

**Carver Select Board  
Meeting Minutes  
Town Hall Meeting Room #1  
May 25, 2021 - 6:00pm**

In Attendance: Chair Mark Townsend, Vice-Chair Sarah Hewins, Jen Bogart, Jim Hoffman, Robert Belbin & Assistant Town Administrator Elaine Weston.

The Chair led the Pledge of Allegiance and Belbin read the community prayer.

**Town Administrator Screening Committee Interviews:**

Chair announced that the Public Safety chiefs have met and have chosen their two members for the Screening Committee to be the Emergency Management Chief Thomas Walsh and the EMS Chief Michael Ryan.

The Finance Committee has met and they have selected Alan Germain for their representative to the Screening Committee.

The School Committee has met and they have selected Jenn Pratt as their representative to the Screening Committee.

Hewins asked about the two chiefs that were selected: The EMS Chief is appointed by the Town Administrator and questioned if that was appropriate. Townsend stated this could be discussed at the next meeting.

Chair reviewed the procedures for the interviews of the screening committee. It was agreed at the last meeting to keep the interviews to five minutes if possible. Chair will open the interviews and then go around the room for the other Select Board members to ask questions. He asked that all applicants have the same questions.

Bogart stated she has two sets of questions as a number of applicants referenced their interactions or working with LaFond in the past, knowing he will most likely be a candidate, how would that effect their interaction and that this question would not be for everyone. Chair stated that was fine.

Belbin questioned the findings on the conflict with a Finance Committee member being on this committee. Chair stated he had a conversation with LaFond and Town Counsel stated this was allowed and if he had any other questions on that to reach out to LaFond.

Chair stated that Margaret Wood & Nancy Reagan are unable to attend the interviews due to a scheduling conflict. Applicant Scott Knief withdrew his application since the School Committee will have a representative and applicant Donna Forand has withdrawn her application.

**Select Board Questions for each applicant:**

Townsend: Tell us why you want to be on the Town Administrator Search Committee and what individual strengths you will bring to the committee.

Hewins: Do you have an understanding of how town departments work together and what they require or need from a Town Administrator?

Bogart: Had two sets of questions; One question was related to if they put on their letter of interest they had a former working relationship with LaFond, how would they move through the selection process in an unbiased manner: If the applicant did not refer to LaFond in their letter, she asked: How deep into an applicant work history and past should you go?

Belbin: How would you rate these qualities of an applicant: personality, financial ability, human services, public rapport, honesty and integrity.

Hoffman: Had no question

**Patrick Meagher:**

Answer to Townsend: Meagher stated he has over 30 years of experience of municipal finance and administration. When he first came to town in 1993 there was no Town Administrator. He was also here when the second Town Administrator was hired in 2014. He is currently serving on the Finance Committee, Housing Authority & Cable Advisory Committee. He has been involved with the hiring of employees of all levels as well as high level employees and has served on committees similar to this. His approach has always been who is going to be the best fit.

Answer to Hewins: He stated from being in school administration for many years he understands the leadership that is needed. He stated that each department provides their own unique service to the town and they all need to intermingle and work together. The Town Administrator needs to make sure everyone is on the same page and working towards the same goal.

Answer to Bogart: Meagher stated he has worked with LaFond for many years, however, he is looking to make the best decision for the Town and would look at the applicants objectively. The previous relationship would not carry any weight.

Answer to Belbin: Meagher stated this would be done face to face and would contact with the people that have worked directly with them including doing visitations of the finalists to where they are currently working or have previously worked. He stated you learn a lot by conversations and this is how he would further judge these characteristics. He would also like to speak to people who know the applicants as a three tiered approach.

**Ellen Blanchard:**

Answer to Townsend: Blanchard stated she has been a resident of the town for over 30 years and has spent her career working for many different municipalities. She stated she has enough experience and knowledge both inside and outside of government and this would be helpful in selecting a new Town Administrator. She stated she has a unique perspective as she has worked directly for Town Administrators. She has represented MA at conferences and stated the leadership skills she has gained will be valuable. She would like the candidate to be respectful of everyone, and not just have experience, but also be willing to learn and be open to information from the different departments.

Answer to Hewins: She stated it is important for a Town Administrator to listen to each department and to be aware of what they have to offer.

Answer to Bogart: Blanchard stated that LaFond does listen and he is a nice person but they don't always see eye to eye. She stated he should be considered to reengage himself fully with the Town of Carver.

