HALIFAX BOARD OF SELECTMEN

SELECTMEN MEETING

THURSDAY, MAY 20, 2021 – 10:30 A.M.

GREAT HALL

--------------------------------------------------------------

Meeting came to order at 10:30 a.m. with Selectmen, Gordon C. Andrews, Troy E. Garron and Ashley A. DiSesa present.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Board as well as those attending today’s meeting stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

**SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT**

**Jill Carr – Interview Council on Aging Director**

Andrews

Tell us about what your interest is in the Council on Aging Director, and a little bit about yourself.

Carr

I have worked for human services for over 25 years, a good bulk of that was working with elders, I worked ten years at Adult Protective Services in Braintree, and we covered 11 surrounding towns. So, I worked closely with Council on Aging. I think probably most closely with like Braintree, Quincy and Weymouth, since they had bigger populations, so I’m familiar the day to day of what happens. I’ve done a lot of Outreach trainings at Councils on Aging. I’ve always had such a passion working with seniors and being an advocate and a voice for a lot of the seniors that might not have a voice, and also, I’ve always had that philosophy of trying to help elders live as independently as possible and letting them determine how they want to live and helping them make that happen, so empowering seniors. So, I have always loved the Councils on Aging. I did recently get my Masters to strengthen my skills regarding social services. I think when you work with seniors too, a lot of times you are working with their families too. I am very familiar with the resources in Massachusetts and have worked closely with the Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

Garron

What would you consider your top achievement in working with elderly and other people?

Carr

I would say being a strong advocate, raising awareness for an elder’s rights to self-determination.

DiSesa

Do you have any experience with handling a budget?

Carr

My only experience would be when I was the Director – we were constantly meeting to be following numbers and maintain a quota, and we would get paid. It got to a point because funding got kind of tricky, and we would get paid for a certain amount of investigations. There were certainly stipulations and policies that we had to follow to make sure that that funding was still coming in, so it was my job to track and do data collection to make sure that our numbers were where they were supposed to be, and we used to have investigations where there were timetables where if we didn’t follow the timetable, it could be a financial impact to our department. I never worked directly with money, but I worked indirectly.

DiSesa

Have you applied for any grants or have any experience with writing grants or anything of that nature?

Selectmen Meeting – May 20, 2021 Page 2

Carr

I have not written grants, but I’ve worked with others to write grants. As part of our department there was the triple A department where they would write the grants but a lot of times, they were unfamiliar with all the different departments at so the directors would have to do up their piece. So, I kind of played a role but I did not write up grants.

Garron

As far as the staff is concerned what would your goals be for them at the Council on Aging?

Carr

My goal would first to learn from them, try to find out/get to know how Halifax runs and know about this community, see what the needs are, try to find out the “ins and outs” of how it works, their day to day. I think the goal too would once I have a grasp/understand how things are run and what the needs are is to set goals where we can expand and strengthen what the town has.

Garron

Have you ever had to fire or reprimand any other individuals working underneath you?

Carr

Yes. I did all the hiring and interviewing for my Protective Service Department, and I had ten investigators. There was one investigator that we did have to let go, but other than that we would talk with workers that might have been struggling or having difficulty, kind of work with them.

Garron

Have you had experience working with other departments outside of the elderly services?

Carr:

Absolutely. Many of our reports came from the Police, the Fire Departments, from hospitals, doctors’ offices, VNA’s – so I was out there in the community, talking with the police, firefighters, going out and doing joint visits with them as well. If there was an elder at risk – one making unsafe decisions, and they were worried about their safety, we worked very closely with the police, fire departments, councils on aging, nurses, doctors etc.

Garron

What is the worst experience you have had?

Carr

I guess the hardest part about the job is watching people that continually put themselves at risk, and sometimes it is hard to see them living unsafely or dangerously to the point where it can have consequences. I remember working with one senior where we tried so many different approaches trying to work with him trying to take their insulin where they absolutely refused. We can’t force people but to watch them deteriorate is hard.

Andrews

If I was going to call one of your references, what do you think the word that they would use to sum up you as a person?

Carr

I think they would say dedicated, hard-working, fiercely passionate about my job. I take my responsibilities very seriously and get along very well with others. I set goals and am very tenacious and able to get things done. I think I was pretty successful when we did have to set up goals within my department and trying to juggle so much work when workers are you know stressed – they have caseloads that are beyond what they really should have but yet the budget is so low, so just trying to work smarter, because I know they all did work hard so it was kind of like how can we work smarter and be more efficient. I think I was pretty successful in my position. In 2012 I was awarded the Employee of the Year and I think that kind of spoke to trying to go above and beyond.

