

The Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Wednesday, August 23, 2023, began at 5:30 p.m. in the Board of Selectmen's Conference Room.

Members Present: James Gennette, Derek DeBarge, Antonio Goncalves, Manuel Silva, and William Rosenblum

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
2023 SEP -6 P 3:33
TOWN OF LUDLOW

Members Absent: None

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

VISITATIONS

5:35 p.m. Charter Committee Interview – Leona Tyrrell

Mr. Gennette: We'll give you a minute to introduce yourself and let us know why you want to be on the committee. We'll ask you some questions and we'll go from there.

Ms. Tyrrell: My name is Leona Tyrrell; I go by Lee. I live in Ludlow on Butler Street. Marc called me and asked me if I'd be interested in doing this. Prior to this I did talk to him one day by accident because I never knew where this room was and I was being nosey that day and I wanted to see where you guys had your meetings. I was paying my taxes and I meet him. Of course, I was flapping away. They had a meeting at Ludlow Senior Center. I left doing my yard work and came in my grubby clothes and met your assistant.

Mr. Strange: Carrie.

Ms. Tyrrell: We chatted for about a half an hour and he called me and said would you like to be on the committee. I said I guess so. I do volunteer work all the time so I might as well be on something else if they want me and that's how it happened. A spur of the moment thing.

Mr. Gennette: You didn't even know where the room was and now you're on TV.

Mr. Goncalves: Thank you very much Lee. I appreciate that and it's great to see people get involved. It's not something that happens very often. Being on the committee like this you would be subject to open meeting regulations, etc. Anything that you're familiar with.

Ms. Tyrrell: No. I might as well start off with this so you'll understand how this all came about. I lived in a city for 75 years then I moved out here. Did I know where Ludlow was? No. I was trying to move near my son, which is 2 miles down the road from me and be close to him to help him out. I packed up and left and everybody thought I was completely nuts. It was like a rude awakening when I got here. I had no idea the politics you guys had and I'll have to say I was not a happy camper. I can't believe the way it's run. In a way I'd like to have you prove me wrong. I like the idea of a city government because I think it's more efficient than this. I came here and tried to get answers from people. I didn't know who to call, people didn't answer the phone, I was having trouble communicating with anybody, I had trouble with the DPW, so it was all building up. When he called me I said this is my chance to express my opinion. Take my opinion for what it's worth. If you don't like it that's fine. Everybody is entitled to their opinion and I'll tell you what I think.

Mr. Goncalves: All those problems that you have we have the same problems. Trying to get somebody to answer a question, calling in and getting somebody to answer.

Ms. Tyrrell: You make me feel better because I thought it was just me. I was like what is this. I didn't know very many neighbors and I am on a corner so I don't have anybody right around me but I said is it always like this. I just could not understand it. It seemed to be the most inefficient system I've ever met. Maybe it was just a bad time. You can't always judge; I've been here 5 years now so it doesn't seem to be that much better. Hopefully you can make me feel like a happy camper and tell me there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Mr. Goncalves: Just out of curiosity, if you were to be chosen for the committee and your committee thought that you might be a good chair would you accept that responsibility.

Ms. Tyrrell: I would accept it because I do a lot of volunteer work for Wilbraham. We're doing a capital campaign for \$750,000 and I'm the treasurer for all of that plus the regular thing we have every month for raising money. I'm kind of busy right now with the capital campaign. The new senior center will be up and running next year. April maybe. I went there today. It was so exciting to see this huge building and I keep saying why couldn't you people do stuff like this. This is going to be quite a facility. The parking lot was paved so I could go. The beams were up and the siding and windows. What a massive building. We've been working on this for a long, long time. When I came this was just something I fell into by accident. I didn't go looking for this but I have a knack for falling into things that I have to help out. That's what I've been doing and I've been busy with that. We're having a big festival this Sunday in Wilbraham in Fern Valley. I'm busy right now but after that I think it should start to calm down so I won't have any trouble helping.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you for your interest. It's refreshing to see the people that are willing to step forward and help out the community. The charter committee will be meeting with the town's consultant, which is The Collins Center at UMass. We'll be meeting with them once a month. Besides that, there will probably be some times that we have to meet multiple times in a month. If so, would you see anything that would prevent you from being able to meet multiple times in a month?

Ms. Tyrrell: No, I just don't go very far with my car at night because I don't see that well so if it's at night someone would have to drive me. If that's a problem I'd just have to quit now.

Mr. Silva: Thank you as well for stepping up. The charter committee is one that will have a diverse mix of people with experiences, skill sets and knowledge basis. Talk about how your knowledge and skills or experiences will be of value to the committee.

Ms. Tyrrell: I haven't held any political positions, other than I'm a political junkie. I'll tell you that right off the bat. I follow politics and financial things and all of that constantly. I don't even listen to music. I just like numbers. I don't know if you can say I actually have experience that would relate to this. Through my years, while I was working I ran a leather company and we made leather goods. I ran that for about 10-15 years. To be honest with you, we couldn't survive anymore and all the leather companies that were surrounding us were all going by the wayside because we couldn't compete with China or Korea. It was impossible to try to make the things and they make them so cheap. So, we closed the doors and I went off and did something else. My husband was sick. He had Alzheimer's and I had to take care of him so my working days were over; although, at that time I did become chairman of the gift shop at the hospital. We ran quite a sizable gift shop.

Mr. DeBarge: Hi Lee, it's a pleasure to meet you. I really appreciate your candor and honesty. I've been on the Select Board for about 7 ½ years and I ran with the one goal to try to change the government in this town. As a policeman, which I was before this, I can tell you our town meeting is just as bad as you say it has been since you've been here. I totally agree. Everybody pretty much has the same feeling about how slow and antiquated things are. Hopefully our departments have been getting better. My question for you is about policy. Have you ever been involved in any way with government or public policy? Writing it or involved with it?

