

*Town of Atkinson
Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
October 21, 2015*

W. Baldwin opened a Public Meeting on Monday, October 21, 2015 at 4:59 PM.

Members Present:

W. Baldwin, Chair
P. Consentino
W. Friel
J. Grosky
H. Morse, Vice Chair

Members Absent:

Others Present:

B. Snicer, Town Administrator Assistant

Interview of Candidates for the Position of Town Administrator

The following candidates will be interviewed in public for the Town Administrator Position:

- 5pm – Alan Phair
- 6pm – Robin Frost
- 7pm – Art Reed

Each Selectman has chosen two questions to ask. Additional questions may be asked however the Selectman should be recognized by the Chair before asking the question. Once the interviews are complete, the Board of Selectmen will go into a non-public meeting to make a preliminary decision and will return to the public meeting to make a motion to conditionally offer the position to the selected candidate pending a background investigation and successful contract negotiation.

Candidate – Alan Phair

The following interview occurred between the Board of Selectmen and Alan Phair.

Mr. Phair began by stating how honored he was to be chosen as one of the top 3 out of 92 resumes for the position of Town Administrator.

Question	Selectman	Response made by Mr. Phair
In preparing for this interview, I am sure you anticipated the types of questions and areas of interest we would pursue – is that a reasonable assumption? What is one of the questions you really hoped we wouldn't ask you? Why? (If applicable) Now that the question is on the table, would you like to try to answer it? What is the one question you really hoped we would ask? Would you like to try to answer it?	P. Consentino	Feared I would accept the position at \$200,000 per year since I would accept it for much less.
Please explain your process in drafting a municipal budget.	P. Consentino	Never involved in a municipal budget before however have been involved in the Trustees of the Library and would fall back on previous experience in managing multi-billion dollar companies. As Town Administrator, I would plan to ask the Department Heads to put their numbers together and ask what they really need, then get together with everybody and put everything together through the process of meeting with the Selectmen and the Budget Committee.
Would you have to give up being a Library Trustee?	H. Morse	Yes I would have to.
Would it be a challenge to work with the Library as the Town Administrator after serving as a Library Trustee?	J. Grosky	No because I am always very fair and don't hold grudges. I look at things very objectively. Even though I do have a

		great relationship with Diane, I have no problem being tough if I was asked to be.
Please tell us about your understanding of this job. What are the challenges? What are the problems? Why should we recommend that you be hired?	H. Morse	The job description is daunting. Bill Innes has been an effective Town Administrator. I have set up my resume to show examples of my experience of things listed in the job description. I have addressed every item in the job description. Even though I do not have experience being a TA, I have a quick learning curve. Some of the problems would be understanding everything. I understand the Municipal Association is very helpful. There will be a learning curve, but I am not afraid of the challenge.
Since you have been retired for so long now, would it be a problem taking on this type of position?	H. Morse	No - not at all. Even during my retirement, I have volunteered over 40 hours per week at times. I am very involved in the community. I am aware this job is a 50 plus hour job and I am comfortable with that because I am a hard worker and am very challenged by my inner self and would like to do more.
When hiring a Town employee, what do you think are the most important qualities to look for? How do you ensure that the applicant has them?	H. Morse	Most important qualities are experience, work ethic, honesty, and someone who cares about other people. I have always tried to promote within to ensure a great relationship with my employees.
An employee in who you have full confidence has been accused of a serious ethics violation. The press asks for comment from you, and without hesitation, you defend the employee and say the charges are a sham. You later come to discover that this employee did in fact commit serious violations of ethics. What do you do? How do you approach the employee? How do you approach the press?	J. Grosky	Well number one, I probably wouldn't have gotten to that point and wouldn't have defended a situation without knowing first what happened. But if you are asking me to respond to this scenario, I would apologize for making a mistake. I would explain to the employee how disappointed I was. If it was an issue not warrant to firing the individual, I would just have a hard talk with the individual and give a second chance.
How do you deal with the Board on a situation like that?	J. Grosky	All I could do is explain the situation and why I did it. I would never lie. I would probably come to you and say boy I really screwed up, but here is the situation.
A local resident stands up at Town Meeting and proceeds, at length, to lecture the citizens of the Town on the various Town functions that he/she feels are wasteful and extravagant. Through sheer force of personality, this citizen riles up the meeting and they are bound and determine to slash funding to programs you believe are vital. How do you deal with this situation?	J. Grosky	He would have a tough time getting out of control, first off. I think I would be strong enough to deal with most cases. I would call the person immediately out of order and if it got unruly, I would seek out a police officer to help. You have to allow freedom of speech, so I would try to allow the person to say what they were trying to say.
What are the three top challenges facing municipal officials today? What actions would you take to ensure this community is effectively prepared to face these challenges over the next five years?	W. Friel	Top challenges would be budgets and dealing with the fact that citizens of the town are dealing with a difficult economy. Also trying to deal with individuals in town to get things done. Also working on obtaining grants would be a challenge.
How will you keep yourself informed of the activities of your staff?	W. Baldwin	I would first sit down with my staff and let them know how I like to operate. Always have open communication. Don't want people to just yes me. I also want people to be able to make decisions.
Please describe the most difficult experience you have had during your career. What did you learn from this experience? How have you grown as a result of this experience?	W. Baldwin	In my previous position, I had a manager who was caught stealing drugs at a location different than my company which was a pharmaceutical business. This person had become my friend and I had to fire this person because it was a criminal act. What I learned from this was that I learned I could do it.

