

Approved 5/23/16

TOWN OF HAMPDEN, MASSACHUSETTS
BOARD OF SELECTMEN/BOARD OF HEALTH

MINUTES

April 26, 2016
5:30 pm

625 Main Street
Hampden, MA 01036

Board Members: Vincent J. Villamaino John D. Flynn, Norman Charest
The meeting was called to order by Vinnie Villamaino at 5:30 pm.

Present: Don Collins and Carol Fitzgerald, members of the Personnel Committee were here to assist in the interview process.

The board had scheduled three candidates to interview for the position of Highway Superintendent.

April 26, 2016

INTERVIEWS

Resumes:

- Mark Langone
- Robert Donahue
- Arthur Herring

Sample Questions

Current Superintendent Contract

Job Description 1993

Operations and Annual Agenda

Operations: Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Annually

General Office Information

2017 Highway Budget

Correspondence: The board reviewed correspondence without comment.

Mark Langone: Mark comes from East Longmeadow DPW with 17 years' experience working in various departments within the DPW. He works a great deal with cross connection controls for the business owners, ensuring that there is no cross contamination between non-potable and potable water, what we know as backflow devices. This takes approximately six months to complete. In addition he has experience with snow removal, has worked a number of different crews and has been in a supervisory position for different crews. Carol Fitzgerald asked what brought him to come here and he is ready to take the next step in his career, and this seemed like the perfect opportunity. He responded that his specialties are snow removal, plowing and

BOS 160426

Interviews

community relations as he has a lot of experience in working with business owners and having to deal with sensitive requests, that he knows how to be diplomatic, and has experience saying no to people, if that is the right answer. He has a lot of interaction with the public, has experience with office work, filing, and computer skills, and has been responsible for a fleet of trucks, mechanics, and the transfer station. When he was asked to fill in for supervisors in their absence, his work has always been appreciated by the Board of Selectmen.

He was asked by Don Collins for his assessment of the Hampden roads. Mark responded that he has spent quite a bit of time driving the roads in town and has met with Dana a couple of times. He would be, He would be honored to continue Dana's work and stated that the roads are in good condition, pothole work has been well done and he would want the roads to be smooth and safe for residents and visitor. He noted that the sides of the roads are cut back, that the culverts and retention basins are well maintained.

Currently he is supervising two garage mechanics; as the town is fully staffed with laborers and supervisors, but he has stepped up in the past.

There are five different plow groups, and for 6 or 7 years, he supervised, and has plowed and sanded every street in East Longmeadow.

Carol asked what priorities he would focus on and his response was to maintain high level of service that has been provided to residents.

He has reviewed town budget on line for 2013 and 2014; focusing mainly on the highway department budget. He would focus on payroll, employee's contract and has worked in a union environment, is currently in the union, and was the President for 5 years and is familiar with contract negotiations. He would also like to become familiar with other department heads.

Carol asked how involved he is in budgeting currently. A year ago, a budget was created for the garage, with a preventive maintenance plan for the aging fleet and he was involved with setting budget for repair work, fleet maintenance software, tracking vehicle inspections.

John asked what experience he has with grants and grant writing. Mark responded that he does not have any, and asked Dana about any grant writing here. He would certainly research any grants that might be available. He has two years of college and then left to work with his father. He has good writing and interpersonal skills.

It was emphasized to him that record keeping is key, and was asked about his experience with MASS DOT. He currently works with the DEP, and submits an annual statistical report about cross connection work, DEP and transfer station compliance and has experience dealing with state reporting, etc.

John asked about the town exploring water and sewer provisions and his response was that he has been involved with installation, maintenance and repair of water, sewer, catch basins, and trench basin compliance and noted that there is a separate department for handling the pump station in East Longmeadow. He was told that community relations are critical which he understands from his own experience.

He was told that the department is funded for five members but has been run as a four man team for some years. He is a firm believer in speaking respectfully to everyone, but if hard decisions need to be made, he would not have a problem with doing so. With residents he starts with showing concern and if he can help in any way, he does that. He deals with the public every day, with business owners, representatives and feels as though he has an excellent rapport with people. Has a tremendous amount of common sense, is acutely aware of how things look, public works in particular. He emphasized that Dig Safe and trench safety is key,

Norm emphasized the need for planning, paperwork, etc., and Mark responded that he is a detail oriented person, that he has worked as a part time inspector with paving, and measuring, milling a bit, and stated that he is not a big fan of using an overlay on roads.

Part of his job is to outfit and bid the trucks, and equipment and has worked doing so in the past, has experience as to how to and when to replace equipment, has an eye for detail.