Ms. Tyrrell: No.

Mr. DeBarge: With your Friends of the Senior Center, you do a lot of fundraising and things like that?

Ms. Tyrrell: We raised funds for the senior center, which we're in the middle of a capital campaign right now, which we're trying to raise \$750,000. We've written a couple checks, one for \$85, we've given them \$151,000 and we've got to give them much more but we're trying to furnish the building with all of the equipment that it needs, like the couches, chairs.

Mr. Gennette: What other information would you like the board to consider when making their final decision?

Ms. Tyrrell: I would hope you would give me a chance. I'm not one who's had a lot of experience in politics as far as actually doing it. I follow it constantly. I like the fact that, could I improve that? I would love that. I understand that you have other people that are more educated than me. I'm just a run of the mill person who worked very hard taking care of my family, took care of my husband

until he died and I'm out here now trying to help my son. I don't know if I can really tell you what you want to hear. I'm just being honest about myself and I'd like to give it a try.

Mr. Gennette: Do you have any questions for us or anything you'd like to add?

Ms. Tyrrell: I'd like to know how you're going to go about doing this. Would you meet with other towns and find out how they're run? Are you considering having a modified government like a partial city type thing where you have ward councilors? I think you would have better representation for your people. Right now, I say to people, who do I call and who's taking care of our section. I've always been told nobody.

Mr. Gennette: The charter committee will do all that and they'll have opportunities for the public to talk as well.

Mr. Goncalves: And The Collins Center. We've hired a firm that specializes in that type of thing so they'll be guiding the committee along with some ideas and some options.

Ms. Tyrrell: I think it would be more efficient and when you're efficient you save money. Like I said, I have never been in politics. I'm not trying to impress you. I'm just telling you where I am.

Mr. Gennette: We appreciate you coming in. We appreciate you putting in your application and we'll take it into consideration.

Mr. Goncalves: By the way, there's a lot of committees in town that are short people. You'd be fantastic on any of them.

Ms. Tyrrell: I hope you consider me. I guess I'll hear from you one way or another.

5:50 p.m. Charter Committee Interview – Michael Engel

Mr. Gennette: We'll give you an opportunity to introduce yourself and let us know why you're interested in being on the committee. We'll each ask you a question and we'll go from there.

Mr. Engel: I'm Michael Engel. I think you have my vitae so you know my background. I've always been a community volunteer of one kind or another. In this case, knowing what the purpose is I thought I had some skills and experience that would contribute to the project.

Mr. Rosenblum: Mr. Engel, thank you very much for volunteering and putting yourself up to help out the town. We relish the opportunity to have as many people as possible come to voice their opinions or help out. We've hired The Collins Center, from UMass, and they're going to be our consultant for this committee. We will meet with them once a month starting next September through the next September, September 2023 through September 2024. Quite possibly and I would probably imagine there will be needs for additional meetings instead of just one a month. Could you foresee any problem with being able to meet multiple times in a month?

Mr. Engel: No, I kind of expected that. It seemed to make sense to meet once a month.

Mr. Silva: Thank you as well for stepping up and trying to help us out. The charter committee is going to be one that has a diverse mix of people, experiences and skill sets and knowledge basis. Talk about your knowledge, skills, and experience that you'll bring to the charter commission of some value to the commission.

Mr. Engel: Looking at my vitae, I was a professor at Westfield State. My specialty was state and local government and American politics. I published 2 books on state and local government and a book on politics in education. I've also had some on the ground experience as a Selectmen and School Committee member in Easthampton and those were very good learning experiences. As you notice, I ran for Congress. That combination should serve well. Initially I had a concern but it was answered about whether there was a conflict with The Collins Center on this, but apparently not. I can contribute whatever I can. That's who I am and what I've done.

Mr. DeBarge: Thank you very much for your interest in this. It's nice to see someone with your acumen to be interested in helping us out in this plate that we're in to try to make a more efficient

government. My question is about policy. I have read your information a few times. Have you ever been involved in government or public policy and the writing? Obviously the answer is yes. Maybe you could give us an example on some policy that maybe pertains to this.

Mr. Engel: If you mean what do I foresee as sort of a purpose for this chart

Mr. DeBarge: I'd like you to expand on anything you feel comfortable with.

Mr. Engel: I've been thinking a lot about that. There were 2 things that occurred to me. One is we ought to have a system that encourages greater political participation and more candidates and a better voting turnout. It has just been terrible. Theoretically, town meeting ought to provide that but it doesn't. Town meeting is kind of, I love town meeting, in Easthampton I did. But it isn't working. Not here anyway. When I came here in 2014, one of the first things I did was go to a town meeting. I was really impressed. It was lively and people were talking. That's when I got myself onto the Finance Committee. Apparently those days are no longer with us, or not as much. One thing we need is a system of government that encourages people's participation. This one is not working. That's no offense to anybody here. I'm thinking that a city form of some kind would encourage a greater interest in politics, would encourage people to run for office, would be more efficient and inviting in that regard. I wouldn't have said this 10-15 years ago but now I think that's true. The other thing, as we all know, climate change is creating disasters everywhere. We just saw in Hawaii how government fell through and let people die. I think we need a system that is more prepared to respond to emergencies in a unified way. This has nothing to do with, I mean we've had some experience and connections with police and fire departments. They're great. One of the reasons we stayed here is we liked the quality of service. I read how the oceans are warming up in the Atlantic. That means hurricanes in New England. We've always been a target for hurricanes. I think we need a system of government that is more prepared to run efficiently, effectively, and quickly. I think that means a city form. As you know, the devils in the details. What kind of city? Do you want a manager? Do you want a mayor? Do you want a council? Etc. But I think those 2 things are the concerns I have for the Town of Ludlow.