What kind of things would you hold an individual accountable for?	W. Baldwin	You hold people to the standard of their jobs, ethical working. But before it gets to the Selectmen, my job would be to try to resolve issues before hand.
How are your computer skills?	J. Grosky	I was involved in designing the first pharmaceutical system. I am very astute when it comes to Microsoft Office and have extensive skills in Excel.
If hire, how long would you commit to the job?	J. Grosky	3 years, but would go to 5.
Would you be seeking health insurance?	J. Grosky	No.
What salary would you be seeking?	J. Grosky	\$71,000.00
Any closing remarks?	W. Baldwin	I am an individual who has dedicated his entire adult life to helping people because I have a passion for it. Many people who have worked for me have gone on to become Presidents within their organization and I am very proud of that. A Manager should be helping their people advance. I have no doubt I can do the job and will always do what is best for the town. You will get more than 100% from me.

The Board of Selectmen took a 10 minute recess.

Candidate – Robin Frost

The following interview occurred between the Board of Selectmen and Robin Frost.

Ms. Frost began by thanking the Board of Selectmen for having her back to interview for the Town Administrator position.

Question	Selectman	Response made by Ms. Frost
Please explain your process in drafting a municipal budget.	P. Consentino	I would look at what was done in the past and look to the Department Heads for their needs and rely heavily on them to tell me what they need for the year. I would put together the best budget that I could taking into conserving what the town really needs balancing with what the town wants and keep the tax rate as palliative as I could for the tax payers.
When hiring a Town employee, what do you think are the most important qualities to look for? How do you ensure that the applicant has them?	P. Consentino	I would depend on the position. The person would need to meet the requirements for that position. Assuming the position met all the criteria for the skills and needs of the job, I would look for someone who is flexible and easy going. Someone who can make adjustments depending on what is going on that day. I would ensure that the applicant has them by asking a series of question such what their reaction would be to shifting projects.
In preparing for this interview, I am sure you anticipated the types of questions and areas of interest we would pursue – is that a reasonable assumption? What is one of the questions you really hoped we wouldn't ask you? Why? (If applicable) Now that the question is on the table, would you like to try to answer it? What is the one question you really hoped we would ask? Would you like to try to answer it?	H. Morse	I hope you don't ask me if I am a morning person because I need to start my day earlier than most to get things going. I was hoping you would ask me about budgeting because I love to do them and I am good at it.
Please tell us about your understanding of this job. What are the challenges? What are the problems? Why should we recommend that you be hired?	H. Morse	It is my understanding that this position is very much a working position. It is very hands on in doing whatever is needed. This is pretty much been my experience everywhere I've been so I enjoy it and not concerned at all. I enjoy meeting the public. In my current position, I enjoy meeting town people and hope to do that here. Challenges

