

MINUTES OF TOWN OF BERKLEY SELECTMEN'S MEETING OF 9/27/2022

SELECTMEN IN ATTENDANCE: George F. Miller, Chairman, Dean R. Larabee, Clerk, Wendy F. Cochrane, Member

TOPIC		ACTION
	Meeting Convened at 4:09 p.m. in the Moitoza – Pettey Hearing Room	
Personnel	Board to interview the following candidates for Police Chief: 4:00 p.m. Christopher Baker 5:00 p.m. Arthur Newhook Jr. 6:00 p.m. Thomas Plourde 7:00 p.m. Scott Rose The full interview panel consisted of current Police Chief Scott Labonte, Interim Town Administrator Kevin Partridge, and Board of Selectmen members Dean Larabee, George Miller, and Wendy Cochrane. Mr. Miller advised they are meeting first as an advisory committee pursuant to section 8 of the Berkley bylaw. The group will be evaluating, interviewing, and then making a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen to ultimately vote on. Mr. Miller called upon Christopher Baker to be interviewed, and read the instructions on how the interview will go. Mr. Baker handed each member of the committee a binder with his resume and other credentials. He then gave the committee some background information on his family, education, and his Police experience, which extends over 33 years. Mr. Miller stated to Mr. Baker that there will be a series of 11 questions, which each member will ask either 2 or 3 each. Mr. Miller began the questioning, followed by Chief Labonte, Ms. Cochrane, Mr. Larabee, and Mr. Partridge. Mr. Miller had some follow up questions for Mr. Baker toward the end of the interview, and Mr. Baker answered them. Mr. Miller then asked Mr. Baker if he had any questions for the advisory committee, to which he replied he did not, and mentioned that he empathizes with anyone who has reservations about someone from out of town looking to take over as Police Chief, and hopes to prove himself to the community. The interview concluded, and the committee as well as the Board took a brief recess. The advisory committee and Board reconvened at approximately 5:00 p.m. Detective Sgt. Arthur Newhook Jr. was next to be interviewed. Mr. Miller read the instructions to Sgt. Newhook, and stated there will be 11 questions that will be asked by the committee in the aforementioned order. Sgt. Newhook gave the committee a brief history of his time within the Berkley Police Department. Mr. Miller then began the questioning process. Mr. Larabee and Chief Labonte had follow up questions for Sgt. Newhook, and he answered them accordingly. Mr. Miller then asked Sgt. Newhook if he had any questions for the committee. Sgt. Newhook asked the committee and Board what they would like from the next Police Chief. Each member of the committee answered individually, with a general consensus that they are looking for someone who is dedicated to the Town of Berkley, someone to keep up with changes within the Police community, great leadership, someone who is fair, and works well with other departments. The interview with Sgt. Newhook concluded. Mr. Miller briefly looked through the binder given to him by Mr. Baker. There were also letters of recommendation in the binder. Mr. Partridge asked Ms. Tigano to retrieve all the certificates that Sgt. Newhook had turned in along with his resume for the committee to review as well. Mr. Miller noted although there were 4 candidates listed on the agenda, only 2 were interviewed due to the last 2 (Thomas Plourde and Scott Rose) declining. The committee reviewed the interview scores given by the consulting agency/assessment center before reviewing their own scores. Each member of the Board of Selectmen commended Mr. Partridge on his recommendation on bringing in an assessment center to conduct interviews for the finalists, and felt it was appropriate for experienced, unbiased Police Chiefs to conduct those interviews with the knowledge possessed, as well as finding the right candidates to move forward in the process. Mr. Partridge stated the total scores of the candidates. Mr. Baker's total score was 458 with an average of 91.6, and Sgt. Newhook's total score was 411 with an average of 82.2. Discussion then ensued between the committee on the strengths and weaknesses between the 2 candidates. Mr. Miller noted the assessment center scored the same as the committee with Sgt. Newhook, and Mr. Baker's score by the committee was only off by roughly 3 points from the assessment center. Mr. Partridge stated his preference for Police Chief is Mr. Baker. Chief Labonte disagreed, and stated his preference is Sgt. Newhook. He argued about any incentive a patrolman would	Larabee to motion to recommend Mr. Baker, amended to read if he declines, the offer be extended to Sgt. Newhook, Partridge 2nd, Miller, Partridge & Larabee voted, Cochrane abstained, Labonte opposed. Larabee to motion to enter into negotiation w/ Mr. Baker, and if unsuccessful, open negotiations w/ Sgt. Newhook, Cochrane 2nd, voted.

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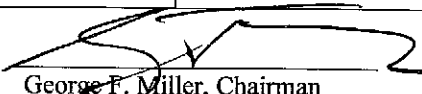
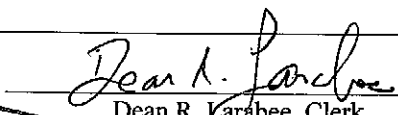
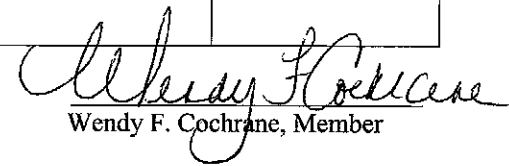
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have to move up in the ranks knowing that someone from outside the department would be hired as the Police Chief. Mr. Larabee stated his preference is Mr. Baker solely on the numerical scoring of the interviews. He then motioned to extend an offer to Mr. Baker. Mr. Miller asked the committee if they are willing to recommend Sgt. Newhook should Mr. Baker decline the contract. Mr. Partridge and Mr. Larabee agreed to that statement. The motion was amended, and the interview committee voted to recommend to offer the position to Mr. Baker, and if he doesn't accept the position, is unable to negotiate a contract, or unwilling to move within a 15 mile radius of the town, then the offer will be extended to Sgt. Newhook. Mr. Miller and Mr. Partridge voted, Ms. Cochrane abstained, Chief Labonte opposed. The Board voted to enter into negotiation with Mr. Baker, and if the Board is unsuccessful in negotiations with Mr. Baker, the offer will be extended to Sgt. Newhook. Mr. Partridge questioned the Board about a plan to have the current Police Chief do per diem work in the event that both candidates decline. Chief Labonte responded he does not have an answer to that question at this time. Mr. Miller asked about the timeframe for moving within a 15 mile radius to the town. Mr. Partridge stated it could be anywhere between 12 and 18 months.

Adjournment

The Board voted to adjourn, and announced the next meeting will be Wednesday, September 28, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

Larabee to motion to adjourn, Cochrane 2nd, voted.


George F. Miller, Chairman
Dean R. Larabee, Clerk
Wendy F. Cochrane, Member
Ashley Tigano, Administrative Assistant to
the Town Administrator & Board of Selectmen