Mr. Goncalves: Thank you for your interest in this. Your resume is incredible. When you were in Easthampton they had gone through a change of government. That was after you left?

Mr. Engel: Yes.

Mr. Goncalves: You didn't stay? So, you're pretty familiar with all the open meeting laws?

Mr. Engel: Yes.

Mr. Goncalves: Would you ever consider being Chairman of the board if you decided to be on the committee?

Mr. Engel: That's very nice. Wouldn't that be the committee's decision?

Mr. Goncalves: It would be. I'm just curious if that's something you'd be interested in.

Mr. Engel: Sure, why not. It would be an honor actually. I do have some experience. I chaired the Board of Selectmen in Easthampton. There were some times I stood out for unpopular decisions, but I got a lot of respect from people. In fact, they made me chair and I was re-elected as an independent. That would be an honor. If I'm selected for the committee and the committee decided to make me chair, I'd be honored to do that.

Mr. Gennette: What other information would you like the board to consider while making their final decisions?

Mr. Engel: What else do you think I need to provide?

Mr. DeBarge: It's always the chairman's question. Do you have anything to add?

Mr. Engel: I'll just say we are in this town. Jackie and I moved here in 2014. Our daughter preceded us. She's a seamstress and doll maker and she had a store next to Santos' barbershop. Now she's in Wilbraham. We followed her and we had some ideas for businesses ourselves. Didn't work out.

But we stayed here. We have an older daughter. She's an art teacher in Cambridge. So, we've been here 9 years. We haven't done very much. I had some health problems that interfered with things at the time, then came Covid. We like it here and we're satisfied here. Maybe that's the kind of personal information that might be useful.

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

2023 SEP -6 P 3: 33

TOWN OF LUDLOW

Mr. Gennette: Do you have any questions for us? Do you have anything that you would like to expand on?

Mr. Engel: I sure have a lot of questions about how a committee like this would operate but I imagine that is going to be taken care of once the committee is formed. There would be an orientation. I certainly assumed when I saw one meeting a month that wouldn't work. There are things to do. But exactly how it's structured and what the role of the...although Mr. Strange explained to me about the role of The Collins Center as sort of a guide. Those details, if I am selected, those are details I'm going to find out. Otherwise, I don't have any questions.

Mr. Gennette: It was wonderful to meet you. Thank you for putting in your application and we'll get back to you.

Mr. Engel: Thank you very much for inviting me.

6:05 p.m. Charter Committee Interview – George Costa

Mr. Gennette: We're going to give you an opportunity to introduce yourself, let us know why you want to be on the committee and then we'll ask you some questions and we'll go from there.

Mr. Costa: My name is George Costa. I've been a resident of Ludlow all my life except 5 years when I was away. I'm a licensed civil engineer. Prior to that I was an educator. I've been practicing engineering, either teaching it or designing it since 1995. Throughout my adult life I've volunteered on many organizations, both in the Town of Ludlow and other communities, be it UMass, Town of Ludlow, or the state as a volunteer. I enjoy working with good people, I like collaborating with them towards making something better. This is my community and I saw there was a need for volunteers to come together and help make the community better so I decided to offer my help.

Mr. Silva: The charter commission is going to be one that has a diverse mix of people, experiences, skill sets and knowledge basis. Can you talk about some of your knowledge, skills, and experiences of value that you might bring to the committee?

Mr. Costa: I'm a resident and business owner in town. I would say that my training and education, I've kind of learned how to collect a lot of information, process it, try to make sense of it, see what it means and try to make a good decision with that information. I think that's going to be a big part here. The committee will be collecting a lot of information, try to process it, interpret what that data means and present it to the town for the town to decide. It's very much in line with what I do. The same thing on the engineering side. I collect a lot of information, process it, and make recommendations. I think the commission will be doing the same.

Mr. DeBarge: George and I serve on the School Building Committee together. My question is about policy for each interviewee. Have you ever been involved, whether it be writing or involved in any way of government or public policy? Of course, the answer is yes because we do that in the School Building Committee. Maybe you could expand on some policy that you've written in your own business.

Mr. Costa: Standard policies for engineering? I'm an independent consultant so I make my own policy so that's what I follow. I do make policies for other companies who come to me for guidance. Some of these are other engineering companies. I put together procedures for them to follow that's similar to mine. And commercial clients who come to me for guidance on preparing policies for procuring services for construction. It's an orderly format that tries to cover all the possibilities that we can think of. As an educator I create a lot of policy. For almost 10 years I taught at a college so there had to be a very orderly, fair process for students to follow. An easy-to-understand process for them to be successful. I kind of knew but verified that policies needed to be updated over time. You learn from experience. The environment changes and you adjust your policy to keep up with what's occurring around you.

Mr. Goncalves: Welcome. Thank you very much. I love the resume. Community services is about half of the 3 pages, which is pretty impressive. You're familiar with all the procedures because you will be a town committee? The open meeting laws, having to hold meetings and posting the whole ball of wax? If the board got together and decided they wanted to make you chairman, is that something you would accept?

RECEIVED
TOWN OF LUDLOW OFFICE
2023 SEP -6 P 3:33

Mr. Costa: If that's what the board feels is best then I'm willing to take on that role.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you for your interest in this committee and thank you for all the other things that you've done for the town. My question is this committee will be meeting with The Collins Center from UMass, they'll be our consultant. We'll be meeting with them approximately once a month starting September next month through September next year, one year, 12 months. There's a very good chance, and I would probably say that we will be meeting multiple times in a month besides that. Would you have any issue with being able to meet multiple times in a month?