		are the same in any position – but trying to make people happy can be a challenge such as tax payers. Sometimes there are some people you just cannot make happy. I don't know if there are struggles in the budget but that is a challenge I enjoy. You should recommend that I am hired because this town intrigues me – very rural yet close to places that people can shop. It is close to members of my family and I think my experience can contribute success to this position.
If hired, would it still be your plan to relocate?	J. Grosky	Yes – my nephew lives in Newburyport with an in-law apartment where I can stay and take my time to look for a more permanent place in the area.
A local resident stands up at Town Meeting and proceeds, at length, to lecture the citizens of the Town on the various Town functions that he/she feels are wasteful and extravagant. Through sheer force of personality, this citizen riles up the meeting and they are bound and determine to slash funding to programs you believe are vital. How do you deal with this situation?	J. Grosky	My role would be to advocate for the budget that has been accepted by the Board of Selectmen and Budget Committee and that is what I would do, if that is what the Selectmen would want me to do. I have no problem defending the budget and would do so with a very calm and factual rebuttal.
An employee in who you have full confidence has been accused of a serious ethics violation. The press asks for comment from you, and without hesitation, you defend the employee and say the charges are a sham. You later come to discover that this employee did in fact commit serious violations of ethics. What do you do? How do you approach the employee? How do you approach the press?	J. Grosky	I would deal with the employee according to what the Personnel Manual says and also let them know how disappointed I am. The Press would probably come at me full barrel, but I would be honest and tell them it is a personnel matter and that I could not discuss details. Some things just aren't public info and I wouldn't cross that line. I would be honest and tell them I was wrong and try not to speak unless I know what the facts are. The only thing I could do is say I made a mistake and admit I was wrong.
What are the three top challenges facing municipal officials today? What actions would you take to ensure this community is effectively prepared to face these challenges over the next five years?	W. Friel	I think the economy and tax payers having a hard time and I think that the issues are trying to provide services that are used at a reasonable cost and to continue looking at those services to supply them with stuff and make it cost effective.
What do you see as the biggest challenges in moving from being a Town Manager to a Town Administrator?	W. Friel	The difference for me as a Town Manager is that I am able to hire, fire, and set salaries. However, even though I had the authority to do these things, I always brought the issue before the Selectmen and would always do that.
How will you keep yourself informed of the activities of your staff?	W. Baldwin	I do a lot of site visiting. I like to get out and know the employees and what they are doing. I currently conduct monthly department head meetings which work very well. In my current position, there are 50 full time employees and a Police Union.
What involvement do you have with Collective Bargaining?	J. Grosky	I head up the management side of contract negotiations. The team includes myself, my Finance Officer, and one of the Selectmen.
Please describe the most difficult experience you have had during your career. What did you learn from this experience? How have you grown as a result of this experience?	W. Baldwin	We had a resident in one of the towns I worked in who likes to personally attach town employees and goes around taking pictures of them. It is difficult because it is freedom speech but employees and tax payers are getting angry. I have to tell the employees to not let it bother them and lead by example doing the same thing.
How have you grown as a result of that?	W. Baldwin	I have learned to take a step back and analyze the issue and ask myself if there was anything I could change. I've also learned a lot of patience.
Can you tell us where your municipal budget is and where	H. Morse	Just over 5 million, including warrant articles. We have a

you are now?		full time Highway Department, one full time Fire Chief and Ambulance Department. We have our own water and sewer. The population of the town is just under 3.
What are your computer skills?	J. Grosky	I am fairly proficient. I have used all Microsoft Applications and just started using google docs. In my past life, I was a Systems Analyst and Programmer.
If hired, how long would you see yourself in your position?	J. Grosky	I could see myself retiring here and I am not planning to retire anytime soon.
Do you need health insurance?	J. Grosky	Yes
What salary would you be seeking?	J. Grosky	I currently make \$65,000 and would be looking for more in order to relocate.
If hired, when would you be able to start?	B. Snicer	A month to six weeks because we are just finishing up our budget.
Why do you want to leave?	W. Friel	It is a relocation issue for me. I lost my husband 1.5 ago and sister. It is time for a change and I have family nearby who would be thrilled if I relocated.
Any closing remarks?	W. Baldwin	Thank you for having me back and considering me for this position. I think it is a really good fit and work well for small towns. Small towns are my strength and really enjoy and like having my hands in things. I love working with Committees, volunteers, and tax payers. I enjoy helping tax payers. The best part of being a Town Administrator is that no two days are alike.

The Board of Selectmen took at 10 minute recess.

The Board of Selectmen waited for the third candidate (Art Reed) until 7:20pm but he did not show.

J. Grosky made a motion to enter into a non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II. (b) for the purpose of hiring a town employee. Second. P. Consentino. Roll Call Vote: W. Baldwin: Yes, P. Consentino: Yes, W. Friel: Yes, J. Grosky: Yes, H. Morse: Yes.

Hiring

Town Administrator Position

J. Grosky made a motion to extend a preliminary offer of employment to Alan Phair as our Town Administrator subject to passing a full background check and successful contract agreement. Second. P. Consentino. 5/0/0.

P. Consentino made a motion to adjourn the Public Meeting of October 21, 2015 at 7:57pm. Second. H. Morse. 5/0/0.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amanda Lueders

William Baldwin, Chair

Phil Consentino

William Friel

Jason Grosky

Harold Morse, Vice Chair

