

Norfolk Board of Selectmen's Open Session Meeting Minutes

March 13, 2019

Present: Jim Lehan; Kevin Kalkut; Scott Bragdon; Bernie Lynch; Susan Jacobson; Todd Lindmark and Bernard Lynch

The meeting was held in Room 124, Town Hall. At 4:00 p.m. Jim Lehan opened the meeting. Jim announced this meeting is being both video and audio taped. All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Jim stated the Board will be interviewing three candidates for Town Administrator.

At 4:10 p.m., Scott Bragdon and Bernie Lynch provided an outline for the upcoming interviews. Bernie stated that this is the second round of candidate interviews as they were unable to reach a conclusion with the first round. There were 42 individuals that applied during this search; 15 people from prior search and 27 new applicants. The screening committee met and interviewed six candidates. They then identified these three individuals as the final candidates.

Bernie discussed the background of each of the candidates.

The first candidate is William Chenard, Deputy Town Administrator of the Town of Natick. He also served as Interim Town Administrator and is involved in all aspects of Town Management. Bernie discussed Mr. Chenard's background over the years and stated that it is a very varied background.

The second candidate is Michael Borg who held several Director positions for the City of Providence. He served in the military as a Colonel and has great leadership and tactical skills. He has sought to improve the City of Providence. The Mayor of Providence has promoted him several times over the last several years.

The third candidate is Blythe Robinson who most recently served the Town of Wellesley as their Executive Director. She served to move the Town forward in a number of areas and now has left that position to pursue other options. She served as the first Town Manager of the Town of Upton for a period of approximately 6 years. Prior to that, she served as an Assistant in a number of communities in the State of Connecticut.

Bernie said they have done background checks including their criminal background checks. He has provided a set of questions.

William Chenard Interview

Jim asked Mr. Chenard why Norfolk? He has applied in several towns and has been a finalist in each town. He has done a good amount of research in the town and he has looked at the good and bad. He feels he can be successful here. Kevin asked what the Deputy Town Administrator does versus the Town Administrator. He said in Natick the Deputy Director is basically a Town Administrator's duties here in Norfolk.

Mr. Chenard answered several questions from the Board.

The Board then took a five minute recess.

Michael Borg Interview

Mr. Borg reviewed his military career. He stated that he is a passionate lifelong public servant. He served nearly 30 years in the Army and had a number of assignments across the globe. He pointed out the similarities of skills gained in his past posts and the skills necessary for the Town Administrator position. He also discussed his tenure with the City of Providence: Director of Emergency Management; Director of Public Works; Director of Public Property and Capital Improvement Program.

Mr. Borg answered several questions from the Board.

The Board then took a five minute recess.

Blythe Robinson Interview

Ms. Robinson described her past experience. She discussed her skills and specifically how they related to her Town Manager position in Upton and Executive Director in Wellesley. She has spent her entire career in local government. When asked why she was interested in Norfolk, she explained that she likes small communities and being involved in all of the departments. She also likes to work with residents.

Ms. Robinson answered several questions from the Board.

The Board then took a five minute recess.

Discussion on selection of candidate:

The Board agreed to discuss the candidates; one at a time beginning with Bill Chenard. Kevin stated that he has a great base of experience. He pointed out strengths such as his initiative in economic development, affordable housing, finance and capital planning. He also pointed out Mr. Chenard's experience with municipal building projects. Jim agreed and believes he has a good background in finance and that he is a good candidate. Jim said he had no concerns.

Jim said he was impressed with all three candidates. He believes they all bring a strong base to the table and each brings uniqueness to the job. Both Jim and Kevin agreed that all three candidates have strong financial backgrounds.

They then moved on to a discussion regarding Michael Borg. Kevin stated that Mr. Borg was a force and was impressed with how he commanded the interview. Kevin was also impressed with his organization skills. He has a more diverse background-transferring from city management to town management. Jim said he was very commanding and passionate. He is driven to succeed. Jim liked how he framed his success and his team around him.

Next, the Board had a discussion regarding Blythe Robinson. Jim stated that Ms. Robinson's tone was very even and comfortable and he feels she is a confident person. Kevin likes that she was in a town smaller than ours. He believes he could be comfortable with that choice. There was not a

single question of subject matter that they brought up that she did not have answers to. He liked her union and insurance background.

Jim asked if Kevin had a preference and they both stated they are torn between three very good candidates. They believe they have a candidate here tonight. Kevin asked if they could narrow it down from three to two.

Both Selectmen felt that although Mr. Chenard is an excellent candidate, Ms. Robinson and Mr. Borg would be their choices.

Mr. Borg comes with a high level approach to apply management style and effectiveness measures.

Ms. Robinson has applied all these things before and has seen success and they have worked.

Kevin pointed out the difference between the two candidates may be that Ms. Robinson might have a more traditional approach due to her experience in municipal government and that Mr. Borg may have a less than conventional approach. Both could bring good results to the Town.

They then weighed out the positives of each candidate.

Jim said if Kevin had a preference, he would have his support.

The Board took a five minute recess.

At 7:48 p.m., Jim welcomed everyone back.

Kevin is at the point where he is willing to cast a vote. He felt that given where we are as a town, a more proven structure and base of experience would serve the Town best in the short term. He reiterated that he felt either candidate would be successful.

Jim supports Kevin's opinion.

A motion was made by Kevin Kalkut to move forward and enter into contract negotiations to make Blythe Robinson the new Town Administrator. Jim seconded and it was so voted.

The Board thanked the screening committee for their time, effort and energy. They thanked Scott and Bernie for bringing the three candidates forward.

At 7:55 p.m., motion to adjourn was made by Kevin Kalkut. It was seconded by Jim Lehan and so voted.

Meeting Adjourned

This is a true and accurate report of the Board of Selectmen's Meeting of March 13, 2019.



Kevin Kalkut, Clerk