Mr. Costa: I have a busy schedule between work and personal life, but I can make time to accommodate the schedule. A normal schedule would be once a month. What do you think it could be if it's more than once a month? Twice a month?

Mr. Rosenblum: When they did it back in 08 is that they met approximately over 18 months they met 50 times. I would say if we meet with The Collins Center once and then once or twice other times a month. I'm not saying this is what we would use, but we have a working model that we can go off of to guide us, but also, we have The Collins Center, which has helped us in other aspects of the town. I would imagine 2-3 times a month as needed.

Mr. Costa: Where would those meetings take place?

Mr. DeBarge: Right here.

Mr. Costa: There's no plans to travel out of Ludlow for meetings?

Mr. Rosenblum: No, but in the sense of how we talked about open forums and speaking with other municipalities and looking at their forms of government there might be outreach from the committee. As we build the committee there might be outreach to Easthampton or East Longmeadow or Westfield that has a weak mayor form, it could be but we would meet here.

Mr. Costa: I can meet your schedule on that.

Mr. Gennette: Is there any other information you'd like the board to consider before making their final decision?

Mr. Costa: No, I think I provided my qualifications. I've read up a little bit about this process that the town is considering. Regardless of who makes up the committee, I wish the group the best of luck and best wishes for a successful outcome.

Mr. Gennette: Do you have any questions for us or anything you'd like to add?

Mr. Costa: No, I read up on a lot of this stuff to become familiar with what's happening and the past and where we are now. I feel comfortable about what this process will allow.

Mr. Gennette: Thank you for the application and we'll let you know.

6:20 Charter Committee Interview – Kathy Green

Mr. Strange: The next interview is Kathy Green and Ms. Green is not here so I don't know if you want to take a 5-minute break and read the questions because the next interviewee is scheduled for 6:35.

Mr. Gennette: Mrs. Green is not able to attend but she did receive the questions from the committee and she responded. Each person is going to read their question and the response and we'll go from there.

Mr. DeBarge: The first one is why are you interested in being on the charter committee. This was a question that was originally given to me but it's been taken care of in their opening comments. I changed my question to the policy question. In the interest of transparency, when I changed it, she didn't know that Ms. Green wasn't coming so she's not getting that question from me but her interest in serving the charter committee, here is her answer for that question. This is what Ms. Green says.

TOWN OF LUDLOW

Ms. Green: Like many people in town, I feel we have outgrown our current form of government. Years ago, there was a grass roots effort that explored a change. They were not able to gather much traction. I followed this with interest and supported their efforts at the time. I was happy to see the town begin to explore this again in a more formal structured manner. I don't have a preconceived idea for the solution for Ludlow. I want to actively participate in the process so that whatever is decided, whether I agree or not with the outcome, I feel that my voice was heard and I had a role shaping the future.

Mr. Silva: The question for Ms. Green was the charter commission is one that has diverse mix of people, experiences, skill sets and knowledge basis. Talk about your knowledge, skills and experiences that will bring value to the committee.

Ms. Green: Growing up in Ludlow and being educated in Ludlow schools have given me a good understanding of the town, our people, politics and how, as a town, we have handled growth. In the 5th grade I was the first class to attend the new Veteran's Park Elementary School. In junior high school my class attended classes at the original Ludlow Manufacturing High School building and later saw a change to senior housing. In 8th and 9th grade I experienced split sessions which was a unique educational experience. I saw the police and fire departments housed on Chestnut Street and move to the new complex on Chapin Street. I saw the new town hall constructed, the high school addition and watched the new middle school open. In many ways, I have grown with the town and can appreciate we've outgrown many things. After high school I continued my education obtaining 2 associate degrees at Holyoke Community College and a bachelor's degree in marketing from UMass. My corporate career was entirely spent at Mass Mutual in their IT department. My skills include technical software skills such as computer programming and use of all MS Office tools. I was specially trained as an analyst and used these skills to define, research and find solutions to problems and identify opportunities. I eventually became an IT manager overseeing many large system development projects. My strengths are analysis, planning, scheduling, and managing tasks and facilitating teams of people, all of which would benefit the charter committee. After I retired in 2015 I brought my skills to the Ludlow Senior Center as an active member of the Friends of Ludlow Senior Center where I helped lead the fundraising effort for the new building. In spite of Covid restrictions we did quite well raising money which is used to supplement programs at the senior center. The past 2 years I have served as president of the Friends and have continued to grow with the organization and support programs and needs of our seniors. I also created and maintained the website and Facebook page for the Friends as well as Facebook page for the senior center. During Covid, I volunteered to work the polls in town when there was a shortage of people willing to work. I continue to work the polls each election.

Mr. Silva: I thought there was a question with the polls.

Mr. Strange: There are Boards of Registrars and there are poll workers. The poll workers are the ones that are basically assisting people on election day. That's different than being on the Board of Registrars.

Mr. Rosenblum: My question is the charter committee will be meeting the town's consultants from The Collins Center once a month between September 2023 and September 2024; however, the committee will likely need to meet more frequently than that to work through important issues. What obstacles do you foresee that may be able to prevent you from being able to attend multiple meetings per month over the next year.

Ms. Green: Despite the fact that I am unable to meet you in person for the initial interview due to travel plans, I do have flexibility in my schedule over the next year and would not have an issue supporting a meeting schedule except for a pre-planned event in May 2024.

Mr. Goncalves: My question is as a formal town committee; the group will be subject to open meeting laws and other administrative procedures and processes. What experience do you have with open meeting laws? Furthermore, would you be interested in chairing this committee?

