

IN BOARD OF SUDBURY SELECTMEN  
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2015

Present: Chairman Patricia A. Brown, Vice-Chairman Susan N. Iuliano, Selectman Charles C. Woodard, Selectman Robert C. Haarde, Selectman Leonard A. Simon, Interim Town Manager Maryanne Bilodeau, Alan S. Gould, Vice President, Municipal Resources, Inc. (MRI)

The statutory requirements as to notice having been complied with, the meeting was convened at 6:05 p.m. in the Lower Town Hall, 322 Concord Road.

At 6:05 p.m., Chairman Brown opened this special meeting to interview three candidates for Town Counsel services. She handed the meeting over to Alan S. Gould, Vice President, MRI.

**Alan Gould – MRI Consultant**

Mr. Gould summarized the screening process. A total of 37 candidates from 17 different states applied to the position, 16 from Massachusetts. After resumes were reviewed, he spent a full day in Sudbury meeting with department heads, employees, residents, and anyone who wanted to drop in to talk. He sent essay questions to the top 13 candidates; did phone interviews with candidates, and conducted preliminary background checks. The town designated a six-member Community Interview Panel representing different viewpoints to evaluate the candidates on how well they would address the needs in Sudbury. A full day (Wednesday, Aug. 26) was spent in the Flynn Building interviewing the six semi-finalists. Both the MRI management consultants and Sudbury's Community Interview Panel identified four applicants as finalists; however, one withdrew the next day. Mr. Gould asked the Board to take as much time as necessary interviewing the three finalists, and cautioned against asking questions of a personal nature.

Selectman Haarde expressed his thanks to Alan for all his hard work in this process, and the rest of the Board concurred.

Mr. Gould shared that if the Board reaches consensus on a candidate tonight, he would proceed with next steps, which would be a conditional offer, based on additional background checks, medical clearance, etc. The process would take about two weeks. However, if no consensus can be reached, he would then offer alternatives allowing for further consideration.

**Melissa Murphy-Rodrigues**

Mr. Gould introduced Melissa Murphy-Rodrigues. Ms. Murphy-Rodrigues lives in Everett with her family, and has served the City of Everett for eight years; first year as Assistant City Solicitor and subsequently as Chief of Staff to the Mayor. She currently supervises 20 department heads managing 400 employees, is directly responsible for city finances (including setting the budget, forecasting, and capital planning), and is responsible for union negotiations. She has served as acting department head in many departments as needed.

The Selectmen proceeded to ask Ms. Rodrigues about how she would function as town manager.

Ms. Rodrigues explained she believes the most important attribute of a town manager is the ability to communicate openly and transparently with both town officials and members of the public. Not everyone will agree with every decision, but it's important to listen carefully and respectfully, to have empathy, and to explain decisions clearly. It's important to be prepared for meetings and to address the questions that arise there.

Ms. Rodrigues sees the duties of the town manager—to execute the policy developed by the executive and legislative branches—as fundamentally similar to those she discharged in the City of Everett. In

Sudbury, the executive is the Board of Selectmen and the legislative branch is Town Meeting. Maintaining open communications with the Selectmen is central to this.

As an example of a situation she could have handled better, Ms. Rodrigues described the rollout of a trash program in Everett. While the program was ultimately a success, saving \$200,000 annually, the large trash containers provided by the city raised a lot of concern and generated complaints from residents. She concluded that the reason these containers were chosen should have been more clearly explained, with visual depictions to show how this would accommodate the needs of residents, prior to the rollout. She believes that more and clearer explanation would have avoided a lot of the dissatisfaction and anxiety this program caused residents.

Her approach to team building among her reports includes holding staff meetings to get together, share ideas, and recognize effort and progress. With a large staff it's important both to build consensus and to come to a solution the team can implement even when there are differing opinions. Ms. Rodrigues would like to meet with individual department heads in their own offices to get to know Sudbury and learn how things are working. Her approach to the town's many volunteers and volunteer organizations is similar—meet with them to learn what they do, and recognize them for their efforts.

Ms. Rodrigues sees engaging the public as a priority in Sudbury. Government should not be something that happens to people, but that happens with people. She would help Sudbury offer means—a Facebook page, on-line surveys—to allow town government to hear from citizens, to address some of the dissatisfaction expressed to the Sudbury Listening Project. She has experience in reviewing and licensing major sites for redevelopment, and with managing school finances.