Carol asked, in the Superintendent's role, how he is at working independently as the board will not be here. He responded that he has worked with a work order system in the past, and understands that it will be his job to tour the town and make a list of priorities.

He researches what he doesn't know; does not have a problem making a decision, or changing a decision if necessary and can made those tough decisions.

John, asked about his availability and what kind of notice he would have to give his current employer. He is willing to get started as soon as possible, but also wants to do the right thing for his employer. He asked if there a residency requirement and if so, he would not be opposed to doing so. The board concurred that they would favor that move. He did mention that he tracked his time getting him from his home and it took him just over ten minutes to get here.

He is looking for long term career choice; he is loyal, hard-working and takes his work and life seriously.

When asked about his management styles he replied that he would involve the staff, and said that he is stern but fair and knows that consistency is key.

Carol asked about his salary range or requirement and his response was mid to high 70's to start. With that Carol ended the interview by stating that the group hopes to follow up with candidates by the end of the week.

Vinnie feels very comfortable with him, Carol likes him a light

Robert Donahue: Carol introduced herself and Don as representatives from the Personnel Committee and then asked that Robert tell the group about himself.

He stated that he has 26 years' experience in site work, construction management, has done a lot of different things, has a diverse background and has been around contractors and engineers throughout his career. He mentioned that he also knows the town as he grew up in Hampden, He stated that the position requires a lot of road maintenance, cleaning drainage systems, catch basin cleaning and recognizes that snow plowing is critical. He also noted that Hampden is known for the condition of its roads in surrounding communities.

Robert attended Minnechaug and graduated in 1984.

John mentioned that a sewer and water system may be coming to town and Robert responded that he has done a lot of public works projects, has experience with landfill capping, lot of road work, construction, and has evaluated sewers and drain lines using cameras as well. He knows our Board of Health Agent, Lorri McCool and is knowledgeable about septic systems, landfills and water systems.

He worked as a supervisor for Lynch and Sons Construction and worked with union employees who were hired out of the union hall. Some of those employees worked for Lynch for years and some lasted only weeks.

He has experience working with state or federal funds related to road work, infrastructure issues, grants, recording responsibilities and has worked to solicit funds for West Springfield. He has managed the account for Chapter 90 funding and has submitted to State for funding and is familiar with reimbursement system.

He has done snow plowing, he is the Director of Operations, has an all call system for additional equipment and staffing for plowing and other large projects, He would get bids and keep a list, kept checking all night on intersections make sure they were pushed back.

John asked about any experience he might have in grant writing, and other than the Winter Recovery funding for potholes, he has no experience.

He was then asked why he wants this job and he explained that he's ambitious and would be proud to be the Supervisor of Public Safety and feels it would be a pleasure to work here.

Carol asked what his priorities would be for the first 30 to 60 days, based on what he knows, he stated that the roads are in good shape, there is some crack sealing that needs to be done, that he would work on estimating road work that needs to be done, bridge work, culverts, draining systems that might need to be placed and mentioned putting a bid package together for line striping.

Carol asked what his experience is with working with the public, as this position requires a lot of interpersonal skills, a lot of calls that need a bit of sensitivity. He stated that he deals with those calls now on a constant basis. He listens to residents, determines what they need, writes up work orders and attempts to get the work done. He determines the priority of the work and whether or not it is a public works project.

Vinnie asked about his CDL license, and he responded that he currently has his permit and will work to get his license as well as his hoister's license.

He was asked about his financial experience and replied that he has estimated, site work jobs, done some bidding, has budgeted roadway, pipe work, lot of roads, drainage, sidewalks, and can put together a scope of work.

He was asked how he would manage a budget and stated that he provides supportive work, but the Director of Operations is responsible for presenting the budget to the City Council and Mayor.

He was told that the department is small, funded for 5 workers, but works with four. He also learned that there would be times when he was working with department members, and there will be times that he will have to direct his staff.

Norm asked how he could get things done and he replied that the best way to manage is to give clear, concise directions. He said he would listen to other opinions but in the end, the decision would be his and he would make sure his directions are followed.

If he was offered the job, what kind of notice would he have to give? He responded that it would probably be the standard 2 week notice. He was then asked about the salary range and he responded that he would be reasonably okay with the industry standard and is looking at a salary in the 70's.

He was asked if he had any questions and they were: What is annual budget, how much Chapter 90 money is allocated, how many miles of road are there in town, what the construction budget is. He was told about the bond, spending about \$400k a year and potential upcoming projects for milling and paving. He also asked about the fleet and equipment that the department has. Vinnie emphasized the need to prevent swamping driveways out and he responded that he has a lot of experience with shooting grades and knows that sodium chloride helps keep frost out of the asphalt. He did say that he uses berm mix for pothole patching, which Vinnie did not agree with. He asked about gas lines and was told that there are no big infrastructure plans at this point. He asked about the software used, mentioned that he runs a safe environment, that he is 50 years old and has no children.

