

**MEETING MINUTES
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Town Administrator Interviews
September 25, 2017**

Present: Maura C. Curran, Chairman, Anthony V. Vegnani, Vice Chairman, Karen Canfield, John Danehey, Shawn Harris

Al Bangert, Interim Town Administrator

The Meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m.

Acceptance of Agenda

**Mr. Vegnani made a motion to accept the agenda for September 25, 2017
Second by Mr. Danehey, all in favor. Unanimous vote (5-0)**

Ms. Curran stated we are here this evening to interview applicants for the Town Administrator Position. Ms. Curran reviewed the format with Mr. Sweet. She asked Mr. Sweet to open with an overview of his experience and why he would be an asset to Scituate.

Applicant Kevin Sweet is a current Town Administrator in the Town of Maynard, MA. Mr. Sweet reviewed his background in the municipal sector. Mr. Sweet grew up in Abington and has background on the South Shore. Mr. Sweet said this is an attractive opportunity to seek out a desirable community such as Scituate and it would be an honor to serve here. Taunton is the second largest city in the Commonwealth land wise. There were a lot of issues in the City of Taunton to address and he was very successful there. Mr. Sweet was recruited to work in higher education with Cambridge College and built a program from the ground up. Mr. Sweet worked in the town of Maynard as the Director of Public Health and in 2011 he was appointed the Assistant Town Administrator and moving up to the Town Administrator in 2013 to present. Mr. Sweet has studied at Mass Maritime and received a degree in Marine Safety and Environmental Protection which will serve him well in Scituate. Mr. Sweet went on to receive his Master of Science in Emergency Management and a Master of Public Administration with a concentration in Fiscal Management.

Ms. Curran asked Mr. Sweet what is his management style and how did he accomplish change. Mr. Sweet said first and foremost is trust. Mr. Sweet's management style is a collaborative effort and to rely on the department heads who are the subject matter experts. He empowers his people and acts in a position of support with an open door policy. He meets with department heads regularly. He holds monthly leadership team meetings. He feels this is a good opportunity for collaboration between departments also. When department heads have the tools they need to do their job they are successful. Everyone has the desire to do a good job. Mr. Sweet is not afraid to make the difficult decisions. The leadership team would include the department heads

including Director of Facilities, DPW Director, Police Chief, Fire Chief, Finance Director, etc. Tools to succeed would be resolving issues that they encounter to better function and do their job. For example training in Microsoft products that is necessary for their team to do their job. Training focused around customer service. Three of the mid-level staff attended the MMA Government and Leadership program. Equipping them with graduate level skills has proven to create better employees. Meetings are also held with his finance team including the Town Accountant/Finance Director, Treasurer Collector and the Town Assessor.

Combining facilities between town and school there was lack of maintenance and some duplication of equipment. There was a lot of finger pointing and there were imaginary lines drawn. In the FY16 budget the school custodians reported to the facilities manager. In the FY17 budget he pulled the department into the DPW to report to the DPW Director. The parks and cemetery division is maintaining the school grounds. The budget operating and capital also transferred to the DPW. The salary portion of the budget are still in the school budget. Mr. Sweet has a great relationship with the Superintendent and the Business Manager. He has instituted school/town meetings with the Superintendent, the Town Administrator and a member of the Board of Selectmen. It has taken some time and the right people to jump in and try it. The highway foreman wore multiple hats as DPW, Cemetery and Parks. Mr. Sweet was able to fill positions that needed staffing in Highway, Water, Sewer, Parks, Cemetery and Grounds, etc. Now there are functional division foremen that have worked very successfully. Succession planning is a hot topic in the Town and the conversation started a year ago. The Assistant Town Administrator started working on this initiative particularly in the financial sector. This area has been a concern of his and he wanted to take a look at succession planning throughout Town Hall. A survey was sent out to all employees to obtain their timeline for promotion, etc. Some were sent to the MMA training and others given additional training. Mr. Sweet is also looking at opportunities for regionalization of work functions. Mr. Sweet has not had to lay off anyone but has dealt with some very difficult personnel terminations. Financially his town has been very stable. Mr. Sweet said kudo's to the Town for taking on a new Public Safety Complex, Library and Middle School. That is quite an undertaking. He has seen the survey for the senior center and felt this was good idea to obtain community input. His Council on Aging in Maynard was lacking and he wanted to build a program there. One of his focuses was to build a program and he has done that. The COA was working in donated space downtown with very poor access. They used some locker room space at their local golf course to improve the programming location in the short term. Maynard's next big facility is the fire station and then they will tackle the senior life center in the near future. Mr. Vegnani asked about his hiring process. Mr. Sweet said the town hall had low morale and now it has turned around and he has hired key great people in the past 4 ½ years. He put together a search committee for the new assistant Town Administrator. The final three finalists went to the Town Administrator for the hiring decision. The Assistant Town Administrator performs the Human Resources function in his community. In some cases he is involved in the beginning. The Fire Chief and Police Chief go through a

