



TOWN OF KINGSTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
OPEN SESSION
MINUTES
TOWN HOUSE-26 EVERGREEN ST. ROOM 200 & VIA ZOOM
February 8, 2024

6:00 p.m. – CALL TO ORDER – ROOM 200

Chairman Kimberley Emberg called to order the meeting of the Board of Selectmen at 6:00 p.m.—selectmen in attendance: Donald Alcombright, Sheila Vaughn, Tyler Bouchard, and Eric Crone.

Staff Present: Keith Hickey, Town Administrator; and Patricia Tucker, Assistant to Town Administrator.

Also present: Fire Chief Mark Douglass, as a member of the Police Chief Search Committee and Russ Stevens of Public Safety Consultants LLC, the firm hired to help with the search.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- This meeting is recorded by PACTV which will soon be known as The Local Seen. Anyone intending to make an audio or video recording of this meeting should notify the Chair at this time.
- Financial Assistance Applications are available on the town's website or by calling the Selectmen's Office.

OPEN FORUM:

There was nobody in attendance for Open Forum

APPOINTMENTS:

Interview Police Chief Candidate

Ms. Emberg began by thanking the working group and mentioned how they have been talking about the hiring process in the Selectmen meetings for a while. Tyler Bouchard and Eric Crone were the liasons for the Selectmen within that group that also included Town Administrator, Keith Hickey, and Fire Chief, Mark Douglass along with Russ Stevens of Public Safety

Mr. Stevens added that the process began 2.5 months ago, and the process went as follows:

- 40 candidates applied for the position, to which all resumes were reviewed
- Responses to SA Questions
- 4 candidates moved to the oral interviews
- 2 candidates moved to the assessment center
- 1 candidate was chosen to move to the interview process

Ms. Emberg stated she would like to begin with an introduction and to ask the current Deputy Chief in Stoughton, Brian Holmes, why he is interested in being Kingston's next police chief.

Deputy Chief Holmes introduced himself to the Board, by saying he is 51 years old, and his wife and daughter are here to support him. Deputy Chief Holmes stated he has the support of his current Chief and Town Manager. He began his career as a dispatcher at the age of 20. He has been with the Stoughton Police Department for the last 27 years where he is currently the Deputy Chief in the Town of Stoughton.

Ms. Emberg began by asking Deputy Chief Holmes questions:

Please discuss your leadership roles and experiences that will support your growth in this new role and specifically explain your management style.

Deputy Chief Holmes responded:

- His Management/leadership style is authentic style, and you will always know where you stand with him. There is not one style to management.
- He speaks directly to what is going on.
- He follows the adaptive leadership model, which focuses on an area that is lacking and the failure to diagnose what the issues are.
- His most valued asset is the staff.

How do you set staff expectations and manage performance?

Deputy Chief Holmes responded:

- Clear communication of what is expected and then have follow up with conversations.

Describe your approach to conflict resolution?

Deputy Chief Holmes responded:

- You must identify what role you have within the discussion.
- Must always have a professional code of conduct.

Talk about how you collaborate with other departments within the town?

Deputy Chief Holmes responded:

- Fire, Police, and the Superintendent of Streets, Trees & Parks are all public safety and need to work together.
- The Police Chief needs to know the department heads, as at some point they will have to work together.
- Relationships need to start day one.

In Kingston Animal Control and Harbormaster reports to the Police chief do you have experience with that structure?

Deputy Chief Holmes responded:

- Yes, to Animal Control
- No to Harbormaster

The Kingston Police Department is actively pursuing State Accreditation. What is your experience and what steps will you take to achieve this goal?

Deputy Chief Holmes responded:

- Make sure the department has policies and procedures.
- Create a policy driven organization.

How will you approach Open Town Meeting as opposed to Representative Town Meeting? Ms. Emberg asked specifically about the presentation of a new police station and provided some history to the last time the topic was presented to the Town Meeting body.

Deputy Chief Holmes responded:

- You must give people enough information to make a rational decision based on facts.
- Salesmanship is a big piece of what the police do.

- Video presentation to explain.

Can you talk about your communication style and how and your thoughts on social media?

Deputy Chief Holmes responded:

- Social media is a huge part of policing.
- Talk matter of fact
- Communication is key staff meetings are key, quarterly staff meetings are probably a good fit
- No conflict in the work places

How do you prioritize the needs and desires of different neighborhoods?

Deputy Chief Holmes responded:

- You must be factual on how you prioritize.
- Communication with the residents
- Visual presence in various areas of town and providing education to the public

Ms. Vaughn asked about Deputy Chief Holmes' thoughts on the School Resource Officer position.

Deputy Chief Holmes responded:

- A valuable resource
- Asked about how many officers are SROs and how it is handled within the regional schools

Mr. Hickey asked Deputy Chief Holmes had any questions and Deputy Chief Holmes asked how much oversight the Board provide to the Police Chief.

Ms. Emberg asked if Fire Chief Douglass would be willing to provide his thoughts and experience working with the Board, from his perspective. Chief Douglass answered that the Board is easy to communicate with, they are looking for a collaborative effort, and have been very supportive. He added that if you provide a plan, the Board will work with you on this plan.

Mr. Crone mentioned the Board would like a quarterly update at a Board of Selectmen meeting and for communicating what the Police Departments needs are and Deputy Chief Holmes stated that would be no problem.

Mr. Bouchard asked what do you want people to know about the Kingston Police Department, and how do you want the public to perceive them?

Deputy Chief Holmes responded:

- Approachable and engaging and safe
- If people don't know the police as an adversary

Mr. Stevens asked what do you plan to do in the first 30 days?

Deputy Chief Holmes responded:

- Get to know the entire staff and that is a priority.
- Policies and procedures
- Maintaining dispatcher development

How do you expect the citizens of Town to meet you?

Deputy Chief Holmes responded:

- Make the swearing in a public event.

- Set up office hours.
- Introduce himself to the Council on Aging and different Churches and to the Recreation Department

Deputy Chief Holmes stated in closing that he didn't know everything about Kingston Police but added that he wouldn't want to pursue an assessment until he had been there for at least several months so that he would have a better sense of which areas an assessment might be needed on and what he could do on his own as Chief.

Ms. Emberg mentioned the Board had discussed an assessment of the department and they decided to wait until after a Chief has been hired.

Deputy Chief Holmes thinks an assessment should be considered and not feared, everyone in the department should know the issues, and this will help identify them.

Deputy Chief Holmes thanked everyone for their time and stated he would be honored to be in this position.

Mr. Bouchard stated he will call him tomorrow with the results of the Board's discussion from the upcoming Executive Session.

Motion by Ms. Emberg, seconded by Mr. Bouchard and a 5-0-0 vote,

VOTE: I move to Recess to Executive Session, to not return to open session, for the purpose to Conduct Strategy Sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with non-union personnel.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

February 13, 2024

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Tucker

Assistant to the Town Administrator/Board of Selectmen