Selectmen Meeting – May 20, 2021 Page 3

Andrews

Have you toured our Council on Aging?

Carr

Yes, it was nice, and I had an opportunity to meet with Susan Lawless, who was able to give me some information about Halifax and how the Council on Aging has been going and I know it’s been a difficult year and a half of course with the pandemic. As stated eventually the building is going to expand. It is a great building and I love the historic piece of it and see that it is kind of like a home environment, which I really liked. I know it is hard trying to keep up with all the needs and trying to maintain space for all the folks.

Andrews

We do have a plan to swap the Council on Aging building with our museum building and doing an addition at the Museum and just swap where things are located. Hopefully, we will have something more to present in September.

DiSesa

Are you CPR and First Aid certified?

Carr

I have not recently but was years ago when I used to work with the developmentally disabled in a group home – I had to have all that certification.

DiSesa

You are okay with taking that certification?

Carr

Absolutely

Andrews

At the Council on Aging, you work with a lot of different people and most of the help is volunteers, so how would you work with a volunteer who is not happy with the way things are going and is frustrated – how would you handle that?

Carr

I would first listen, talk with them, try to get an understanding of why they are unhappy. I think a lot of people want to be heard and want to be validated and I think that’s important, so I guess it would depend on the situation, but communicating, being a good listener and trying to trouble-shoot and say okay, well how we can work on the solution that you’re hoping for or is there another approach we could look at. I guess it would depend on the situation, but certainly being able to talk with people and listen to them and getting their perspective.

DiSesa

We kind of touched on it with your references, but if you had to choose one word to described yourself, what would it be?

Carr

Dedicated

Andrews

Do you have any questions for us?

Carr

I was curious if there are any other goals regarding the Council on Aging beside the expansion?

Andrews

The building’s been closed to the public since last March 13th so yes, we would be looking to open back up and start getting programs going. Right now, the downstairs floor at the old Museum that is being used for the art program. Our Library Director has allowed the use of the conference room at the library.

Selectmen Meeting – May 20, 2021 Page 4

So, it is not really in one building but there’s spaces around town that can be used to have programs. I think understanding what spaces are available and how to adequately use them is something that we would be looking for in the Director because the project to expand is going to be hopefully a short-term goal but it’s probably a year or so away.

Garron

Have you had the opportunity to speak in front of large groups before?

Carr

I’ve have done some group trainings at police stations. I have gone to schools like Curry College and talked to their geriatric nursing and taught classes there every year. I have talked at Councils on Aging. Before I had left South Shore Elders my last training was at Braintree Council on Aging. June 15th is Elder Abuse Awareness Day – so every year we would do some type of event where I would give a talk.

Garron

When could you start if you were chosen to be the Director?

Carr

I could start in a couple of weeks because right now I am not working. I have a few things scheduled next week. I went to school fulltime and just graduated, so I wanted to make sure I was able to give a hundred percent, so I did not work the past two years.

Andrews

Any other questions for us?

Carr

I was curious if you could speak a little bit to how much you are able to reach out to the seniors, like the percentage of seniors that get involved with the Council on Aging?

Josephine Schofield – member of the CoA

We have chair yoga, book clubs, sewing, quilting – all kinds of things that people in this town really like to do. Not sure what the number is.

Garron

There are more than just the seniors that are being served in town – there are family situations, some single people with illness, cannot work. We have reached out and touched a lot of people.

Andrews was comfortable in making a decision Tuesday night. Garron thought Tuesday would be fine.

**REORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

Moved by Garron and seconded by DiSesa, the Board unanimously voted to nominate Andrews as Chair.

Moved by DiSesa and seconded by Andrews, the Board unanimously voted to nominate Garron as Vice Chair.

Moved by Garron and seconded by Andrews, the Board unanimously voted to nominate DiSesa as Clerk.

**DISCUSSIONS / MAIL**

Discussion of format for meetings of the Board of Selectmen

Andrews stated he would like to have department heads come in once every six or eight weeks to give an update of what is going on in their department, what things are going well, what things need to be changed, and how to make things more effective for them.

