

Town of Colrain
Select Board/MLP Board Meeting
Colrain Highway Garage
9 Jacksonville Road
5:00 PM
MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD
May 2, 2024

Present: Benjamin Eastman, Chair; W. Thomas Griffin; Emily Thurber

Others Present: Diana Schindler; Marjorie Smith, Administrative Assistant

Chair Ben Eastman called the meeting to order at 5:02pm.

Appointments:

Diana Schindler – Town Administrator Candidate Interview

The three Select Board members alternated asking questions of the candidate, including her reason for applying for the position, Colrain's needs, the relationship between the Select Board and Town Administrator, the Town Administrators role in developing municipal operations and budgets, grants, interacting with residents, experience working with police and highway superintendent, social media, and knowledge of Colrain's finances.

Ms. Schindler explained that she has been in the municipal business for over 25 years, starting in Colrain, and has found her current job isn't quite the right fit. Regarding what Colrain needs, she described the need for a highway superintendent, grant funding, and not many revenue streams for the Town.

She has had a variety of relationships with Select Boards as a Town Administrator, some challenging, but can stay calm in difficult situations and work things out. Ms. Schindler's philosophy is that she works under the direction of the Board, but also for the Town and residents itself. She further explained that she still has good relationships with former Board members.

When asked about the Town Administrators role in developing municipal operations and budgets. Ms. Schindler explained that every year she has prepared budgets, has prepared capital plans from nothing to taking over a five-year stable capital plan. She has a financial background, is the chief procurement officer, and completed a myriad of projects from big to small. She also has skills working with volunteers and department heads.

Ms. Schindler has secured many different types of grants pertaining to the fire department, explained what MIIA can offer and that she tries to get as much money for a community that can be useful. She also has experience working with a "strong" chief.

Regarding challenging residents, she is direct with people, and tries to listen and ascertain what the issue is. She does her best to work with them to get them the answers, but sometimes there isn't an answer that can be given. She further explained that she tries to be as available for concerns as possible and be as transparent as possible, direct, and kind.

She has had varied experience working with the Highway Superintendent depending on the community, some want more input some want less. It is the Town Administrations responsibility to make sure the day-to-day work is being done, however doesn't over-insert herself into the day-to-day operations as it is not her expertise. She would work with them more on an administrative basis.

Regarding social media, Ms. Schindler believes there are ways to use it, but not on a day-to-day basis; there are other ways to give information to residents. Discussion on current Colrain Facebook pages.

When asked if there were specific projects she would take on, she would look at climate resilience issues, Municipal Vulnerability Plan, being prepared to obtain earmarks for different capital projects and grants, working with the regional schools, and administering the MassWorks Grant for the washout on Jacksonville Rd.

Ms. Schindler asked the Board their issues and they described some resident concerns, the hiring for the police and highway departments and the sewer district issues. She has resources to help with the hiring and creative ideas to attract new hires. Discussion on Barnhardt and the sewer district.

Discussion on starting availability, should she be hired.

Regarding the current state of Colrain finances she explained that she looked at DOR's website and believes the Town is doing well financially. Discussion on stabilization accounts and how to look into the finances in terms of attracting key positions. She is conservative by nature especially when it comes to finances, which Colrain tends to be, so thinks it will be a good fit. Discussion on assessments, tax bills, and resources for seniors.

The members of the Board discussed making a decision at tomorrow's meeting.

New Business:

None

Old Business:

None

Unanticipated:

None

Town Administrator Updates:

None

MOVED: Emily Thurber moved to dissolve the meeting at 6:02pm.

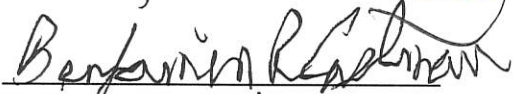
Thom Griffin seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,



Marjorie Smith
Administrative Assistant

Accepted by the Select Board on 5/14/2024



Benjamin Eastman - ~~Chair~~



Emily Thurber



Katie Korby

Documents Distributed to the Select Board Before the Meeting in a Packet or at the Meeting:

Diana Schindler Cover Letter and Resume

Summary of References for Diana Schindler

Interview Questions from the Ad-Hoc Town Administrator Search Committee

Candidate Rankings from Lynn DiTullio

Candidate Rankings from Thomas Griffin

Candidate Rankings from Michael Shuipis

Candidate Rankings from Howard Phelps

Candidate Rankings from Ellen Weeks