Carol mentioned that the group hoped to contact candidates by the end of the week.

The group thought he was brief and rigid.

Arthur Herring: Carol introduced Art to the group and explained that she and Don were here from the Personnel Committee to help with the interview process.

She then asked what he understands this position to be. He replied that he looked at the job description and thought that since he is currently a Supervisor at Westover, has been in construction all of his life, with family, and local businesses, works now for the government, and has to adhere to very strict rules, environmental concerns etc.

He has to use herbicides on the grass to slow the growth down, as there is concern about local nesting birds and is well versed with runoffs into water and silt fencing,

Art did acknowledge that the snow plowing is well known in Hampden and he prides himself on doing a good job. He must have bare pavement at Westover, and is very familiar with pretreating for ice storms, putting calcium down and has been on the job at Westover for eleven years. He takes his job very seriously and asked how many workers are on the crew. There is a changeover going on now and he is working with 17 guys less than he used to have. He hires college kids for summer help, then trains them on the job, and helps them determine if they wish to pursue a certain discipline.

He also trains new recruits and may have them for 60 days or more; they have to be trained and licensed, so when they are shipped out they are prepared. He has created a job site training area for them to learn. He has worked to save money on the base, as companies used to come in to build, excavate, etc. and now he uses the men at hand to do those jobs and learn on the job.

The concrete and hard pack gravel gets recycled.

He was asked the size of the budget he manages and responded that it has been \$500k to as little as \$100k, depending on the year.

He is very strict on the proper maintenance of vehicles and works to keep up with maintenance and training to keep budget in line. He is constantly looking for ways to save money.

He is in charge of 68 vehicles and has pieces of equipment that are valued at a half million dollars in the fleet.

He is very secure in his job, but at this point in his life he is looking for another challenge and feels like he could bring something new to the position. He has always stepped up to challenges and at Westover things are running pretty smoothly.

He was asked what his management style is; how he supervises, etc. He does not believe in screaming at people; and takes people aside in his office behind closed door. He conducts meetings to crews know what is expected of them. He emphasizes that he should be notified of any problems or issues to they don't become bigger and more difficult to handle.

He is a firm believer in training everybody and is a big supporter of seniority. If everyone is trained, they can fill in for anyone being out.

He was told that the highway department is funded for 5 workers and they work closely, in the garage and out in the field.

He stated that he always listens to what the crew has to say, but ultimately he's in charge for a reason, unless of course someone has a better way to do something.

If they don't look good, he doesn't look good and in turn the board members would not look good.

He throws spring and summer parties, for casual workers, to thank them for their work.

Teaches them to talk with the tower, winter casuals, 5:30 at night, Uses a map for training purposes,

All of his plow drivers have always come back to work year after year and puts people in jobs to work to their strengths. Safety is of paramount importance.

Carol asked if he has any questions for the group. He asked about the salary. Last year he made 85k, and doesn't expect to make that to start but as he lives in Hampden, his commute would make up for the difference in salary. He asked about medical insurance, retirement, etc. He was asked what kind of notice he would need to give to current employer. He could do that fairly quickly as the company he works for now has a contract expiring soon.

The new company does not take over until May 1st, and he would rather let them know sooner rather than later as it will take them some time to find a replacement. No one currently there is ready to take over.

He also mentioned the good mechanical background he has.

Carol explained that a decision will be made by week end and a board member will be in touch with him.

Art thanked the group and promised to save the town money. If selected he would like to come in before Dana leaves.

The group felt positive about Art and his level of experience and general demeanor, his emphasis on training and his varied skill sets.

The group discussed the three candidates and agreed that Mark Langone had the technical skills for the job and that he was very engaged. Carol suggested that Norman and John check references as Vinnie knows the people listed as references. Carol will get a list of standard questions to ask to make sure there is consistency.

The next steps are to call Mark tell him the town is interested in him taking the position, that he is the first choice, that references will be checked first. After that he will be called back with an offer, start to negotiate the rest of the contract, get a CORI check done.

Carol asked if the board would like to meet with Mark in an informal setting. This hire is very important. The meeting will not be formally closed in the event the board members wish to meet with Mark later in the week, in a more informal setting.

With that, a motion was made by Norman Charest to adjourn the meeting at 8:15, with the possibility of reconvening later in the week, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela B. Courtney
Administrative Assistant

/pbc