Answer to Belbin: Blanchard stated financially they would need to take the lead to ensure the Town has a balanced budget and that money is spent with a great deal of forethought. Blanchard stated the Town Administrator should have a good track record of hiring the right people for the jobs. She stated the Town Administrator needs to be receptive not only to the tax payers, but to the employees as well.

**James Nauen:**

Answer to Townsend: Nauen stated that Carver was damaged severely by the last Town Administrator and the Town needs to see farther forward for the Town and policies need to be set up that will produce a solid future for the Town.

Answer to Hewins: Nauen stated he has been active in Town activities since 1990. He has seen DPW go from volunteer board to Commissioners. He stated he has a good understanding of what the Town needs. He stated the Town Administrator needs to take the Department requests and determine how they can be handled at this time or in the future.

Answer to Bogart: Nauen stated a thorough search should be done due to previous Town Administrator that may not have been best suited for the job.

Belbin: Did not have a question for Nauen. Belbin stated the screening committee has to have truth, honesty and integrity. Belbin stated he did not think that Nauen had these qualities. Hewins stated that is not fair and that they are not here to attack.

**Gail Nauen:**

Answer to Townsend: Nauen stated she is an artist and has a different way of looking at things which involves a lot of problem solving. Nauen has been on a handful of committees and is hoping her involvement has been a positive experience for the groups.

Answer to Hewins: She stated she would like someone who is brilliant, a problem solver, willing to listen to all points of view before making a decision, live a reasonable distance from Carver and be aware of the Town's unique history and assimilate that into its future. She is not as familiar with how different departments work together.

Answer to Bogart: Nauen stated to go as far as you need. She stated the Town Administrator should work with everyone and be a good listener and be willing to dive in and investigate. No one should have an issue with privacy.

Answer to Belbin: Nauen stated she would spend time doing research to determine this. She stated some of these qualities are the same as social aspects and some are business aspects.

**Deborah Gesualdo:**

Answer to Townsend: Gesualdo stated her biggest strength is her objectivity. She is a retired teacher, has served on committees and knows how to talk to people without any political motivation. She stated she is able to put her personal opinions aside and able to follow the norms of the group. She stated Carver deserves the best candidates and would like the bar to be set high. She would like to walk away from the past and look forward.

Answer to Hewins: Gesualdo stated the Town Administrator is commissioned to accomplish what is set forth in the by laws. Coming from the school side, she stated every employee deserves dignity and respect at all times.

Answer to Bogart: Gesualdo stated she does not have an opinion one way or another and is only looking toward the future. If she is chosen for the committee, she would only look forward to better the community as a whole.

Answer to Belbin: She values honesty and integrity in her own life and would emulate that if chosen for the committee. Once candidates are received and direction is given she would know how to better rate those qualities.

**Mary Ross:**

Answer to Townsend: Ross stated she has lived in town for 46 years and has been involved with the youth in town as a teacher for 30 years, running the Carver Youth Needs Committee and now the Recreation Committee, she can bring her varied experiences to the group. She is 'apolitical' and is a people person.

Answer to Hewins: Ross stated her experience has been from a financial perspective of depositing money and hasn't had experience from the other departments in town. The importance of the Town Administrator is to maintain an atmosphere and climate in which everyone feels valued and appreciated. The Town Administrator should have enough people sense to help other departments work together without resentment or conflicts.

Answer to Bogart: Ross stated she is not sure how far you can legally go into one's past and there are certain questions you cannot ask. She stated you just need to do your best to read them when you meet them. She stated she looks at adults as tall five year olds and that has taken her far.

Answer to Belbin: Ross stated determining this would be coming from the perspective of reading people as opposed to knowing the inter-workings of the finances of the Town. Conversations tell a lot of how people handle themselves as well as their knowledge of things. The committee would look into references and referrals. It is a difficult thing to know for sure.

**Paul Kelly:**

Answer to Townsend: Kelly stated he is interested in involvement overall. He has been in the Town for over 30 years and has been on many committees. He stated it is a good balance to have the Town Administrator position.

Answer to Hewins: Kelly stated a lot if it is a positive agent of change and the Board would be a representative of the citizens and someone to work in consort with. He has volunteered with Boy Scouts, Library and Council on Aging and sees the pockets in town in need of a lot of attention. Kelly stated what he has seen is more involvement with Directors as well as the Board.

Answer to Bogart: Kelly stated he looks for tendencies throughout. If someone has the right motivation, the rest of the things can work themselves out. Someone can be in business and there is someone behind them doing all the work – he would like to know exactly what they are doing and have them be the one doing the work.

Answer to Belbin: He stated integrity is hard to uncover, but when you see it you know it. He stated the goal should be for social services and for the good of the future.

