

**Raynham Board of Selectmen**

**Raynham, Massachusetts**

**Regular Meeting**

**February 21, 2023 @ 7:00 p.m.**

**Donald L McKinnon Meeting Room**

**Members Present: Town Administrator:**

Mr. Richard Schiavo – Chairman Mr. Gregory Barnes

Ms. Patricia Riley– Vice Chair **Staff:**

Mr. Joseph Pacheco - Clerk Ms. Dawn Caradonna, Recording Secretary

**Called to Order:**

7:00 p.m. – Mr. Schiavo opened the Board of Selectmen’s meeting and informed the public that the meeting is being both broadcasted live on Comcast Channel 98 and Verizon Channel 34 and recorded by RayCAM.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Mr. Schiavo led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Acceptance of Minutes – February 14, 2023**

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Pacheco and seconded by Ms. Riley to accept the Board of Selectmen’s meeting minutes of February 14, 2023, as printed. Discussion: None. Vote: 3-0-0

**Department Head Reports**

Mr. Schiavo announced that there were no Department Head reports scheduled.

**Health Director Interviews**

*Paula Rossi-Clapp*

Ms. Rossi-Clapp was the first finalist to be interviewed. She informed that her educational background is in community health and that she interned in Halifax in the Health Department. She was also able to obtain experience in the community health field when she managed and coordinated services for seniors and adults with disabilities. That experience eventually brought her to her current position of Health Agent for the Town of Kingston. She believes a key ingredient in being a successful Health Director is being a good communicator and great listener because, in the health field, people have different types of issues and challenges to deal with. It also takes someone who has patience and tenacity so that if you are faced with a problem that you don’t know the answer to, you are humble enough to say that you will find the answer to work towards a resolution. She said one important issue facing Boards of Health coming out of COVID 19 is the melding of public health issues with the more traditional role of health agents, which involves getting out in the field to conduct inspections. Public Health has become more community health oriented with the addition of nurses and providing more of a one-stop shop for community health and access to medical advice on top of the environmental health issues. She stated that, with the change in the position’s title from Health Agent to Health Director, “Raynham may have seen a projection of things that were about to come in the Health Department with a broader base and expansion into the public health sector.” Ms. Rossi-Clapp informed that her comfort level and experience in supervising employees ranges from running her own business and partnerships with nurses to currently supervising over 100 volunteers and a staff of eleven employees.

Ms. Riley asked about her strategy for handling difficult situations and/or people. She replied that her experience working with the elderly community has taught her patience along with bringing humor into the situation. She said, “You need to make sure everyone is heard and that they have confidence that you are listening to them and taking them seriously.”

Responding to Mr. Pacheco’s question, Ms. Rossi-Clapp explained that the COVID experience made the population that she dealt with very vulnerable. During this time, she became part of the emergency management team where she was able to see the effects firsthand while working on needs and assessments. She said, “People have come out of COVID differently. The senior population is a little more worn down and a little more fragile” She said working with a small staff and going out into the field would not be a problem for her because that is the fun part of the job for her. She explained, “It’s putting on your boots and doing the work.” She said the most important partner she would have as Health Director would be the Board and Town Administrator, and she pointed out that communicating with the Health Department staff to find out where they come from and what their needs are is also critical. She said she believes that it is a team that takes care of problems, not an individual, and being in a leadership role, she will be able to guide people to be successful.

During the first sixty days of employment, she said she would get to know everyone, not just department heads but their staff members as well, and learn about the major issues in Town.

Mr. Pacheco asked, “Why Raynham?” She replied that Raynham mirrors her experience coming from a small community and the job description fits her background. She said, “This is the position that I would like to have to round out my career.”

Mr. Schiavo asked about working with other agencies and other communities. Ms. Rossi-Clapp replied that in her previous employment, it was important to learn about and work with different agencies such as those in Bristol County, the American Red Cross, and the Department of Public Health. She added, “It is also important to know where to locate grants and funds to be brought back to the community.” In her current position, she has knowledge about grant opportunities because Kingston is the host community for the Public Health Excellence Grant Collaborative for six towns.

Ms. Rossi-Clapp informed that she works well with Animal Control in her municipality. Even though the Animal Control Officers are under the Police Department, she has worked in conjunction with them for farms and animals. She also noted that she has been doing her homework on the Town of Raynham, learning how it’s run, understanding the function of the Town and various aspects of it.

Board members thanked Ms. Rossi-Clapp for coming in, and she thanked the Board and commented that she looks forward to hearing from them.

*Paul Dinwoodie*

Mr. Dinwoodie was the second finalist to be interviewed. With an educational background in environmental science and management, he has been employed with the City of Newton for the past four years, serving as Senior Environmental Health Specialist for the last two years. He said, “I am at a point in my career where I am looking for career advancement and saw a perfect opportunity in Raynham.” He believes that the key ingredient to be a successful Health Director is being a team player. The Department is a public resource to the community; therefore, you need to be respectful, caring and understanding as everyone is in a different situation. He believes that an important issue facing Boards of Health is the restructuring process the State is going through with respect to regionalizing efforts, and one of the biggest challenges would be with the health service grants where cities and towns need to merge and join forces. For the past two years, Mr. Dinwoodie had the opportunity to manage and train new hires for inspections, housing cases and social service cases along with how to deal with the public.

