

Town of Ayer
Board of Selectmen
Town Hall, First Floor Meeting Room
Ayer Massachusetts, 01432
7-1-10



Selectmen's Meeting
Ayer Town Hall 1st Floor Meeting Room, Main Street, Ayer, MA
Tuesday, July 1, 2010-Town Administrator Finalist Interviews

Meeting Date: 7-1-10

Present:

Richard D. Gilles Chairman (Chairman Gilles)	X	Carolyn McCreary, Member (Selectman McCreary)	X
James M. Fay, Vice-Chairman (Selectman Fay)	X	Gary J. Luca, Member- (Selectman Luca)	X
Frank F. Maxant, Clerk (Selectman Maxant)	X		
Janet Lewis, Secretary (Mrs. Lewis)	X		

9:14a.m. Open Session-problem with Cable TV not recording-Doug Becker contacted. Mr. Becker assembled a portable transmission camera & tape for the Board.

Selectman Luca thanking the Town Administrator's Screening Committee for their work over the past 6-8 weeks.

Robert A. Pontbriand-Fitchburg, MA-Chairman Gilles welcomed Mr. Pontbriand and advised him to the interview process: opening remarks a short question & answer session by the Board and closing statement. Mr. Pontbriand opened by thanking the Board for the opportunity to meet with them to discuss the Town Administrator's position. Mr. Pontbriand reviewed with the Board his background i.e. professional education, leadership skills, administration, budget preparation, contract negotiations, economic development, and public speaking attributes. having worked as the Chief of Staff to the Mayor of Fitchburg. Mr. Pontbriand also reflected upon his experience as the Director of the North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation elaborating on working with Shaun Suhoski on the Town of Ayer's seed grant to assist in the development of the Town's parking & intermodal projects, and familiar with the town's 2009 community development strategy. Mr. Pontbriand also advising to his familiarity with the region being near & dear to him having family/friends in the Town of Shirley.

The Board conducted a brief question and answer session with Mr. Pontbriand re concept of position, personnel background i.e. discipline/action, The town presently going forward with a Town Government Study Process i.e. Town Administrator vs. Town Manager, communication, Economic Development, what could be done/brought to Ayer to increase the Town's tax base, impression of job-role & responsibility re day to day administration, multi-tasking, Collective Bargaining/Non-Union equity, creative management-selling services to other towns-i.e. intermunicipal agreements-sharing resources.

The Board concluded the interview requesting a closing statement from each candidate. Mr. Pontbriand closed by stating he looked forward to opportunity to work in Ayer, has the passion and vision and expertise to serve; brings with him a huge tool box and will hit the ground running, looking forward to new challenge and opportunity with a strong fundamental knowledge of region.

10:00a.m. John J. Sanguinet, Plymouth, MA-Chairman Gilles opened the discussion by advising Mr. Sanguinet to the interview process: opening remarks, short question & answer session by the board and closing statement. Mr. Sanguinet opened by stating he is committed to government having worked in the field for over thirty (30) years. Mr. Sanguinet reviewed with the Board his resume reflecting upon his administrative policy, training and experience and memberships having worked for numerous municipals in his career-the longest at