Selectmen Meeting – May 20, 2021 Page 5

He also would like to create a spreadsheet of all the Articles that were just approved and previously approved to keep track of the estimated date of completion and check off each one, so we know we are moving forward. Having this information when we get to Town Meeting will give us an idea of how well we are doing on these items.

Another thing he mentioned was at Town Meeting having the motions on a PowerPoint presentation so people can see them because what is printed in the warrant and what is read are two different things. Also having a display that the Selectmen are controlling showing a dashboard of the spending for raise and appropriate, undesignated funds, what we have for stabilization, how much Finance Committee is recommending etc., and have it update as the meeting goes on and you can estimate out what the tax bill is going to be based on what their recommendation is.

Nolan said that these ideas sound reasonable and there are a lot of logistics need to be worked out. She would like him to present this at a department head meeting and include the Moderator to get more input because she is sure that there will be objections. Andrews agreed that this an item that can be talked about at the department head meeting.

Garron said the only flaw is the cost. If they are not reading what is printed what makes you think they are going to read it on the display. He is not saying it is wrong but just asking.

Andrews thinks having the motions on it either a TV or a projector for the department heads would be easier for them. Seelig and McSherry work hard getting all the motions and sometimes the wording is different than what is printed and the audio in that room is very difficult to hear. Garron understood what he was saying.

Gaynor thought that doing this will make Town Meeting much longer because you would have to stop and update, and people are going to say wait a minute. Residents get the warrant in the mail and are supposed to read it, the motions have always been different – the money isn’t always in there, you don’t know if you’re transferring, voting to raise, appropriate, or where it’s coming from – none of that has ever been in the warrant that is mailed out. The motions on the floor have always been different for the 12 years she has been Town Accountant. Just something to think about.

Andrews said the audio in that room is not good and he had to keep leaning over to try to hear what people were saying. Nolan thinks a lot had to do with the masks and not necessarily the audio.

Gaynor said that her, Seelig and Attorney Mayo all had a very hard time, there was no speaker on the stage so if in fact that’s the case, a speaker on the stage would be more effective. Andrews stated that there was a speaker underneath the BOS table which apparently was supposed to be for them. Gallant stated that the acoustics in the All-Purpose Room might be better assuming that next Town Meeting we will be back in there.

DiSesa said doing it this way might make is, so we don’t have as many questions either.

Andrews thinks if they capture all the data and post it to the website before Town Meeting, people will have that information beforehand.

Gaynor said the Board, the Moderator, Larry Mayo and herself met a week before and someone asked the Board for an *inaudible* still asking so they might not be firm until the day before with the figures and where the funds are coming from, and then all the slide training and whatnot is extensive going on besides returning *inaudible.* Andrews understands it is more work, but it will make things move smoother having a spreadsheet/automated slide.

Nolan said in the past the Board of Selectmen were always asked their recommendation for Articles but that has not happened the last couple of years and that is important because the Finance Committee gives their recommendation in terms of if we can financially afford something.

Selectmen Meeting – May 20, 2021 Page 6

The Board of Selectmen should be giving their recommendation on every Article so that the Town knows where the Selectmen stand. She seems to think it was the Moderator who asked the Finance Committee their recommendation and the Selectmen theirs but that has not happened or a couple of years.

Gallant said the Selectmen and the Finance Committee meet the night of Town Meeting but as a department head to work all day then have an hour or so between getting to the Town Meeting, getting to those meetings is difficult. She suggested having a department head meeting before Town Meeting but not that night. Nolan thought it was a good idea.

Andrews knows that they did not have any department head meetings due to the limitations in the Great Hall and then there were issues with trying to get everyone on Zoom here in the building at one time. Nolan understood that and seeing that restriction will be lifted soon going forward it is important to have a meeting with the department heads.

Garron asked if they wanted to set a specific date for department heads to meet and Nolan thought the week before as they would have all the motions by then and any questions could be addressed.

Vacancies on Halifax Elementary School Committee and Finance Committee

Town Moderator Dennis Carman had some suggestion for Town Meeting. He said because of the sound the Board might want to consider the idea of earphones for those people who are having a tough time hearing. He can never tell what direction someone is coming from when they are speaking because they are all coming from the same speakers. Also, he thinks the questions asked are reasonable but are very contentious. Without being critical of the departments he suggested maybe start with good solid presentations, and if the department heads and committee members are not comfortable doing that then we should probably help them, support them in some way through some kind of training and helping them with the presentations.