Ms. Green: I have cursory knowledge of open meeting laws and understand the formal facilitation training and understand meeting practices. I would welcome more in-depth knowledge of this process. I would not be interested in chairing the committee but would be available to aid as necessary.

Mr. Gennette: What other information would you like the board to consider when making their final decision?

Ms. Green: I appreciate the quality of life available in the Town of Ludlow. My husband and I make our home here. My mother, sister and her family all make their home in Ludlow. It's not a perfect community but still a great town to raise a family. I would consider it a privilege to help to shape the future of our town.

Mr. Gennette: Thank you to Ms. Green for answering the questions and getting them into us. We hope you enjoy your trip. We're going to take a break until we get our next guest, who is going to be Judy Breault.

6:35 p.m. Charter Committee Interview – Judy Breault

Mr. Gennette: Welcome back everybody. We have our next interview coming in, Judy Breault. Apologies for the delay. We're a little ahead of schedule. Ms. Breault, come on it. We're going to give you an opportunity to introduce yourself, let us know why you want to be a part of the committee, we'll ask you questions and we'll go from there.

Ms. Breault: Sounds great. My name is Judy Breault. I've lived in Ludlow about 35 years. Two years ago, I retired from a corporate job. I now volunteer for the Ludlow Pond Management Committee. Just looking to really understand what the process is, as far as changing the form of government. I don't know anything about the different forms and I'm really interested and just want to understand it so we can make the right decision for the town residents and town businesses in the Town of Ludlow.

Mr. DeBarge: Hi Judy, good to see you. I still tell people you had the best Power Point presentation I have seen since I've been a Selectman on the Pond Commission. My question is about policy for our interviewees. Have you ever been involved, whether it be writing or involved in any way with government or public policy? That could be through work or through your committee and if so could you give us an example?

Ms. Breault: I don't know if I would say government policy, but my role at Mass Mutual was working in Human Resources and I managed multiple departments within Human Resources. We were continuously looking at policies, developing policies, updating policies, so I have a lot of experience about how you need to generate a policy that's easy to understand but has the right legal language in there to help protect an organization.

Mr. Goncalves: You're pretty familiar with procedures, etc., you've been on a lot of committees. The committees that you're on, are they subject to open meeting laws?

Ms. Breault: I think the Pond Committee is, yes.

Mr. Goncalves: If you were asked by your peers on that committee, would you serve as chair?

Ms. Breault: Yes.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you for volunteering yet again. The charter committee will be meeting approximately once a month with our consultant, The Collins Center from UMass, so roughly starting next month for a year until about next September. There's a good chance the committee is going to have to meet multiple times over the course of a month and not just the one time. Do you foresee there being anything that could prevent you from being able to meet multiple times in a month?

Ms. Breault: Generally, no. There is a period of time in April that we are gone for a couple weeks but other than that I have no issues with meeting.

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
2023 SEP - 6 PM 3:33
TOWN OF LUDLOW

Mr. Silva: Thank you for signing up again and trying to help us out here. The charter committee is one that has a diverse mix of people, experiences, skill sets and knowledge basis. Talk about your knowledge and skills and experiences that you will bring into the committee.

Ms. Breault: Again, I'll go back to my corporate career. In my role there, I managed about 35-40 individuals on 4-5 different teams at any point in time. Being in Human Resources you have to deal with a lot of different people. Diverse backgrounds, diverse thinking, diverse ways of doing things. My role has always been to listen first and understand what people are talking about, what viewpoints are and then respond to that. I feel like I've always had a really good rapport with the people I've worked with.

Mr. Gennette: Is there any other information you'd like the board to consider while making their final decision?

Ms. Breault: I would just like to say, I know I've been in front of this board so you know my work, you know my commitment to the town, you know my dedication to what I volunteer for.

Mr. Gennette: Do you have any questions for us? Do you have anything you'd like to add?

Ms. Breault: The only question I would have is, is there any work that people on this committee could do in advance of meeting with the consultants to start to educate ourselves because I am walking into this blindly. I don't know it so if there's homework that I could do to become prepared.

Mr. DeBarge: This was the old charter from 2006-2008. It wouldn't be a bad idea to read up on it. You can have my copy.

Mr. Gennette: There are also different forms of government, town manager, mayor, strong mayor, weak mayor, those kinds of things. If you got familiar with those it would help. We appreciate your time coming in.

6:50 p.m. Charter Committee Interview – Michele Manganaro-Thompson

Mr. Gennette: We'll give you an opportunity to introduce yourself, let everybody know why you want to be on the committee, we'll ask you a bunch of questions and we'll go from there.

Ms. Manganaro-Thompson: I'm Michele Manganaro-Thompson. I've lived in town my whole life. I'm currently a teacher at Harris Brook Elementary and I've been a realtor for 35 years. I've been a town meeting member, been on the School Committee, so I've always been involved in local government at some form or another. In the resume I wrote a quick overview of things that I had done. I know this had come up before and it has come up in the past and I haven't really been involved in it before when it's come up but I'm definitely interested to see if there's, I know there are other types of government, but what are some types that could work for Ludlow. What other could possibly work for Ludlow. The town is getting bigger. I think it still has that small town feel. I'd like to keep it a town. I know that's one thought that I had. Would we have to be a city if we had some other type of government. I'm interested to see what plays out with that. If I'm not mistaken, did we vote at town meeting to have someone oversee this process? So, I like the idea of that too, so it's not just really well-intentioned townspeople and town officials trying to figure it all out. There's someone who can direct and guide and I think that's going to be helpful. I figured I'd give it a shot and see what it's all about and see if it's something that works out.

