. Selectman Bourque called the meeting to order at 6:00 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.

Deliberations and Vote to Appoint one Such Candidate as Town Administrator, Subject to Successful Contract Negotiations and to Appoint one Selectmen (or Selectman _____) to Engage in Contract Negotiations and to Report back to the Selectmen.

Chairman Bourque stated the only item on the agenda is the deliberations and vote to appoint one such candidate as Town Administrator, subject to successful contract negotiations and to appoint one Selectmen to engage in contract negotiations and to report back to the Selectmen. He stated he was hoping the Board could go through pros and cons of each of the candidates. Selectman Miller stated he didn't want to get in trouble with anyone who may be watching regrading talking about each candidate. Selectman Becker stated this was an open meeting. Selectman Dowgiewicz stated each candidate was good. He stated some had strengths in different areas. He stated he was looking for a candidate that had all of the strengths combined. Selectman Becker stated a few of the candidates had a few restraints and would like to talk about each of the candidates. He stated he would like the Board to come to a consensus.

Selectman Becker stated Mr. Willardson was honest and result driven. He stated he had been involved in successful overrides. He stated Mr. Willardson pointed out that rt. 395 and the lake were Webster's best assets. He stated he spent a lot of time researching the area. He stated a con for him would be his experience as a Town Administrator. Selectman Dowgiewicz stated Mr. Willardson lacked experience but liked his enthusiasm. Chairman Bourque stated Mr. Willardson was strong in the financial department and the HR Department. He stated he was concerned over a comment he made regarding Webster being a stepping stone for him. He stated he also did not have Town Administrator experience. Selectman Miller stated he liked the gentleman but felt Webster would chew him up. Selectman Jolda stated Mr. Willardson had a strong fincial background but had limited experience as a Town Administrator.

Selectman Becker stated Mr. Ralph has a lot of dynamics. He stated he liked how he would sit with citizens and identified three important issues the Town is facing. He stated the cons would be that he has only done financials and rambled on a bit during the interview. He stated the only other problem he had was the lawsuit in Dedham. He stated the Board was unable to get both sides of the story. Selectman Dowgiewicz stated Mr. Ralph had a nice personality and strong financials but lacked Town Administrator experience. Chairman Bourque stated Mr. Ralph lacked experience and thought the Town would chew him up. Selectman Miller stated Mr. Ralph had a very strong financial background but lacked experience. He also thought Mr. Ralph was overbearing. Selectman Jolda stated Mr. Ralph had a strong financial background but limited experience in municipal government.

Selectman Becker stated he respected Ms. Leduc's honesty and brings stability to the Town. He stated she has good priorities. He stated the cons would be Free Cash. Selectman Dowgiewicz stated Ms. Leduc did a good job but would have liked to have known about Free Cash. Chairman Bourque stated Ms. Leduc was a very active member of staff and has been the Acting Town Administrator much longer than expected. He stated she did an excellent job. He stated the only con would be Free Cash and some communication items. Selectman Miller stated he never had a problem with Ms. Leduc. He stated he read some emails regarding problems going back to 2014. He stated he was not pleased with the interview being delayed. He stated this whole process had been flawed. He stated help should have been asked for prior to getting into this situation. He stated communication is key. He stated he was very disappointed in employee's behavior. He stated this was more of a presidential campaign than choosing a Town Administrator. Selectman Jolda stated Ms. Leduc forged strong relationships with employees but was disappointed in the Free Cash certification. Selectman Becker stated he would like to address the email controversy. He stated the Board of Selectmen only received five or six emails from a member of the Finance Committee. He stated he has read them and did not find anything

to concerning. He stated he believes these emails were taken out of context. He stated he would be interested in reading all of the emails.