ie Com of MA-Dept. of Revenue (14) years. The Board conducted a brief question and answer session with Mr. Sanguinet re Town Administrator taking Direction from Board of Selectmen-different role currently for him as Asst. Town Manager in Wareham, Revenue/deficits Mr. Sanguinet advising to his lead re Wareham's 2009 local aid budget cuts, financially strapped community he moved out of deficit and increased free cash to balance debts. Mr. Sanguinet stated he is a strong manager/administrator-hears what Board wants and disperses back to residents. Selectman Luca complimenting the Town of Wareham's Website being one of the best in MA Mr. Sanguinet stating he is always working to make it better. The Board questioned Mr. Sanguinet re his role currently as Asst. Town Mgr. and Ayer having weak Town Administrator Board set policy-Mr. Sanguinet stating Town Administrator implements it. The Board questioned Mr. Sanguinet re experience in employee personnel not performing, the Town of Ayer starting up a Town Government Study Committee Town Manager vs. Town Administrator Mr. Sanguinet stating his thought re reorganizing Departments to be more efficient, collaborative team budgeting, staff meetings Personnel Policy, the Board continued their questioning advising Mr. Sanguinet to Town having newly elected officers and how he would build relationships, purpose of position, multi tasking, Contract negotiations Collective & Non-Union, regional sale of services through Intermunicipal Agreements, management style, tax rate-sales tax. The Board expressed their concern to Mr. Sanguinet re his living in Plymouth being a long ride to Ayer and advised to his thoughts re taking an apartment during the week. The Board concluded the interview by requesting a closing statement by the candidate. Mr. Sanguinet stating his work experience and education makes him a qualified candidate for the position and is aware of the Town's plans re parking facility in the works that he would see to fruition, he is involved and supports the Green Initiative he advised to his first initiative to eliminate paper stating with the Board by having packets eliminated and replaced by laptops. He would work to take Ayer from the Top 10 Best Communities to the Top Five.

0:50a.m. The Board took a ten (10) Minute Recess-

11:00a.m. The Board re-convened their meeting

J. Jeff Ritter, Medway, MA The Board welcomed Mr. Ritter and advised him to the interview process: opening remarks, a short question & answer session and closing statement. Mr. Ritter thanked the Board for allowing him to enter into the Search for a Town Administrator. Mr. Ritter advised the Board to his bringing unique skills with him to the position to bring the Town to a new level of effectiveness. The Board addressed perception re Mr. Ritter serving 3 months as the Interim Town Administrator and advising to the Board to look at the most qualified person to do the job. The Board thanked Mr. Ritter for his communication skills- always addressing the full Board all five members. Advice offered always based on exposure and his perspective from proven and successful track record. Mr. Ritter agreeing to communication the key to understanding role. Selectman Luca thanking Mr. Ritter for always keeping the Board informed -important to Board to know what's going on. Mr. Ritter stating Local Government is the most effective form of governing; providing public safety, education, health and environmental services are the most critical keys. The Board conducted a question and answer session with Mr. Ritter. Issues discussed employee performance, evaluations, expected accomplishment, ADA-handicapped network re hiring, Mr. Ritter advising to his job skills analyses which helped to hire handicapped individual. Employee behavioral problems, progressive discipline process, warnings, leading up to termination. The Board discussed a Town Government Study Committee with Mr. Ritter who spoke this undertaking necessary to work smarter, cost savings and can see need for improvements. Mr. Ritter advising to his leadership in areas of community development introducing significant organizational challenges and new accountability expectations for department heads and staff. Mr. Ritter spoke to collaborative team effort having 4 approaches -1. Department Head meetings-agenda accomplished, 2. elaborating on bringing everyone together i.e land use, 3. Public Safety Aspect, i.e recent flooding, 4. have

man on job. The Board questioned Ayer biggest problem he sees-Mr. Ritter stating the stress on tax dollar. The Board questioned Mr. Ritter on concept planning-land use, concept of role as Town Administrator, citizen complaints. The Board asked Mr., Ritter what is his most rewarding accomplishment Mr. Ritter stated he is very aggressive and persistent on getting job done. The Board complimented Mr. Ritter on his impressive credentials, management style Mr. Ritter responding he always challenges himself to improve & be more effective. The Board spoke to Mr. Ritter being in the top three finalists for the Town Administrator's position in Auburn, MA. Mr. Ritter stating he is unaware of timeframe in Auburn but stated he has a commitment to the Town of Ayer he will honor. On a last question to Mr. Ritter the Board questioned his opinion re intermunicipal agreements as a creative solution re sharing of resources with neighboring towns. Mr. Ritter stated there are models out there re other communities sharing libraries, Health, Veterans Services that are working and Town should tap their studies and investigate if it could/would work in Ayer. The Board like Mr. Ritter's land use recommendation re getting all Town Departments together that share interest in a new development i.e. Conservation, Building, DPW, Planning Board, Board of Health, etc. to share information being a great concept to avoid problems. The Board requested a closing statement from Mr. Ritter. Mr. Ritter thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve the Town and looking forward to a continued relationship, as well as feeling their anguish re challenging decision to make.

