

Revised
10/5/2004

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
BROOKFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION TO HOLD AN INITIAL SCREENING OF CANDIDATES
FOR EMPLOYMENT**

MINUTES FOR November 12, 2002

The Executive Session opened at 7:35p.m. Beverly A. Lund, Robert S. Phillips and Joseph J. Klimavich were present.

HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT INTERVIEWS

HERBERT A. CHAFFEE

Mr. Chaffee stated he has worked part time for the Highway Department for 20 years, was a current member of the Brookfield Fire Department and has always been interested in working full time for the Town. His present employment is in the building construction industry.

If he was hired as Superintendent he would make repairs to the sidewalks in the center of Town, keep the roads and Town property maintained and clear away brush and litter from the sides of the roads.

Although Mr. Chaffee is not responsible for his company's yearly budget, he manages and plans daily work schedules for his crew of 17 workers. He has worked with road surfacing materials and has prepared time and material bids for such jobs.

He had mechanical ability and worked on the repair and maintenance of very large pieces of equipment. He holds a current CDL and hoisting license.

Mr. Chaffee said his supervisors would say that he knows what to do to put a job together and get it done right the first time.

Mr. Chaffee said he is willing and able to do physical work as a superintendent. He has worked harmoniously with Bruce Clarke, the Water Superintendent and Donald Herbert, the Highway Operator.

Mr. Chaffee was advised that the salary was commensurate with experience. He said he would be interested in \$18.00/hr to start.

Mr. Chaffee's interview ended at 7:50pm

RICHARD J. KIRBY

Mr. Kirby has over ten years experience in public works as a superintendent and many years working on ground and park maintenance. He is presently working as a counselor. He would like to work as a Highway Superintendent for a small town and is prepared to be a working superintendent because he likes manual labor. Mr. Kirby lives in Templeton but stated he would be willing to relocate to be close by for snowplowing and sanding the roads. He has experience in designing roads and drainage and was responsible for 90 miles of roads both in the Towns of Templeton and Gardner. He worked with the Townspeople of Gardner and was awarded a \$205,000 matching open space grant to refurbish a playground.

Mr. Kirby said he changed positions from Gardner to Templeton because it was a better job with better pay. He was laid off from Templeton when the Town combined the Water, Public Electric and Highway into one department. He felt he has a good management style and although he could be stubborn he found a way to work out problems. He said he would keep the Selectmen informed.

Although Mr. Kirby is not a mechanic, he has a BS in Environmental Design/Park Administration, a CDL, Hoisting and Water License and is computer literate.

Mr. Kirby advised that it took him 45 minutes to drive from his home to Brookfield. Although he only drove on the major roads of Brookfield, he found them to be bumpy, similar to other rural towns. He felt he could learn the locations of Brookfield roads within a months time using a road map. Mr. Kirby was informed that the Highway Department maintained the Town Common and Route 148 and that MassHighway maintained Route 9.

Mr. Kirby advised the Selectmen that Templeton voted by ballot to appropriate funds to snow plow private ways. The residents maintained the private ways and the private ways must meet certain requirements so that the snowplows would not be damaged. Princeton has no private ways.

Mr. Kirby advised that his salary range would be around the high \$30,000 to \$40,000. He was advised that the Town offered 60% contribution on health and life insurance.

Mr. Kirby's interview ended at 8:20pm.

MR. GRAUPNER, MR. HAYES, MR. GRIFFIN VS. TOWN OF BROOKFIELD

Police Chief Ross Ackerman, Michele Randazzo, Town Counsel, and Maureen MacDonald, Senior Claims Representative, MIIA were present.

Ms. MacDonald was advised and brought up to date on the negotiations and arrangements discussed and offered to the plaintiffs.

Chief Ackerman informed the Selectmen that Kenneth Hayes and Jamie Griffin had contacted him to come back to work by the week of November 18, 2002 and at this date the Chief had not heard from Peter Graupner. The Selectmen had not been contacted by any of the plaintiffs. Chief Ackerman planned to work Mr. Hayes and Mr. Griffin into the rotating part time Police schedule.