Ms. Riley asked about his strategy for dealing with difficult situations and/or people. He replied the key is communication. He explained, “From the public health perspective, you are not there to punish. You are there to educate people.” He explained that sometimes if a situation gets confrontational, it is wise to pause the situation and regroup at a later time. He said that in the final analysis, “Even though people may not always agree with your opinion, at the end of the day, the health department is the boss.” In Newton, Mr. Dinwoodie is the sole animal inspector. He said Animal Control Officers work under the Police Department and he has worked closely with them. He would have no issues going forward with Animal Control being under the Health Director.

Responding to Mr. Pacheco’s question, Mr. Dinwoodie commented that, coming out of COVID, people learned something new as it was a global pandemic, unlike anything that has happened for 80 to 100 years.

He explained that during the pandemic, it was a struggle to communicate with businesses because you’re talking about their livelihood. He said COVID was and is a fluid situation and you never knew what you were getting into, so you had to take things on a case by case basis as they came up. Mr. Dinwoodie said he has no concerns about getting involved in field work. It is one of his favorite things to do. Concerning working with a smaller department than he has dealt with, he said the only concern he would have is that you have fewer minds to come together to solve problems and meet challenges. When asked who would be his most important partner as Health Director, he replied that when working in the public health field, “You build relationships through your career, and these are the individuals you can go to for help. If needed you can always fall back on old colleagues, friends.” He added, “A good partnership is built within the department.”

During the first sixty days of employment, Mr. Dinwoodie would review local regulations and ordinances to see specifically what Raynham enforces and he would learn from his peers.

Mr. Pacheco asked him, “Why Raynham?” Mr. Dinwoodie replied that he is at a point in his career where he would like to look for career advancement and he thinks the Town of Raynham would be a perfect opportunity. He said that he feels that he could bring a lot of skills that he has obtained to the Board of Health in Raynham. Presently, Mr. Dinwoodie has a long daily commute. He informed that he would have no issues with commuting to Raynham and is open to relocating if need be. He added that the reason he applied for the position is that he feels he is at a point in his career where the director position is the next step for him.

Mr. Schiavo asked about any experience he has had with state and federal agencies and grant opportunities. Mr. Dinwoodie replied that in his current position, he has not written grants. He has only reviewed grants and helped populate them, but he has had experience working with state agencies on housing cases, social services, seminars, and that he is very familiar with the state Department of Public Health.

Mr. Dinwoodie then asked questions of the Board. When asked about the challenges facing the Raynham Health Department, Mr. Pacheco commented that restaurants are the bulk of Raynham’s health-related business, therefore, the Town wants to make sure they are clean and safe. Referring to COVID and its different variations, Mr. Pacheco added, “Raynham is still learning and adjusting, therefore, it’s having someone in the position who can help guide us through whatever else is coming during the endemic phase.”

Mr. Dinwoodie asked the Board what important skills they were looking for in a Public Health Director.

Mr. Pacheco informed that education and experience are important, but of equal importance is the cultural fit. He said, “Raynham has a culture that has been built and we try to maintain it.” He explained that to have someone able to come in, fit into that culture, and bring improvements where appropriate is extremely important. He said it is also important how someone acts with the community as a whole. Because businesses are extremely valuable to Raynham, a Health Director needs to understand the critical component that businesses play in Town while working to enhance that type of relationship. Ms. Riley added that communication skills are really important as well as having the professional knowledge and skill set..

Mr. Dinwoodie asked about legal services available to the Health Department and social service referrals.

Mr. Schiavo reviewed the process to follow when legal counsel is needed. Mr. Pacheco explained the

restructuring that has taken place with the Council on Aging Director becoming the Director of Community Services. He added that there are also a host of social service agencies throughout the community and the surrounding area.

Mr. Dinwoodie thanked the Board for their time, and Mr. Schiavo thanked Mr. Dinwoodie for his interest in the position.

Ms. Riley noted that the Collins Center is in the process of doing background and reference checks and suggested that the Board take the matter under advisement until the next meeting.

**Motion:** Moved by Ms. Riley to take under advisement both candidates’ applications and interviews until the next Board of Selectmen’s meeting on February 28, 2023. Mr. Pacheco seconded. Discussion: None. Vote: 3-0-0

**Appointment -** There were no appointments scheduled this evening.

**Public Hearing -** No public hearing was scheduled.

**Completion Old/Continuing Business**

There was no discussion.