Mr. Goncalves: Open meeting laws, you're familiar with that from those positions before? Thank you, your resume is pretty deep as far as commitment to the town. You have been a realtor a long time. You would be chair of that committee if they asked you, I think?

Ms. Manganaro-Thompson: I wouldn't be opposed to it. I haven't chaired other committees so I would just want to see what the responsibilities are and make sure that I could meet them. I wouldn't be opposed to that at all.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you again for your interest in this position, this committee and thank you for everything you already do for the town. The charter committee will be meeting with the consultant, The Collins Center from UMass, and they have helped in other aspects of searches for the town in the past. We would probably be meeting with them once a month starting next month through September of next year, approximately 12 months. There's probably going to be the need to meet multiple times a month and not just the one time with The Collins Center. Would there be anything to prevent you from meeting multiple times in a month. The question had been asked before, it will probably be 2-3 times. I'm not saying it's going to be 7-8. As a reference, the last commission over the course of 18 months met about 50 times.

Ms. Manganaro-Thompson: The most recent thing I've been on, and Mr. DeBarge has been on too, is the new school building committee. We've had our meetings monthly and sometimes we had to have emergency meetings. I think before you go into something like this you have to be a little flexible with that. You have to be willing. Sometimes a meeting date is going to change or something is going to happen if there's not a quorum. I think I can commit to that. Both my kids are older and less needy so I do have the time to do something like this.

Mr. Silva: Thank you for wanting to be involved. We don't get many people lately. There used to be a day where we got considerable people but now it's difficult. The charter committee is going to be one that is a diverse mix of people, experiences, skill sets, knowledge basis. Can you talk about the skills and experiences you will be bringing of value to the committee?

Ms. Manganaro-Thompson: I think there's varying skills that I'll bring. I think one, as an educator I'm used to being with a large group of people, having to work together with people. We may have a common goal, which is educating kids, but we all come from very different backgrounds, philosophies and ideals and work together to do that. I think my experience as a realtor, just knowing the ins and outs of the town very well and what people look for when they move to this town and what they want in this town would be beneficial. I think having lived in the town my whole life and watching a lot of changes go on. I think I alluded to you in my letter some have been really positive and some have been I don't know if we should have done that. I think overall living here, a town meeting member, School Committee member. I think I've kind of run the gamut on what I've been involved in, whether its small searches sitting to hire another teacher in our school, big searches to hire a superintendent, building a new school or being on the school committee, which helped to oversee the whole department. I think I can bring a few different things to the table.

Mr. DeBarge: As you've already stated, we are on the school building committee together and I have also had the pleasure of teaching Junior Achievement in Michele's 3rd grade class. It's an hour a day for 5 days and I say to her and any other teacher, I don't know how you do it because with 1 hour...wow. My question is about policy. If you had any experience in government or public policy, which by your acumen we all know that you do because we're on the committee together, School Committee and all of that. You can explain what policies you've been in or pick one or talk about whatever you want.

Ms. Manganaro-Thompson: Thank you for the shout out with the teaching. Usually, he'll be watching me and go how many decisions did you just make in that last minute and a half and I'll go about 47. I think my time on the School Committee would be where policy was most at the forefront. Yes, there's policy with us on the Building Committee, but there's not really policies we're doing, like superintendents other than falling under the open meeting laws and things like that. I would say as a School Committee member that was the biggest thing where I'd have the most experience with policy. Whether it was something as simple as what our policy was on student athletic fees or our parking policy. There certainly didn't seem to be as much controversy back then with policy as there seems to be now with policy. I think it's a whole different ball game. I think at that time is where I had to deal with policy the most. I don't deal with, as a teacher, we have to fall all the School Committee policies. We just got our Harris Brook Hub, which is all the information on anything you could want in the school and it looks like the wellness policy is at the forefront again, talking about what you can do with food and things in a classroom. The wellness policy right now seems like it's come into play again. In my daily life I guess I do deal with policies but it's almost become second nature. As far as a committee to deal with policies and either amending them, instituting them, changing them, deleting them, I'd say School Committee was probably the biggest time I did that.

Mr. Gennette: I want to note for the record that Michele and I served as the superintendent search committee successfully. I think that was a good committee and we did well on that one. What other information would you like the board to consider while making their final decision?

Ms. Manganaro-Thompson: I'm not privy to who else has been in here or who else has whatever experience they have or what they bring to the table. I'm sure you have it narrowed down to people you think would fit in different roles and aspects of that committee. I think what I wrote speaks for myself. I'm lucky having lived here. I do know all of you to some degree. Some better than others, some I've worked with. I think I'm someone that definitely has the time to do it but also the interest in doing it and the background. I plan on living here forever. Hopefully I'll convince my kids to stay around here too. I feel like I'm vested in the town. My parents were here, my grandparents were here. I feel like I'm vested and the direction that we choose to go in, should we change directions, is something I'd like to be a part of.

Mr. Gennette: Do you have any questions for us?

Ms. Manganaro-Thompson: When do you plan on making a decision?

Mr. Gennette: Hopefully tonight.

Ms. Manganaro-Thompson: When would the first meetings take place? September?

Mr. Rosenblum: The tentative date is 24th of September.

Mr. Gennette: Is there anything you'd like to add before we close?

Ms. Manganaro-Thompson: How big will the committee be?

Mr. Gennette: 9 members, 2 alternates and 2 Selectmen.

Mr. DeBarge: Selectmen Rosenblum and DeBarge will be on the committee.

Mr. Gennette: Thank you for coming in and applying. We're early for Marissa Ribeiro Dahan.

Mr. Strange: She should be here soon. We reached out to all the candidates and asked them to come 10 minutes early and they all seemed to have complied.