Chief Ackerman advised that the men would need to be brought up to statutory Police requirements.

The Chief advised that the department had a Deputy Chief and that no other rank had been established.

Ms. Randazzo advised that residency must be consistent for all officers. Chief Ackerman said all the officers live within a 15-mile radius of Brookfield.

There was discussion on an orientation time to introduce the men to the many changes that had taken place to the Police Department during the last three years since the men worked for the Town of Brookfield. The Police Department had a new Police Station with more advanced technology and equipment in the station and in the cruisers. There has also been changes to the Department's policies and procedures.

Ms. MacDonald said that MIIA had appointed Atty. Nancy Pelletier of Robinson Donovan Madden & Barry, PC to the case and once she reviewed the complaint she would contact the Selectmen to explain what motions she would file on behalf of the defendants of the Town of Brookfield. A letter entitled "reservation of rights" might be sent from MIIA if there was anything in the complaint that was not covered. She wondered if the Town had adopted M.G.L. Chapter 258, Sections 9 or 13.

Mr. Graupner, Mr. Hayes, Mr. Griffin vs. Town of Brookfield Executive Session ended at 10:10pm

DISCUSSION CHRISTINE McMANUS

Mrs. McManus was present.

Mr. Phillips asked Mrs. McManus if it was true that she had neither answered the phone nor listened to voicemail on Wednesday November 6 and Thursday November 7. Mrs. McManus said she started preparing meeting minutes at about 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday and only then did she stop answering the phone. She said the selectmen had told her she did not need to answer the phone while preparing minutes. She did not answer the phone or listen to voicemail for the remainder of the day. On Thursday she began answering the phone. At about 10:00 a.m., she started listening to voicemail but did not finish listening to it for several hours. She finished the minutes in the afternoon.

Mrs. McManus read to the Board a journal listing her activities, minute by minute for the day (November 12.) The journal made it clear that there are a large number of interruptions both from phone calls and drop-ins throughout the day. Mrs. McManus must also communicate with many people throughout the day for a wide variety of purposes. Each conversation might last just a minute or many minutes. If she cannot get the minutes done in a timely fashion, it is because, Mrs. McManus said, she has a high level of activity.

Mr. Phillips said the Board had suggested (over Ms Lund's reservations) that Mrs. McManus not answer the phone to avoid being interrupted while preparing minutes. The Board did not intend to leave the Selectmen's office incommunicado for any length time period and he was very perturbed that Mrs. McManus would interpret the Board's suggestion thusly. He added that during any other (non-phone) interruption Mrs. McManus might easily have checked for any urgent voicemail messages. The fact that Ms. Lund was forced to contact Mrs. McManus through the help of the Town Clerk was unnecessary and embarrassing to the Board. He did not understand why listening to voicemail should take several hours. Although responding to the accumulated messages might be time consuming, listening to the messages should only take a few minutes.

Mrs. McManus admitted that failing to answer the phone was a bad decision. Mr. Phillips said that while Mrs. McManus' journal demonstrates the Selectmen's office is very busy and that he knows she works very hard -probably more than the 37 hours per week for which she is being paid – it does not show that the Administrative Assistant's work is beyond a single person's capacity. He suggested it would help to set priorities better and to delegate work to members of the Board. He also suggested that keeping conversations short and to the point would save time. He noted that a daily journal is a good device for managing time and suggested that Mrs. McManus continue maintaining it. The other Board members disagreed saying it would consume too much time.

Mr. Phillips said, since one issue is setting appropriate priorities, perhaps the Board's list of work could be managed by the chairman who would manage priorities and assign tasks to the Administrative Assistant or other Board members. Ms. Lund said she should not have to do that. Mr. Klimavich said he felt micromanaging the office is infeasible.

