

IN BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TUESDAY, MAY 16, 1995

Present: Chairman John C. Drobinski, Maryann K. Clark, and Lawrence L. Blacker.

The statutory requirements as to notice having been met, the meeting was convened at 9:05 a.m. by Chairman Drobinski at the Sudbury Town Hall.

Acting Clerk, Pro Tem

It was on motion unanimously

VOTED: To appoint Janet Silva, Administrative Assistant to the Board of Selectmen, as Acting Clerk, Pro Tem, for purposes of this meeting only.

Meeting with Department Heads - Town Manager Search

Present: James Vanar, Terri Ackerman, Mary Jane Hillery, Daniel Loughlin, I. William Place, Jody Kablack, Mary Ellen Dunn, Peter Lembo, William Talentino, Robert Noyes, Michael Dunne, Robert Leupold, Jo-Ann Howe, John Braim, Ruth Griesel, and Patricia Savage, department heads; and local businessmen Frank Vana and Theodore Pasquarello, former Selectman John E. Murray, and Moderator Thomas Dignan.

Chairman Drobinski convened a meeting with department heads for the purpose of obtaining feedback from them concerning the three finalist candidates for the position of Town Manager.

Selectman Blacker acknowledged receipt of a letter dated May 10, 1995, from several department heads expressing a collective opinion that it would be in the Town's best interests to reopen applications at this time in order to obtain more Massachusetts applications. He said he was initially disappointed to receive the letter, but he understood that today's meeting could still be productive, as department heads are prepared to provide input on the individual candidates. Chairman Drobinski had not seen the letter and was given a copy at this time.

Some written comments on the individual candidates had been received prior to the meeting and others were given directly to the Board at this time from various department heads.

Following comments from the Board as to what they hoped to accomplish at this meeting, Jody Kablack, Town Planner, explained that many of the department heads had gotten together with their notes and overwhelmingly felt the candidates did not measure as high as they had expected from the Screening Committee's report, and they would like to have the benefit of interviewing strong Massachusetts applicants. Mary Ellen Dunn, Town Treasurer and Collector, clarified that the recommendation does not bear any relation to past discussion regarding Mr. Thompson's candidacy or the Screening Committee.

There was much discussion as to whether there would be any change in whether candidates from Massachusetts would now apply under the current situation.

A majority of the department heads then gave individual input on the candidates to the Board on their impressions and information received as a result of personal contact, attendance at the interviews, and conversations with counterparts in the towns in which the candidates have been employed.

Following the critique, Mary Ellen Dunn again urged the Board to think about reopening applications, saying she believed there would be a learning curve for a non-Massachusetts manager and 5-10 years of Massachusetts experience would make the transition easier. She added that she personally believes that the Town Manager governmental structure is a positive step for Sudbury.

Chairman Drobinski complimented the department heads on their efforts, saying it was evident they are working toward what is good for the community.

Again, the question of how the application process could be made open to Massachusetts candidates, notwithstanding the professional ethic concerning displacement of an incumbent, was discussed. Selectman Blacker, in particular, expressed his opinion the application process should not be reopened unless Mr. Thompson volunteers to withdraw from the running. The Selectmen concluded that Chairman Drobinski would ask Mr. Thompson how he feels about the matter, and whether he would want to make a statement which would eliminate the ethics issue.

Jody Kablack stated that, if the search is reopened, the department heads would like to see it handled by a professional search company.

Chairman Drobinski stated that the Committee had done a good job, notwithstanding his own feelings in the matter.

Mr. Frank Vana, town resident and businessman, expressed his opinion that there was potential to turn around the divisiveness which he stressed was very evident in the community, and he agreed there should be a good representation of Massachusetts candidates to consider. One advantage, he stressed, was to have an established rapport with the State House, which takes years to build up. He further stated that the town manager search process had been shocking to many people and if put to a vote, he opined Sudbury residents would vote to take another look before making a decision. He recommended further that, for a smooth transition period, the Board go back to talk to Mr. Thompson and with his cooperation the town manager search can be reopened and time taken to turn the matter into a positive situation.

Town Moderator Thomas Dignan stressed that a major criteria to consider was how well a new town manager could handle the open town meeting form of government.

Responding to comment by the Department Heads, the Board individually expressed their ideas of the attributes each sought in a new town manager.

Selectman Blacker stated he felt today's process and input received had been very helpful.

Mr. Vana asked rhetorically if anything would be hurt by opening the process again. He stated that Sudbury's strength has rested in its department heads.

Selectman Clark made note that North Andover had received twice the amount of applications as Sudbury, including Massachusetts candidates, but has gone round the process two or three times.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Attest: Janet Silva
Janet Silva
Acting Clerk, Pro Tem