7:05 p.m. Charter Committee Interview – Marissa Ribeiro Dahan

Mr. Gennette: Are you Rosemary Ribeiro's daughter?

Ms. Ribeiro Dahan: Yes

Mr. Gennette: We'll give you an opportunity to introduce yourself, let us know why you're interested in being on the committee, we'll ask you some questions and we'll go from there.

Ms. Ribeiro Dahan: I grew up in Ludlow. Some of you know that. I spent 4-5 years living in Boston when I was working for former Governor Baker in his administration. I just moved back here over a year ago with my now husband. We bought a house here. Happy to be back in Western Mass and working locally now. I've been looking for ways to kind of get involved in the town now that I'm back and I thought this was a great opportunity. It fits the work that I've done having that government administration background. That's what first sparked my interest. I think that's probably what is long overdue for the town, to look at ways to improve the way that it's being run. I think it's a great thing they're doing to get folks involved as well.

Mr. Silva: The charter committee is one with a diverse mix of people, experiences, skill sets and knowledge basis. Can you talk to us about the skills that you would be bringing of value to the committee?

Ms. Ribeiro Dahan: I've spent a lot of time working with a diverse group of people across departments in state government in particular. In those roles it was a lot of figuring out how we can make things work better for folks. There might have been an issue with a grant program we

were running and we started hearing folks were having trouble applying or weren't hearing back and we may look at that and I would go in and say what's going on here? What do we need to do to fix it? How can we make it better for the people that we're representing? I think that I'll be able to bring that to the table. It's been a lot of project management stuff that's been done. Keeping the ball rolling. Having a bunch of things going at once and keeping folks on track to get to the end point by the deadline.

Mr. DeBarge: Marissa, pleasure to meet you. It was a pleasure to read your resume, especially for something like this. It's very impressive looking for people for a charter like this. Thank you for your interest as well. My question is about policy. Obviously, in your resume you are a policy advisor. My question is very simple for all of our interviewees. Do you have any experience in policy writing, whether government or private. Please expand on it.

Ms. Ribeiro Dahan: I first got into policy when I was in the Governor's office. When I was the assistant chief of staff for cabinet affairs that was our policy team. I had 3 different secretariats or agencies of the government under my wing. I had education, labor, and technology services. What that entailed for me was that when those agencies were trying to put in place new policies or initiatives they had to run those ideas by me first. I would ask my questions, maybe make tweaks, have them go back and at that point then they could bring it and put it in front of the Governor and his senior staff. I do have background in analyzing policy proposals and does this make sense, are we asking the right questions, is there anything we're not considering that we need to think about before we move forward with it. What I'm doing now as a state policy advisor at ISO New England is working with Massachusetts and what the state is doing on policy side and making sure that we're working with them so that we're not at odds with one another and that the policies that they're developing are feasible, that they make sense with the technical nature of the electrical grid. So, I'm very familiar with policy work.

Mr. Goncalves: Thank you for your interest. You look familiar so I'm sure we've met somewhere along the line. Have you served on any committees where you were subject to open meeting laws?

Ms. Ribeiro Dahan: I haven't served on any committees. I am familiar with a lot of the open meeting laws. As you know, the state government is subject to the same rules. There were a lot of commissions and boards and those sorts of things that were under the different agencies that I worked at. Something I heard about a lot. I reviewed a lot of the materials that would get posted for those meetings so I know there's strict deadlines on getting things out. I think it's 48 hours in advance or 2 full business days. I'm familiar with it, I haven't served on a committee myself.

Mr. Goncalves: If you were chosen to be on the committee and the committee thought about making you the chairperson or the committee, is that something you would take on? You would have the time or desire?

Ms. Ribeiro Dahan: Yes, I think that I would be interested in taking on that leadership role.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you for your interest. Your resume is great. The charter committee will be meeting with the town's consultants from The Collins Center approximately once a month, roughly starting the end of this September through next September, basically in a 12 month window. Do you see any obstacles that may prevent you from meeting multiple times in a month if there might be some important issues we have to get through? Chances are we will meet, the last commission over 18 months met 50 times. I would anticipate that we would meet 2-3 times a month. Would you have any problem doing that?

Ms. Ribeiro Dahan: No, that should be fine. There may be a one off where I can't make it but regularly shouldn't be an issue.

Mr. Gennette: Is there any other information you'd like to offer the board to consider before they make their final decision?

Ms. Ribeiro Dahan: I would just say I'm excited for the chance to help do something that's going to help the town and excited to see where Ludlow goes. Being back here and raising a family here I kind of want to have a say in the direction it goes it.

Mr. Gennette: Do you have any questions for us? Anything you'd like to add?

Ms. Ribeiro Dahan: No, at this point I think this makes sense. I was going to ask how often you were planning to meet so that was helpful.

Mr. Gennette: Thank you for applying, thank you for coming in. Everybody said it. Your resume is unbelievable. We'll get back to you and let you know. I think we're going to go into deliberation. Does anybody have any comments they would like to make?

RECEIVED
TOWN OF LUDLOW
2023 SEP -6 P 3:34

Mr. Goncalves: I didn't think we were going to be faced with 13 really highly qualified and eager people. Would it be a big deal or is it something we can consider taking it to 11 and 2 alternates? We had 13 applicants and we could include everybody by adding 2 more people instead of 9. Then we'd be deciding on 2 alternates from these 13 and giving them all an opportunity to serve.

Mr. Silva: We already established a committee. We'd have to go back and dissolve the committee and then re-do it if we were to go that route. I know the committee was voted on.

