

Selectmen's Meeting
Friday, September 15, 2006
Ayer Town Hall, 1st Floor Meeting Room, Main Street, Ayer, MA
FIRE CHIEF INTERVIEWS

7:00p.m. Open Session

Present

Frank F. Maxant, Chairman	X
Pauline Conley, Vice-Chair	X
Carolyn McCreary, Clerk	X
Gary J. Luca, Member	X
Cornelius F. Sullivan, Member	X
Shaun Suhoski, Town Administrator	X
Janet Lewis, Secretary	X

Chairman Maxant opened the meeting by stating the Board is meeting this evening for the purpose of interviewing the last finalist for the Fire Chief's position presented to the Board of Selectmen by the Screening Committee. Chairman Maxant advising to four (4) of the five (5) finalists for the Fire Chief's position have been interviewed with the last one remaining to be interviewed this evening finalizing the interviews. Interviews being conducted on Tuesday 9-12-06, Wednesday 9-13-06, tonight Friday 9-15-06. Chairman Maxant advised to each candidate having the opportunity to present their 90 day transition matrix/overview should they become Chief. Following this presentation the Board of Selectmen will conduct a question and answer session with the candidate time allowing each Selectman approximately six minutes. Chairman Maxant read into the record a prepared guidelines statement.

The Board met with Timothy Johnston, Town of Ayer resident and Captain with 22 years of service with the Ayer Fire Department-candidate for the Fire Chief's position. Mr. Johnston stated he started with department April 9, 1984. Mr. Johnston presented the Board his 90 day Matrix/ Transition Plan. Mr. Johnston thanked the Board for meeting with him and expressed his gratitude for having the opportunity to interview. Selectman Luca took this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Johnston for making it this far in the Selection process. The Board echoed Selectman Luca's statement.

Mr. Johnston ran through his 90 day transition plan with the Board outlining his plan for the Department should he become chief. Mr. Johnston presented his assessment re Personnel, Training, EMS/ Call Firefighters, Ambulance Service, Operations. Mr. Johnston's presentation finalized and the Chairman opened the floor to questions from Selectmen. Questions ranged from administration, operation, training, fire prevention, ambulance service/s, on-call volunteers, problem solving, stepping up to managerial position-strong points, areas where he may need support in, diversity of department & how to improve, recognition of employees, principal role to sub-ordinates, Performance reviews, community service outreach, current moral of call fire-fighters improvement. Current department consists of 12 full time fire-fighters and 18 call volunteers looking to update Rules & Regulations establish Performance Reviews re promotional incentives. Area he would seek support: budgeting and Grant Applications advising Board to his taking time to walk around Town Hall and having opportunity to meet with Town Accountant re process. Department support is available through Chief's Assoc., MA & Federal Agencies should problems come up as well as taking his wife's input re need for guidance/assistance. The Board closed with why apply for chief? Mr. Johnston stated it was next step in career path, looked to aspire to position. The Board asked if he could change one thing in department what would it be. Mr. Johnston stated nothing to change, great department, runs well and will continue. Mr. Johnston stated community involvement with School Dept.-PTO & his 4th year on School Council.. Selectman Sullivan questioning Mr. Johnston as to his being the highest paid employee in the Dept. and to how he feels about pay but taking on this position. Mr. Johnston stating his hopes to coming into agreement contractually, not in short term but eventually.

The Board took this opportunity to ask Mr. Johnston if he had questions for the Board. Mr. Johnston stated he thought process was very good, though and looked forward to hearing from the Board.

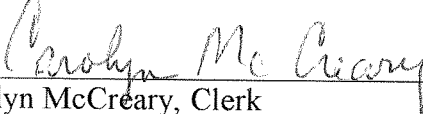
The Board thanked Mr. Johnston for stepping up to challenge and wished him well.

8:15P.M. The Board met took this time to reflect and review all five (5) candidates before them. Chairman Maxant opening discussion by stating the Board has five enormously qualified candidates before them and requested if the Board would take up the appointment this evening, tallying points per person or if Board was leaning one way or another. Selectman Conley requesting a few minute recess to collect thoughts before continuing discussion.

8:25p.m. Selectman Sullivan opened the discussion when the Board resumed the meeting. Selectman Sullivan ran through his thoughts re all five candidates: finalizing his review and recommendation for Robert Pedrazzi being his preference. Selectman McCreary stating she had great deal of respect and desire to hire within but after listening to all five candidates nominated Mark Kirko due to finding him compelling, lots of experience brought forward fresh ideas for Town , proven leadership, grant writing. Chairman Maxant spoke to morale of Department -service will be rewarded-nominated Robert Pedrazzi due to his safety first being of the utmost importance feeling his letter of interest first two sentences demonstrated his confidence and drive to handle the job. Selectman Conley reflected upon all questions posed to candidates and raised concerns relative to budget knowledge, diversity, problem solving and leadership with four of the candidates. Selectman Conley feeling Mark Kirko had great diversity and knowledge of Chief's leadership/responsibilities having the edge over the others and recommended Mark Kirko her preference. Selectman Luca Stated all five candidates anyone of them could be chief, all interviewed well and to not get discouraged, keep going. Selectman Luca stated he looked for something different. Selectman Luca ran through his assessment of the candidates and felt Timothy Johnston had that something, different- interviewed well, did homework, checked out Town Hall Dept. met with Town Accountant re budget and impressed him with his answers. Selectman Luca nominated Timothy Johnston for the position.

Chairman Maxant called for a vote: Selectman Sullivan-Robert Pedrazzi, Selectman McCreary-Mark Kirko, Selectman Conley-Mark Kirko, Selectman Luca-Timothy Johnston, Chairman Maxant Robert Pedrazzi.. NO VOTE 2-2-1, The Board reviewed among themselves pros & cons of each of the candidates. Selectman Luca after a short discussion moved to offer the Fire Chief's position to Robert Pedrazzi subject to reference checks, other than the two submitted, and successful passing of psychological and physical examinations, 2nd by Selectman Sullivan VOTE: Selectman Sullivan aye, Selectman Luca aye, Chairman Maxant aye, Selectman Conley no, Selectman McCreary no, 3-2 motion carries. Robert Pedrazzi to be offered position of Fire Chief. Selectman Conley requested the other four candidates remain finalist if Robert Pedrazzi doesn't work out and requested the Town Administrator contact all five candidates and advise of Board's decision. Contact Robert Pedrazzi to begin negotiations, and to discuss Town's contract offer on the Selectmen's 9-19-06 meeting using Chief Filebrown's contract as base as well as obtaining Mr. Pedrazzi's current contract and compensation plan. Selectman Conley also requested if Mr. Pedrazzi should choose to withdraw to contact the Board immediately.

9:35p.m. Selectman McCreary moved to adjourn the meeting, 2nd by Selectmen Luca, VOTE: unanimous, so moved.


Carolyn McCreary, Clerk

DATE: _____