center approach. Mr. Danehey asked what experience he has had in grant writing. Mr. Sweet said he has been fortunate in achieving grant money for several hundred thousand dollars. He received a FEMA grant for a new fire truck receiving \$750,000. He has been the recipient of competitive grants every year. He was successful in getting a Hazard Mitigation Grant. Recently received a grant with MAPC for a housing grant. He just submitted a MassWorks grant for over \$2M for sewer infrastructure upgrades. Parks grants were received for more accessible pathways. Mr. Danehey asked if there were any major crisis in Maynard and if he would be in Scituate during a crisis. Preparedness has been at the core of his work related duties for a number of years. In 2010 Mr. Sweet was the Emergency Operations Director at Cambridge College for students and faculty. His role in Maynard with the retirement of the Fire Chief he was appointed as the Emergency Management Director. As a coastal community Scituate faces these emergency situations and he would like to bring his experience here. Most of his emergency management has been with heavy snow in the Snow Belt and ice storms, along with shelter operations. Maynard is the home of region 1 coordination for all of New England. They are all staged in Maynard. The state police crime lab is located in Maynard and the fusion center for homeland security is located in Maynard also. Mr. Sweet has dealt with these organizations for vaccination planning and other critical issues and projects. The Taunton dam crisis he served in the emergency operations center and it was a big public disaster at that time. There was FEMA federal reimbursement and a lot of planning and response was required. He had to condemn homes, etc. The City of Taunton was a reception community center for the nuclear power plant. Mr. Sweet holds all of the FEMA certifications. His plan is to relocate to the south shore as a long term plan but he will always be here in case of emergency. He views Scituate as a place to have a long extensive career. Mr. Vegnani asked Mr. Sweet to describe the Town of Maynard from a financial perspective from when he arrived to today. There was negative free cash of \$750,000 and now there is positive free cash from \$1.5M to over \$2.5M. He has maintained healthy stabilization funds which were positive for bonding. The OPEB trust is funded with some amount every year with over \$1M and a dent at this point but he is working on it and is in a better position than many communities. There is \$2.3M in capital stabilization fund. Recapturing Retiring debt and putting it into the capital budget is what is done in Maynard. He turned the negative free cash to a positive cash flow with no layoffs. The bond rating is AA2. At the next bonding rating they expect AA+. The bond rating was improved. Ms. Canfield asked how he prioritizes the capital planning projects. A Capital Planning Advisory committee was established with seven members and they prioritize the list over the past five years who works with their finance committee.

Mr. Harris asked about the Recreation Department who has shined in our community and his opinion and approach on recreation. The Town of Maynard has a weak recreation department and they do not have the level of facilities that they need.

Ms. Curran asked about customer service and the impact of social media on employees. Mr. Sweet has provided training for handling difficult customers and making sure that residents are being treated in a customer focused way. He feels that we are here to serve the tax payers and that is a priority. Mr. Sweet is rolling out a customer code of conduct at each service window also since it is a two way street. Ms. Curran asked if Mr. Sweet has used technology at Town Hall. Mr. Sweet implemented online permitting and online bill payment. There is not a lot of social media beyond police and fire. Mr. Sweet has implemented a blog that updates his Facebook and twitter account. Mr. Sweet does positive press releases on a monthly basis. There are a lot of great things going on with town employees that the public just doesn't see. There is an opportunity to register for a monthly newsletter. The Town events calendar is all in one location. A weekly TA message is sent out town wide to employees. A bi weekly TA report is included in the Selectmen's packet. An online system used for agenda management was rolled out in Maynard. All of his Selectmen have tablets that they utilize and all the attachments are included. The public also has this information. There is executive content as well that is not viewable by the public. This has improved communication with the Selectmen and the public. Ms. Canfield asked about minutes for boards and committees. Mr. Sweet said that is tough. Some of the boards do not have administrative staff to do this. Continued reminders are sent out and that is an issue with volunteers.

Chief Murphy asked what his peers would say about Kevin Sweet if asked. Mr. Sweet said dedicated to the role, someone you can trust and he offered to have staff reach out to his employees in Maynard.

Ms. Canfield asked if Mr. Sweet had experience with addiction programs in Maynard. Mr. Sweet said his police chief serves on the governor's council and has rolled out a number of programs in Maynard. A lot of their focus has been in the school system working with the school resource officer. This is not unique to Scituate but a real serious crisis across the Commonwealth. His public safety team is very active in this and they have a five member subcommittee that tackles local issues pertaining addiction in the community. On the marijuana front, Maynard is making some zoning changes to tackle this issue.

Mr. Vegnani asked Kevin Sweet to name two accomplishments he is proud of.

First, Mr. Sweet said his improved financial status in the town of Maynard.

Second, the formation of the Economic Development Committee and a ten year mixed use redevelopment project had no teeth until he took over four years ago to include what the community really wanted in the project. Mr. Sweet described the mixed use project. A lot of lessons were learned through this project. This reduced the tax burden on residents and was a huge accomplishment. This involved revitalizing an old mill that is now a thriving location.

Mr. Sweet thanked the Selection Committee and the Board of Selectmen for this opportunity.
Mr. Vegnani asked the attendees to email the Selectmen directly with any feedback.

There being no other business there was a motion to adjourn at 7:42 p.m. by Ms. Canfield
Second by Mr. Vegnani Unanimous Vote (5-0)

Respectfully Submitted,

Lorraine Devin, Recorder

List of Documents for the September 25, 2017 Board of Selectmen Meeting

- Agenda

Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes for September 25, 2017

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Maura C. Curran, Chairman

Anthony V. Vegnani, Vice Chairman

John F. Danehey, Clerk

Karen B. Canfield

Shawn Harris