Andrews read the following email from Dennis Carman:

If this morning’s Select Meeting will be open to the Zoom attendees, I plan on attending. If the public is allowed to give any input on specific agenda items, I would like to do so regarding the vacancy on the Elementary School Committee. If that is not possible I would ask the Select Board via email a question regarding the candidates being considered, specifically will the Select Board consider the results in this past Saturday’s election, i.e. the person with the most votes as runner-up be given consideration, additionally will, sorry, additionally will the related experience of each candidate be considered in making this decision, also will any consideration be given to diversity of the candidate given our society’s building of awareness, diversity equity, and inclusion issues. I hope the answers to my questions will be yes, and if not, I would be interested in the thoughts of each of the members on the Select Board. Thank you.

Garron thinks that the person who came in second on the voting scale should be given consideration because at least you know they’re interested in the position.

Andrews said for those interested in the opening on the Elementary School Committee should fill out a Talent Bank and let us know that they are interested, and then the BOS would have a joint meeting with the School Committee to do the interviews and to have a vote. He then asked the Board how soon do they want to get it done? – the next Elementary School Committee meeting is July 1st, so he does not want to wait that long and Garron agreed.

Seelig said if the Board is looking to do the Talent Bank forms and interview people, the problem is the agenda needs to be posted tonight for this coming Tuesday night’s meeting.

Selectmen Meeting – May 20, 2021 Page 7

So, if they are asking for Talent Bank forms to be sent in, they have no time to do that if they are trying to aim for the June 25th, it can be done if they are aiming for June 8th. Garron and DiSesa said that sounds good.

The Board will have a joint meeting with the school committee on June 8th to conduct interviews.

Resignations - Finance Committee & Elementary School Committee

Moved by Garron and seconded by DiSesa, the Board unanimously accepted the resignations from Frederick McGovern and Alison Vance and that letters be sent to them thanking them for their service.

Seelig stated that there are two vacancies on the Finance Committee and the committee has scheduled interviews for May 25th. Generally, for the appointed Boards you wait for a recommendation from that Board as for the Finance Committee appointments, we will have to check if the appointments need votes from the Moderator, Selectmen and the Finance Committee or whether it is votes from the members of the Finance Committee and each Selectmen having a vote. Seelig mentioned that depending on what the workloads are going to be on June 8th the Board might want to hold interviews on June 8th and June 22nd.

VFW Memorial Day Ceremony

Moved by Garron and seconded by DiSesa, the Board unanimously granted the VFW Post 6258 the use of the Town Green and the use of speakers on Monday, May 31st, from 9:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. for their Memorial Day ceremony.

Live Entertainment – Cruise Night at Walmart

Moved by Garron and seconded by DiSesa, the Board unanimously approved Permit #2021-12 issued to Ralph Smith for live entertainment at Walmart for Friday Night Cruise Nights from the May 21, 2021 through September 24, 2021 contingent on the Board of Health receiving a certificate of liability.

**MEETING ADJOURNED**

There being no further business, moved by DiSesa and seconded by Garron, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting to open the scheduled meeting for 11:15 a.m. at 11:27 a.m.

The 11:15 a.m. meeting came to order at 11:27 a.m. with Selectmen, Gordon C. Andrews, Troy E. Garron and Ashley A. DiSesa present.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Moved by Garron and seconded by DiSesa, the Board voted as follows to enter into Executive Session at 11:29 a.m. to discuss Contract Negotiations for Sergeants, Patrol Officers, Firefighters, Highway, “Mixed-Unit”, Police Chief, Fire Chief & all unions at the SLRSD & HES:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Gordon C. Andrews | - | Yes |
| Troy E. Garron | - | Yes |
| Ashley A. DiSesa | - | Yes |

as discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Town.

Selectmen Meeting – May 20, 2021 Page 8

Andrews announced that no statement would be made at the end of the Executive Session and the Board would not reconvene in open session.

--------------

Moved by Garron and seconded by DiSesa, the Board voted as follows to come out of Executive Session at 12:12 p.m.:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Gordon C. Andrews | - | Yes |
| Troy E. Garron | - | Yes |
| Ashley A. DiSesa | - | Yes |

**MEETING ADJOURNED**

There being no further business, moved by Garron and seconded by DiSesa, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 12:12 p.m.

-------------------------------------------------

Ashley A. DiSesa

Clerk

/pjm