MINUTES PREPARATION AND CONTENTS

Mr. Klimavich asked whether timely minutes were really so important. Ms. Lund said that, since each week brings a new set of minutes, it is important that the Board keep up with the process for drafting, reviewing, and approving them.

Mr. Phillips said it is crucial that the Board review the minutes soon after the meeting while the events are still fresh. But before seeing a draft he wants all obvious errors removed by having the Administrative Assistant run MS Word's spelling checker and by printing a hardcopy of the minutes and proofreading it, there being many errors that one misses on the screen and only sees on a hardcopy. He said he would like to see a draft of the minutes emailed to Board members each Friday for their review over the weekend. By returning their comments to the Administrative Assistant on Monday, she can have a second and hopefully final draft available for the Board's approval on Tuesday. He would also like to have the approved minutes emailed to him the following Friday, since he keeps them in his records.

He said the minutes should be minimal, containing only a summary of the matter discussed and the Board's decision. More detailed discussion should only be included for issues that might be of interest in any possible later litigation. Additional detail can be added by selectmen during their review as they see fit.

He said that this level of content was agreed upon at the Board's October 18th meeting but the latest minutes included much more. Mrs. McManus said she had removed the additional material as per Ms. Lund's and Mr. Phillips' review comments. Mr. Phillips said the point of the content rule is to save time in preparing the minutes. It saves no time to add extraneous detail and remove it later.

POLL FOR IDEAS

Mr. Phillips said that, with regard to the Administrative Assistant's workload, there are really two possibilities. Either (1) Mrs. McManus should be able to perform all of her work through better time management, improved priorities, more delegation, and simply refusing low priority requests, or (2) there is more work to be done than any single person can accomplish in 37 hours per week, given the disruptive work environment.

Mr. Phillips reminded the Board that at the previous Selectmen's meeting, the Building Inspector had asked if the Board planned to take any action on his proposed revised fee schedule. Mr. Phillips said he thought the Board had overlooked the whole question. While Mr. Phillips keeps a document listing all the issues facing the Board and their status, here was an issue that had been forgotten. He said that while he did not mind maintaining the document - and the other Board members interrupted saying that they appreciated his doing so he felt that tracking all issues and their status was really a task for the Administrative Assistant. But since she was unable to finish her current tasks, it was unreasonable to ask more of her. Mrs. McManus suggested that the town hire a receptionist to work weekday mornings in the coming fiscal year. Most phone calls are in

the morning and a receptionist could relieve the Administrative Assistant of that distraction at just the time when she is trying to be most productive.

The Board members considered the situation.

Ms. Lund stated she did not approve of hiring a receptionist and that this is a duty of the Administrative Assistant. She said that Mrs. McManus was hampered by her typing ability. If she could type faster, it would take less time to prepare the minutes.

Mr. Klimavich said he has made fewer demands on Mrs. McManus and, accordingly, he really has no complaints. He noted that the Board, in reversing the previous Board's decision to terminate Mrs. McManus by reinstating her, has a strong interest in ensuring that she succeeds in her position.

Mr. Phillips said it is possible that he has unreasonably high expectations. He hoped that, now that Mrs. McManus is aware of his concerns, she might better organize her time. He said he would also like to see the Selectmen's office better organized, with books and binders in bookshelves, files in filing cabinets, and credenzas and desktops clear. He said it is embarrassing when guests find the Selectmen's office untidy. Mrs. McManus said she would tidy the office. She advised the Board that she had ordered Charter Pipeline and would, in the near future, consolidate her computer use to just the computer in the Selectmen's office.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Phillips moved to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Klimavich seconded. Mr. Phillips voted aye; Mr. Klimavich voted aye; Ms. Lund voted aye. Meeting adjourned at 11:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine McManus
Christine McManus, Administrative Assistant

Robert Phillips
Robert Phillips, Selectman

Date approved by Board 11-19-02

Released 10/30/2012