Ms. Rodrigues develops a budget after consultation with department heads and “make their unrealistic goals realistic.” This is part of an intensive discussion for planning purposes of how things are working in the department. Typically, she presents a five-year forecast to the Council a couple weeks prior to presenting the budget so they can see what the projections are. The capital budget is completed in March, so she can fold that into the financial forecast. The enterprise fund budgets are included as well. The Council then receives the budget after receiving the financial forecast. In the budget presentation she goes into thorough detail with backup from the department heads. There are public budget hearings as well so the public can weigh in prior to the Council voting on the budget.

Ms. Rodrigues then asked the Selectmen what they saw as the most important challenges facing Sudbury. Members of the Board mentioned the need to start in quickly for annual challenges such as the budget; the need to be open, transparent, and accessible to the community; a “priority to set priorities”, which is the need to engage the community in long term planning; and a need to address the administrative structure of the schools (SPS and LS) in Sudbury.

Ms. Rodrigues thanked the Board for this opportunity and expressed her confidence that she could serve as an excellent town manager in Sudbury.

### **Steven Crane**

Mr. Gould introduced Steven Crane, Town Manager of Longmeadow, by asking him what was something important about him that was not included in his written submittals to the town. Mr. Crane responded that, while studying the Sudbury community, he had been struck by how similar it was to Sudbury—how many of the things he had recently done in Longmeadow were pending or recent tasks or core parts of the administration in Sudbury. He was particularly excited about using his planning and economic development skills in Sudbury to address current and future development in the town. Master planning large sites and brownfields redevelopment are skills he used to in previous positions in Lowell and Worcester.

The Selectmen proceeded to ask Mr. Crane about his approach to the town manager position.

Mr. Crane explained that leadership, listening, learning and humor are the characteristics he sees as most important in a town manager. He is a decisive manager, but he takes a lot of input from his staff. When he makes a decision, it's after he's listened carefully to them. It's also very important to be responsive, to provide support for staff, and to communicate with the media and the public. He enjoys learning new things and applying the knowledge to new challenges. Humor is a way of "keeping it fun" in an environment that can become stressful.

While he has enjoyed the challenges in Longmeadow and has had a positive impact there, Mr. Crane is seeking a position in eastern Massachusetts where he can grow and shape a community for a long time. He sees that opportunity in Sudbury.

In response to a request to describe a situation which, in retrospect, he would have handled differently, Mr. Crane replied that when he reflected on interactions with various individuals he sometimes thought he could have presented himself better. This is a skill he's spent a lot of time on, and received a lot of positive feedback. He thinks about how he could have done better, and uses that to improve.

Mr. Crane stated that the charter determines the lines of authority between the town manager and the Board of Selectmen. Town Counsel's review of the document addresses disagreements between the Board and the Town Manager about how to apply the charter in specific situations. If necessary, a facilitator can help to resolve issues as well. Clear and consistent communication between all parties is key to trust and cooperation.

In response to a question, Mr. Crane went on to describe specifically how he worked with the Selectmen in Longmeadow to obtain mitigation as a neighboring community to the proposed MGM casino in Springfield to upgrade traffic signals in Longmeadow. MGM presented stiff opposition which he overcame by thorough research and analysis, actively managing media exposure, and steadily advancing the town's proposals.

Mr. Crane strongly favors the town manager having meetings with individual selectmen on a monthly basis, particularly for the first six months. This both facilitates communications and helps build a working relationship with the town manager based on trust. His door is always open to selectmen, board members and residents. He believes the Board of Selectmen should make a decision on monthly meetings as a board.

Mr. Crane describes his management style as adaptable, becoming more deeply involved in managing in areas where there are problems. Staff members are professionals committed to their jobs; he solicits and values their input. It's important to be consistent in providing feedback, assignments and discipline. We've been able to manage a lot of turnover in senior staff which we've been able to handle well because of the teamwork among staff. Volunteers are an important part of the community. It's important to provide the structure for them to be productive, and to show your appreciation.

When asked his top priorities as town manager in Sudbury, Mr. Crane stated that he'd like to get to know the town's stakeholders, dive into the land use planning challenges, study the town policies and bylaws, and get to know the departments. He praised the town's financial standing, a product of sound financial practice. He would focus on getting to know the selectmen and the people in Sudbury, to try to anticipate questions and answer them before they were asked.

