

**Norwell Board of Selectmen
January 7, 2021
Open Session – Remote meeting**

TOWN OF NORWELL
TOWN CLERK

2021 JAN 28 AM 10:02

Present: Ellen Allen, Alison Demong, Jason Brown, Bruce Graham, Joe Rull, Peter Morn

RECEIVED

Open Session

The meeting was opened by Chair Ellen Allen at 7:03pm. She announced that all votes will be roll call votes as the meeting participants are using remote access software. The meeting is being recorded and the audio file will be available on the Town website. Ms. Allen noted that this meeting will be conducted pursuant to the Executive Order dated March 12, 2020 suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, Gen. L. c. 30A §20 et seq. and 940 CMR 29.01 et seq.

Approval of Agenda

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to approve the agenda as written. Unanimously voted by roll call vote

Deliberation To Choose A Candidate for Police Chief

Mr. Brown opened the discussion about the choice of candidates, noting that this is the second time he has participated in a selection process of this kind. This search looks to replace a long-time strong and exceptional leader, which is not an easy task. Mr. Brown had a few conversations with Chief Ross offline about this process. All of the police department personnel expressed the same concerns as the PCSC and the BOS: who could fill the position vacated by a long term, well respected chief, the nationwide negative press that the police are receiving and the large number of people leaving this field. What level of candidates would be available for hire?

Pay structure was discussed; the Town has historically been at the lower end of the pay scale for the local area. For several years, this board and prior boards have made a concerted effort to address the pay scale inequities of the Town's entire public safety division within what the Town can afford. The salary ranges are now somewhere in the middle compared to surrounding communities.

Mr. Brown stated that the PCSC conducted a detailed analysis of the 3 candidates, concluding that any one of them would be an excellent choice. The Town would be well served – it's just a question of the best fit. The three finalists again are: Chief John Carbone – Barre, MA; Chief Leon Krolikowski-New Canaan, CT; Chief Edward Lee – Hopkinton, MA.

The board's recommendation will be based on: residents' feedback, responses to questions on the Second Amendment rights/rescinding firearm permits, police reform at a local level, operational issues, budgeting, philosophy, policing in the community, reputation in the community, job performance, assessment center performance (a "360 evaluation" by individuals at the chief level who would work with them in various capacities). Police Chief Wayne Sampson (ret.) and Fire Chief Andy Reardon (ret.) were part of the evaluation team. The three candidates were also interviewed by the Norwell Police Department union reps and members of the force. Almost the entire department participated in the 3 interviews. After reviewing and discussing all of this information, the board concurred with the PCSC; all are excellent candidates. The board recommends Chief Edward Lee.

Mr. Brown yielded the floor to Ms. Allen, who invited other board members to respond.
Bruce Graham: I could have chosen either Chief Lee or Chief Carbone.

Alison Demong: I liked all 3 candidates. My preferred choice would be Chief Lee because of his background and experience. In Hopkinton, he coordinated the beginnings of the Boston marathon for years, which is impressive! His creative handling of a difficult tight budget in Woonsocket, RI, was impressive. I liked his approach to community policing. While all 3 were phenomenal, it came down to a good fit, both professionally and personally.

Joe Rull: I would concur with the choice of Chief Lee. All 3 are really, really good and the Town would be lucky to have any one of them. Chief Lee's specific background and union experience makes him relatable and compatible, a good fit.

Ellen Allen: I talked to all of the other members of the PCSC for their assessments and feedback. I had come to my own choice of Chief Lee and learned that they reached a similar conclusion. I thought that his specific answers really addressed the questions asked by the board with regard to unions. He had creative solutions to problems such as cross training to different positions in the department without adding to the budget, such as splitting a second SRO position. He is modest, not bragging but inspiring confidence. Our department doesn't need "fixing", but it will be great to have new ideas and address the challenges. Chief Lee is my first choice.

Bruce Graham: I would completely support Chief Lee, but I thought that Chief Carbone more closely mirrored Chief Ted Ross. He is very empathetic. Chief Lee reminds me of a former police chief in Norwell before Chief Ross. We don't have serious crowd control issues in Norwell, the budget will keep chugging along regardless, and Chief Lee's strengths are not relevant to the Town per se, but I am happy to support him for this position.

Alison Demong: I really liked Chief Carbone, but Chief Lee said really good things about the department and is clearly a team player. I think he would be a better fit for the Town.

Jason Brown: In the department and PCSC interview, Chief Carbone exceeded his expectations, but that is only one component of the whole sum. The peer assessment and the 360 evaluation which provide the most complete feedback guide the choice. Chief Lee was not the most "impressive", but the evaluation as a whole put Chief Lee at the top of the list.

More discussion ensued about relating on a personal level and making the choice from the data and the interview. The entire board is 100% behind the choice of Chief Lee. All were impressed with Chief Carbone, who comes from a town where he is "on the street" as a working chief. This would be a step up for him, but not necessarily for the Town.

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, that the Board of Selectmen make a job offer to Chief Edward Lee to be the next police chief of Norwell. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to adjourn to Executive Session at 7:32pm, not returning to open session, to discuss the police chief contract offer details, not returning to Open Session. Unanimously voted by roll call vote. To discussion this topic in Open Session would jeopardize the negotiating position of the Town.

Ellen Allen polled the board, Brown voting yes, Demong voting yes, Graham voting yes, Rull voting yes, Allen voting yes.



Ellen Allen, Chair