**Jennifer Gallant:**

Answer to Townsend: Gallant stated she has lived in Town for five years and is involved in public service to the town. This would give her the opportunity in being more involved in the future of the town.

Answer to Hewins: She stated Public Safety has four well run departments and the position of Town Administrator needs an open minded person as it is run differently than other towns. These departments need resources as the Town continues to grow. The school system will be taxed and significant support will be needed and avenues for funding will be needed.

Answer to Bogart: Gallant stated she would like to have a Town Administrator that is transparent & easy to communicate with. She has a small amount of experience in public administration and her education has expanded her knowledge of how different towns are run.

Answer to Belbin: As a committee, they would go with their collective experiences. These are not things you would be able to pick up on in an hour long interview. A Town Administrator should be able to openly communicate with the public and be transparent on why the Town is doing the things they are doing.

**James Dahill:**

Answer to Townsend: Dahill stated there were 3 people by the deadline and then there were 9 by the end of the week. He wanted to know how they got to 9. Townsend asked how many applicants were received by the deadline – Weston stated there were 16. Dahill asked how he was picked out – but stated it was ok - he was here and to keep going. Dahill stated for the previous administrator, no one did their due diligence. Dahill cited a time that he was at a Cohasset basketball game and was speaking to a Select Board member who stated she was so afraid to be on the Select Board that she had to carry a gun. He questioned what was the matter with the new administrator that was here. He stated you need to interview people and they need to work with the Select Board. He would question if they are going to work as a team and can the public approach them. He stated some of the people on the list sound like the prisoners are bringing in the warden and you don't want that when you are hiring them.

Answer to Hewins: Dahill stated the Select Board should be in charge of the Town Administrator and you need someone who is in charge of everyone else. He asked if you want someone who will work together and is willing to say no. You need to take the time to do due diligence.

Answer to Bogart: Dahill stated the screening committee should speak to people from their previous employment. The right person needs to be chosen and the same type of people are going to be applying. The time needs to be taken to choose the right person and due diligence

needs to be done. Someone should be chosen that wants to be here 4-5 years or longer to make the community better.

Answer to Belbin: Dahill stated he would take time, do a background check, talk to his employer, check his education background and do a credit check.

**Adam Holmes:**

Answer to Townsend: Holmes stated his approach is to have an open mind and not have a preconceived decision. He grew up in Carver and would like to give back to the community. He is currently involved in youth sports and there is a lot of positive change happening and would like to be a part of that. He has also been involved in Recreation Committee endeavors as well as advocating for the new Elementary School.

Answer to Hewins: Holmes stated he does not have a comprehensive understanding of how all the departments work together. His understanding is that they work independently and need to collaborate and the Town Administrator works as overseeing their roles and as a liaison. The right attitude and perspective should be taken and all employees should be working in the best interests of the town and the Town Administrator should be facilitating that.

Answer to Bogart: Holmes stated he worked with LaFond primarily as a member of the Finance Committee. He has also worked with the previous Town Administrator and has an understanding of how to work with them and that they had two different management styles. He stated having worked with both will help him choose someone with hopefully all the qualities that the Town needs.

Answer to Belbin: Holmes stated all these qualities are needed in a Town Administrator and would like to see going forward that a Town Administrator has all those qualities. The financial policies that are in place has helped the town through the unforeseen circumstances. He would like to see someone proactive and not someone who reacts to situations, especially financially. He would like to have someone who is fair and transparent.

**Kevin Tracey:**

Answer to Townsend: He is looking for a new Chief Executive Officer and the day to day operations need to be handled in that way. He would like to be involved in selecting someone who will be leading this town in the future.

Answer to Hewins: As an elected official, he needs to work with various departments and has an understanding of the day to day operations. He would like to see more resources provided to some departments. The Town Administrator will need to work with what funding is available

to make resources available. There is a lot of mandates that are unfunded and many people are chasing information for the state and a lot of time gets spent on that. Resources need to be found to make that possible.

Answer to Bogart: A minimum of 5 years and up to 10 years. It is important to know the past as future performance is predicted by the past. The future Town Administrator could be here for the next 10-12 years.

Answer to Belbin: You need someone you can trust who will follow through with that they say and they also need a common sense approach to the dollars and it needs to be allocated properly. Public services needs to be something that is in their bones.

Motion to adjourn at 7:25pm by Hoffman, second by Hewins.

Belbin asked how this process will move forward. Townsend stated at the June 1 meeting the process will be discussed in further detail and the at-large members will be voted on.

Vote 5-0