Selectman Becker stated he liked Mr. O'Mara goals for the first 3, 6 and 12 months in office. He stated he did not like his comment about keeping his ears open and his mouth shut. He stated he had strong labor negotiation knowledge. He stated cons would be that he is not familiar with Massachusetts government. He stated he did not feel good about the interview. He stated Mr. O'Mara had a strong personality. He stated he had one or two word answers and would face a conflict of interest problem. Selectman Dowgiewicz stated Mr. O'Mara was the strongest candidate. Chairman Bourque stated he was very impressed with Mr. O'Mara's background. He stated there would be a learning curve for him coming from New Hampshire to Massachusetts. He stated as cons that Mr. O'Mara came off cold and militant. Selectman Miller stated everyone has to acclimate themselves to Massachusetts General Law. He stated he liked Mr. O'Mara's answers. He stated there was no fluff. Selectman Jolda stated Mr. O'Mara has strong experience in labor negotiations but has limited experience in Massachusetts.

Chairman Bourque stated he would like to open the discussion up to the Board. Selectman Becker stated the Board has the opportunity to promote from within.

Motion: made by Selectman Becker, seconded by Selectman Bourque to appoint Pamela Leduc as Town Administrator.

Selectman Becker stated Mr. Leduc did a great job with the hand she was dealt. He stated she accomplished quite a bit. He stated she negotiated all of the union contracts and got the water treatment plant approved. He stated she has shown she can be the boss. Selectman Dowgiewicz stated he thought Mr. O'Mara was the best for the position.

Motion: made by Selectman Dowgiewicz, seconded by Selectman Jolda to appoint James O'Mara as Town Administrator.

Chairman Bourque stated that the Board felt for the last sixteen months she was the best person for this position. He stated he is mind boggled on what is now different. He stated she did a good job overseeing the budget, Town Accountant Office and the Town Administrator's Office. He stated no one walks on water. He stated she is the best candidate for the position. He stated she knows the ins and outs of the Town. He stated she doesn't need to be trained and it would be a mistake to not move forward with Ms. Leduc. Selectman Dowgiewicz stated the Board waited in order for her to get her degree. Selectman Miller stated Ms. Leduc would have made the top five if someone didn't drop out. He stated as far as he knew she was at the bottom of the Town Administrator Screening Committee's list. He stated he has nothing against her. He stated the Board allowed this situation to happen. Selectman Jolda stated Ms. Leduc had strong communications skills but had a problem with Free Cash.

Selectman Becker stated Mr. O'Mara had a very strong personality. He stated he is concerned about the people who work for the Town and is afraid someone will come in like a bull in a china shop. Selectman Miller stated he did mention in his interview that he would listen to employees. Selectman Becker stated it was a very difficult interview. Chairman Bourque stated the Town Administrator's position is a huge responsibility. He stated the Town Hall is unique and they are dealing with human beings. Selectman Dowgiewicz stated Mr. O'Mara was his top pick. Selectman Miller stated Amherst and Webster are very comparable. He stated they both have lakes. Selectman Becker stated Mr. O'Mara was appointed by his fellow Selectmen and getting to know someone is very important. Selectman Jolda made the motion to move the question.

Motion: made by Selectman Becker, seconded by Selectman Bourque to appoint Pamela Leduc as Town Administrator.

Vote: Selectman Miller – defer, Selectman Dowgiewicz – no, Selectman Jolda – no, Selectman Becker – yes and Chairman Bourque – yes. Selectman Miller – no.

Motion: made by Selectman Dowgiewicz, seconded by Selectman Jolda to appoint James O'Mara as Town Administrator.

Vote: Selectman Miller – yes, Selectman Dowgiewicz – yes, Selectman Jolda – yes, Selectman Becker – no and Chairman Bourque – no.

Motion: made by Selectman Becker, seconded by Selectman Jolda to appoint two Selectmen to engage in contract negotiations and to report back to the Selectmen.

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

Motion: made by Selectman Dowgiewicz, seconded by Selectman Becker to appoint Selectman Jolda and Selectman Miller to engage in contract negotiations and to report back to the Selectmen.

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

Adjournment

Motion: made by Selectman Becker, seconded by Selectman Jolda to adjourn the regular session meeting at 6:45 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