Mr. Crane then asked the selectmen if they felt the relationship between the board members and the town manager was improving—and the selectmen did think so. He then asked what the board is seeking in a

town manager. The board members listed leadership, communications, engagement, openness, accessibility, and being a manager.

Mr. Crane thanked the selectmen for the opportunity to address the board this evening.

**Andrew Sheehan**

Mr. Gould introduced Mr. Sheehan by asking him to tell the Selectmen something important about him that they would not find in his submitted materials. Mr. Sheehan responded that he was a native of Acton, had grown up there, had raised his family there and still lived there. He knows Sudbury and the other towns in the area.

Mr. Sheehan described the attributes of a successful town manager as competency—knowing what the important duties of the position are and having the skillset to accomplish them—and beyond that communication and relationship building. You need to connect not only with the board, but with employees and residents. His first thirty days as town manager he would spend getting out and meeting people: elected and appointed officials, management, staff, citizens, businessmen and clergy to begin to build relationships with them. Meeting people on their own turf shows respect and a desire to understand their work environment.

When asked to describe a situation, which, in retrospect, he would have handled differently, Mr. Sheehan stated that he wished he had known earlier that he wanted to work as a public sector manager. He might have made some different educational and job choices. However, overall he is happy with the way things have worked out.

Mr. Sheehan described the role of the board of selectmen as the chief policy-making entity, as it's described in the Town Manager Act, and that of the town manager as the one who implements those policies in day-to-day operations. There will be gray areas between policy and implementation, and those areas will shift over time and with different people. As long as the communication is open and respectful you work through that. He has managed through a major transition, restructuring town departments in consonance with a charter change. The process was lengthy but went very smoothly, one result of building support with the selectmen and the affected staff. A key aspect of his relationship with the Board of Selectmen is to keep them informed, so they are not surprised by developments. His communication tends to be informal; he maintains an open door policy and communicates by phone, e-mail, or in person.

Getting to know people is the first task Mr. Sheehan would undertake as town manager. He would also dive into the details of the budget and town finances and collective bargaining agreements. The schools are a huge part of the town and he would reach out to the school committees and superintendents. He is currently in a three-town K12 regional school system and he and the other town administrators meet regularly with the school superintendent to share budget challenges. His management style is collaborative, recognizing the specific expertise of his department heads but bringing people together and working collaboratively to find approaches to problems. There has been a discussion about using social media to connect with residents in Townsend where Mr. Sheehan serves as town administrator; however, the Selectmen have not fully embraced this idea. Mr. Sheehan continues to communicate with local papers and media. As long as the board has concerns he will continue to implement their policy.

Mr. Sheehan's asked the Board what the biggest challenges facing Sudbury are, and what role the town manager plays in meeting those challenges. The selectmen stressed the need to communicate, particularly to communicate with the public, leadership and management skills, availability and accessibility, and begin immediately to address our planning and development projects.

Mr. Sheehan thanked the Selectmen and left the room.

**Alan Gould, MRI Consultant**

Mr. Gould clarified that the next steps in this process would be determined by whether the Selectmen came to consensus on a candidate this evening. He felt that all three candidates were highly qualified and the choice came down to the Board's determination of personality, fit and character.

All board members agreed that all three candidates presented themselves well. For Selectmen Woodard, Iuliano, Brown, and Haarde, their first choice was Melissa Murphy-Rodrigues. Selectman Simon's first choice was Andrew Sheehan.

After a brief discussion with Alan Gould on Melissa's background, qualifications, and references, the Board agreed to ask Alan to draft a conditional offer to Melissa. Alan said this would take about two weeks, with a possible contract for early October.

It was on motion unanimously

VOTED: All in favor of requesting Alan S. Gould, of Municipal Resources, Inc. to draft a conditional offer for the position of Town Manager, to Melissa Murphy-Rodrigues.

Chuck thanked Alan for all his hard work, and the rest of the Board agreed.

A motion was made to adjourn.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Maryanne Bilodeau  
Interim Town Manager-Clerk

**Documents & Exhibits**

1. Opening remarks by Alan Gould of Municipal Resources, Inc.
2. Interview Town Manager Candidates

**Attachments:**

- 1.2.a CraneApp2
- 1.2.b Murphy-RodriguesApp2
- 1.2.c SheehanApp2

3. Evaluate candidates, and possibly vote to authorize the consultant (Alan Gould) to make a conditional offer to the candidate of choice; or, to take other action to further the search process.