



MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA

SELECT BOARD • TOWN HALL

Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts 01944-1399

Telephone (978) 526-2000 FAX (978) 526-2001

MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD

January 30, 2025

6:30pm

Hybrid Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting, Meeting: ID 894 4222 5982 Passcode: 432328 Mobile: 1.646.558.8656

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Harrison – Chair, Mr. Round – Vice-Chair, Ms. Bilotta, Mr. Sollosy, Mr. Delaney

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Town Administrator, Mr. Federspiel

Ms. Harrison called the Select Board meeting to order at 6:30pm with five members present in person and stated the meeting is recorded.

1. Town Administrator Screening Committee Interviews:

a. At Large Members: Rob Beatty, David Crehan, Gar Morse & Becky Jaques

The Select Board conducted interviews with candidates for the Town Administrator Screening Committee. The first group interviewed were the at-large members.

Becky Jaques was interviewed first. She highlighted her experience working with town administrators through her roles on the Select Board and Planning Board. Ms. Jaques emphasized her ability to bring valuable perspective without competing for the Select Board position. She noted the importance of understanding the needs of a smaller community and managing limited resources effectively. When asked about differentiating between management and leadership, Jaques defined management as overseeing tasks and projects, while leadership involves guidance and inspiration to accomplish goals.

The Board discussed the importance of finding a candidate who could potentially have a longer tenure. Ms. Jaques emphasized the need for someone who understands the challenges of a smaller community and can maximize limited resources. She noted that age shouldn't be the sole determining factor, but rather the candidate's experience and what they've learned in previous roles.

When asked about red flags in candidates, Jaques mentioned frequent job changes in rapid succession. She emphasized the importance of a candidate's ability to manage effectively and efficiently, even if they weren't the most articulate communicator.

Gar Morse was interviewed next. He highlighted his professional experience running a large department in a commercial bank and overseeing his own operation for 30 years. Mr. Morse emphasized the importance of having a strong performer, even if they might only stay for a shorter term, rather than a mediocre performer who stays longer. He stressed the critical nature of having a competent leader given the important issues facing the town.

Mr. Morse suggested that the Select Board needs to refine and restate the mission of town government. He advocated for considering changing the position from Town Administrator to Town Manager, emphasizing the need for more authority and trust in the role. He emphasized the importance of references and experience in narrowing down candidates, suggested asking each candidate to write an essay about their perceived job responsibilities and why they would excel in the role.

David Crehan was interviewed next. He highlighted his experience in construction-related hiring and noted the trend of experienced professionals returning to work. Mr. Crehan emphasized the importance of finding candidates who can provide good leadership to different department heads and have experience with capital planning and state interactions. He also mentioned the significance of operational budget management.

When discussing the school district challenges, Mr. Crehan acknowledged the importance of a candidate's ability to work with regional dependencies and communicate effectively with counterparts in other towns. He suggested that while technical skills are important, leadership abilities are crucial for success in the role.

Rob Beatty was interviewed last among the at-large candidates. His work involved representing various stakeholders in the oil and gas sector, hiring expert witnesses, and ensuring clear, persuasive communication in both litigation and appellate work. He values effective communication as a crucial leadership and management skill, believing that clear oral and written expression is essential for governance and decision-making.

As a member of the Board of Assessors, he has gained insight into town governance and infrastructure challenges. Mr. Beatty supports hiring the most capable individuals for leadership roles, advocating for both management expertise and strategic leadership. He emphasizes the importance of transparency, responsiveness, and candid communication with residents. His approach to evaluating candidates for the Town Administrator position involves asking open-ended questions to assess confidence, experience, and authenticity.

b. Past Select board Members: Tom Kehoe, Eli Boling, Jeff Bodmer-Turner, Margaret Driscoll & Lee Spence

The Select Board then interviewed past Select Board members for the Town Administrator Screening Committee.

Lee Spence highlighted his 55 years of residency in Manchester and his experience serving on various town boards and committees. Mr. Spence highlighted the importance of relevant experience in candidates and suggested using a conversational style during interviews to assess their background and problem-solving abilities. He expressed a preference for long-term candidates but acknowledged that the most important factor is finding a strong performer.

Eli Boling discussed his experience on the Select Board and emphasized the importance of finding a candidate with strong leadership skills and the ability to handle capital planning and budget management. Mr. Boling stressed the significance of a candidate's experience working with state

officials and managing regional dependencies, such as the school district. He suggested that while technical skills are important, leadership abilities are crucial for success in the role.

Jeff Bodmer Turner emphasized his experience as a forensic psychologist and his involvement in various town boards and committees. Mr. Bodmer-Turner highlighted the importance of group facilitation skills and the ability to stay focused on the town's needs when evaluating candidates.

He discussed the challenges related to affordable housing in Manchester-by-the-Sea, emphasizing the need for a candidate who understands the diverse nature of the community and can address the issue of housing. He also stressed the importance of finding a candidate who can effectively communicate with and lead department heads, as well as interact positively with residents.

Margaret Driscoll highlighted her experience on various town committees and boards, including her time on the Select Board. She stressed the importance of finding a candidate with proven leadership skills, strong communication abilities, and experience in capital planning and budget management. Ms. Driscoll also stressed the need for a candidate who can collaborate effectively with surrounding communities and state representatives to secure grant funding.

Tom Kehoe, drawing from his extensive experience in town government, emphasized the importance of communication skills, particularly in town meetings. He stressed the need for a candidate with strong budget preparation abilities and team-building skills. Mr. Kehoe highlighted the upcoming challenges of hiring new department heads and suggested the importance of a candidate's ability to develop talent within the town staff. He also mentioned the potential benefits of regionalization efforts and the need for a candidate who can work effectively with neighboring communities.

The Board discussed the importance of considering diversity of thought and representation when making their final decisions on committee members. They also mentioned the possibility of reviewing the recording or transcript of the interviews before making their decision at the upcoming Monday night meeting.

The Board expressed their deep appreciation to all the candidates for stepping forward and offering to serve on the screening committee.

9:15pm Mr. Round moved to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Delaney seconded. Mr. Delaney – yes, Mr. Sollosy – yes, Ms. Bilotta – yes, Ms. Harrison – yes, Mr. Round - yes.