**New Business**

*Request for Tag Day – American Legion, George S. Shephard Post 7, Easton, MA*

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Pacheco and seconded by Ms. Riley to approve the Tag Day Request for American Legion, George S. Shephard Post 7, Easton, MA for May 20, 2023. Discussion: None. Vote: 3-0-0

**Town Administrator’s Report**

*Mr. Gregory Barnes*

Mr. Barnes informed that he will be meeting with Bridgewater/Raynham School District administrators to review and discuss their budget. He also reported that the Finance Committee continues to meet every Monday to review and discuss the various department budgets.

Mr. Barnes created a memo with assistance from the Highway Department endorsing the Hewitt’s Pond repair project. He included the support of the Board within the memo. He explained that the dam at the pond is in disrepair. There is a program through the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs’ Dam and Seawall Program, and the Town will be applying for grant funding to provide for the repair and restoration of the dam. The Town previously appropriated $71,250 to provide the required match for the grant.

**Selectmen’s Report**

*Ms. Riley*

Ms. Riley asked the Town Administrator to reach out to the Highway Superintendent for recommendations to address the Gardiner Street Bridge/Dam project considering the defeat of the debt exclusion including a possible request to the state to extend the 2024 deadline given to the Town to address the issue.

Due to the defeat of the debt exclusion for the Senior Center, Mr. Riley requested suggestions from the Community Service Director on ideas she may have to address the need to expand services and programs to seniors and to accommodate more seniors within the limited space. She noted that Ms. Medeiros has reported that exercise classes, for example, are being offered at more times, and she would like information regarding whether or not that has been helpful. Lastly, she requested a copy of the Town’s policy on non-resident participation at the Senior Center.

Ms. Riley asked that an item be placed on the agenda for next week’s meeting for a Resolution for Read Across America Week.

Mr. Barnes informed that he has spoken to Mr. Buckley about the Gardiner Street Bridge and Dam Project and they will be looking into and discussing possible options with an engineer.

*Mr. Pacheco*

Mr. Pacheco commented that Mr. Barnes is approaching six months of employment with the Town, and his contract calls for a six-month evaluation. Mr. Pacheco said he has provided Mr. Barnes with a copy of the evaluation the Board used in the past and requested he review it to make sure it captures the job. Once he has received feedback from Mr. Barnes, Mr. Pacheco will request an agenda item for discussion and a vote to ratify that the form is the tool the Board will use for the evaluation. He noted that in order to stay in compliance with the terms of the contract, the evaluation should be placed on the agenda of a March meeting.

**Correspondence**

*Chief Donovan – Request of Extension on Deadline for Special Police Officers*

Mr. Schiavo explained that the Board received a letter from Chief Donovan in which he pointed out that there are five openings on the Reserve Police Officers list through Civil Service. The requisition the Department

received was extended through February 17th, but the Department is still in the process of completing medical, psychological, and physical ability evaluations. The Chief, therefore, is requesting the Board’s permission to extend the date to April 28th.

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Pacheco and seconded by Ms. Riley to approve the Police Chief’s request for the extension through April 28, 2023 regarding filling the five openings on the Reserve Police Officers list through Civil Service. Discussion: None. Vote: 3-0-0

**Press Time**

Present was a reporter from the Taunton Gazette who asked if other candidates for Health Director would be interviewed by the Board. Mr. Schiavo replied that the two candidates interviewed were the finalists, so there are no plans for additional interviews and the Board plans to make the appointment next week. The reporter also asked if the possibility of regionalization is still under consideration. Mr. Schiavo explained that because two qualified candidates have applied for the Health Director’s position, regionalization is no longer a consideration.

**Citizens & Community Input**

There was no discussion.

***Performance of Administrative Duties***

Mr. Schiavo asked for a motion to approve the Town of Raynham Invoice and Payroll Warrants.

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Pacheco and seconded by Ms. Riley to approve the Town of Raynham Invoice and Payroll Warrants dated February 21, 2023. Discussion: None. Vote: 3-0-0

Mr. Schiavo asked for a motion to approve the Town of Raynham Police Invoice and Payroll Warrants.

**Motion:** Moved by Ms. Riley and seconded by Mr. Schiavo to approve the Town of Raynham Police Invoice and Payroll Warrants dated February 21, 2023. Discussion: None.

**On a Roll Call Vote:** Ms. Riley – Aye; Mr. Schiavo – Aye; Mr. Pacheco – Abstain. Vote: 2-0-1

Mr. Schiavo asked for a motion to adjourn.

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Pacheco and seconded by Ms. Riley to adjourn the Board of Selectmen’s regular meeting of February 21, 2023, at 7:42 p.m. with no additional business to be conducted. Vote: 3-0-0

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Dawn Caradonna*

*Recording Secretary*

List of Meeting Documents:

         • Minutes – February 14, 2023

• Collins Center - Health Director advertisement

• Paula Rossi-Clapp - resume

• Paul Dinwoodie - resume

• Tag Day Request – American Legion, George Shepherd Post 7, Easton, MA

• Letter from Chief Donovan

• February 21, 2023, Town of Raynham Invoice and Payroll Warrants

         • February 21, 2023, Town of Raynham Police Invoice and Payroll Warrants