11:55a.m. The Board took a five minute recess

12:00 The Board reconvened their meeting

Andrew Sheehan, Acton, MA-Chairman Gilles opened the discussion by advising Mr. Sheehan to the process re the finalist interviews: opening remarks, a short question/answer session by the Board, and closing statement. Mr. Sheehan thanked the Board for meeting with him advising the Board to his sixteen (16) years of local government experience: Asst. Town Manager-Town of Westford, Assistant to City Manager-City of Lowell, Town of Chelmsford where he held the position of Community Development Director-Coordinator, and Land Use Coordinator. Mr. Sheehan reviewed with the Board his expansive knowledge of public facilities, procurement, public construction projects, handling multi-department projects, annual budget, collective bargaining, and implementation of 21D, foreclosure mitigation, and energy efficiency performance contract, codification of ordinances and accepted statutes as well as regional initiatives. Mr. Sheehan stated he implemented the Town of Chelmsford's first Community Development Dept. Mr. Sheehan stated he has the skills to assist the Board in administrative and management matters having excellent interpersonal, verbal and written communication skills. The Board conducted a brief question & answer session with Mr. Sheehan re working as Asst. Town Mgr. and this position under the policy & direction of the Board of Selectmen, concept of local government Mr. Sheehan responding which is the level that touches people most directly public safety, education, health, economic development all important elements. Selectman McCreary continuing the questioning re employee not performing, the Town's establishing a Town Government Study Committee re Town Charter moving from Town Administrator to Town Manager, Collective Bargaining, economic development-expanding tax base, relocate businesses to Ayer, financial team, where are you in five years with career. Mr. Sheehan stating nothing drawing him back his motivation is Ayer presently working as Interim Town Administrator in Townsend. Mr. Sheehan was questioned re his economic development knowledge and acknowledged his awareness of the Towns effort seeking a downtown parking facility and offering his knowledge and assistant to endeavor. Chairman Gilles closing the session with cost/analysis service agreement re regionalization of services, sharing of services with local neighboring communities. Mr. Sheehan advising the Board to evaluate where you are and where you neighbors are, facilitate discussions, and build upon small successes. The Board requested a closing statement. Mr. Sheehan closed by stating he would be committed to Ayer, wishes a stable career environment and would offer Town of Ayer a broad range of experience having worked in small/large urban communities and work to see that the Board of Selectmen's goals and objectives are met. The Board thanked Mr. Sheehan for meeting with them.

7-1-10

2:30p.m. Interviews ended

The Board held a follow-up discussion re the interviews. Selectman Fay opening the discussion by stating it comes down to does the Board want a young energetic person or a more experienced candidate. Selectman Fay stating in his mind it comes down to two (2) candidates Jeff Ritter and Robert Pontbriand. Selectman McCreary concurring both Mr. Ritter and Mr. Pontbriand are the two top candidates. Selectman Maxant stating he utilized the point system and gave his evaluation to the Board the candidate having highest points was Mr. Ritter and the candidate with the lowest points was Mr. Pontbriand. Selectman Luca stating he is not committed to anyone at this time and needs to look over his notes; this is an important decision and declines comment at this time. Chairman Gilles agreeing all are capable people having different strengths, commenting on Mr. Pontbriand's exemplary awards/honors and Mr. Ritter's proven administrative/professional experience. The Board continued the decision to the next Selectmen's Meeting 7-6-10.

Chairman Gilles called for a motion to adjourn, Selectman Luca moved to adjourn, 2nd by Selectman Fay, VOTE: unanimous, so moved.

 DATE: 9/1/10 *Approved 7/20/10*
Frank F. Maxant, Clerk
AYER BOARD OF SELECTMEN

7-1-10