Mr. DeBarge: It was voted on 11 or 9 if we couldn't get the 11. Let me just say to Tony's point, the class of the backgrounds we have from all people that have applied for this is staggering. I was surprised at how many but my view is to stay with 11 total. Sometimes, whether qualified people or not, too many voices are too many voices and too big may hinder at getting some things done. That's my opinion.

Mr. Silva: Sometimes the quorums get tough with a big committee.

Mr. Rosenblum: I would probably stay with what we have right now because I think that along the lines of Mr. DeBarge, you have too many cooks in the kitchen it could get a little sloppy. Like you said, except for the one person right now we could easily have everybody on this commission. I think I would prefer to stay with the number that we voted with. You'd end up having to make a motion to dissolve the first decision then do a new motion to amend the number of people.

Mr. Gennette: My original vote was for 9 for that same reason. I thought too many people was going to make it difficult to get the job done. I'm really happy that you guys went to 11 because we have 11 good ones. These are 11 amazing individuals. I'm comfortable but I understand your position.

Mr. Goncalves: It's just tough to decide who to knock out here. There's nobody that clearly doesn't belong.

Mr. Rosenblum: I would recommend due to the amount of applicants if the rest of the board has the 2 or 3, one is already self-eliminated so we're down to eliminating 2. It would be easier to eliminate 2 first and then go into who the alternates would be. Then read off each name of each person and say something about them. That would be my recommendation.

Mr. Silva: Being in local government for... I actually looked at it a different way. I looked at people that were involved in local government and at least had knowledge of local government. I understand there's people out there that are versed in many aspects but you need people that know the ins and outs. What I did, I gave the people that were involved and have been serving on committees, those people will have a little more knowledge. Quite honestly I have 9 people that all have at least a part of that. Then the 2 alternates would be something that I'd look at. If nobody minds I will give you the names. Brian Bylicki, Jennifer Aldworth, Martin Fanning, Linda Collette, Michael Engel, George Costa, Michele Thompson, Judy Breault & Marissa Ribeiro Dahan. Those are the 9 individuals I saw that have experience.

Mr. Gennette: Just so everybody knows that's not the official election. I'm going to collaborate and say that those are the same names that I had.

Mr. Silva: I'll read them again. Brian Bylicki, Jennifer Aldworth, Martin Fanning, Linda Collette, Michael Engel, George Costa, Michele Thompson, Judy Breault & Marissa Ribeiro Dahan.

Mr. Strange: Jen Aldworth, Marty Fanning, Brian Bylicki, Michael Engel, George Costa, Judy Breault, Michele Manganaro-Thompson, Marissa Ribeiro Dahan & Linda Collette.

Mr. Silva: That's the 9 that I felt had some knowledge of local government, cities, and towns.

Mr. Gennette: Does anybody have any changes from that list? Or does everybody agree that that's a good list for the first 9?

Mr. Rosenblum: I'm on that list.

Mr. Goncalves: I'm good.

Mr. Strange: Really? That's interesting. Curious that everybody has the same list.

Mr. DeBarge: I don't. My biggest change would be...

Mr. Goncalves: We didn't talk about the alternates yet. We have to pick from the 5 remaining.

Mr. DeBarge: I understand, but my alternates are in the 9. My alternates I had now are Brian Bylicki and Linda Collette. To be honest with you, with Mr. Fanning and Mr. Bylicki it's kind of the same thing. Same kind of schools of thought. Similar interviews. I think Mr. Bylicki is an asset to us, with his knowledge of being in the last charter. But I want to be clear in my decision that this charter is about a different time. I think as a consult, so to speak, it would be beneficial to us, but I'm also interested in seeing different people involved in this as well. Which is why I had instead of... I had Jen Aldworth, Marty Fanning, Michael Engel, George Costa, Kathy Green, Judy Breault, Michele Manganaro-Thompson, Marissa Ribeiro Dahan. I had 3 alternates for the discussion.

Mr. Gennette: It seems the majority of us came up with the first 9 so I think we should probably go to a vote on whether or not the first 9 mentioned, Jennifer Aldworth, Martin Fanning, Brian Bylicki, Linda Collette, Michael Engel, George Costa, Judy Breault, Michele Thompson, and Marissa Dahan to be the first 9 members.

So moved by Mr. Silva. Mr. Rosenblum second. Mr. Rosenblum yes, Mr. Silva yes, Mr. Goncalves yes, Mr. DeBarge yes, Mr. Gennette yes. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Gennette: For alternates we're looking at the 5 leftover. Christopher Pelletier, Kathy Green, Mrs. Kurtz, Cormier is out so we're down to 4. So Lee Tyrrell, Diane Kurtz, Kathy Green and Christopher Pelletier. I'll put out my recommendation and obviously none of this is against anyone. I think everybody is a wonderful candidate and I thank everybody for applying but I think Christopher Pelletier and Kathy Green are my alternates.

Mr. DeBarge: I agree.

Mr. Goncalves: I agree.

Mr. Rosenblum: I agree.

Mr. Silva: I agree.

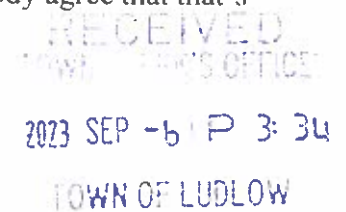
Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to appoint Kathy Green and Christopher Pelletier as alternates to the charter commission board. Mr. Rosenblum second. Mr. Silva yes, Mr. DeBarge second, Mr. Goncalves second, Mr. Rosenblum second, Mr. Gennette second. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Goncalves: Thank you to everybody.

Mr. Gennette: Thank you. I can't believe the amount of talent that came through on these resumes. It's pretty staggering. This is quite the knowledgeable group so it will be very interesting to see some of those meetings.

Mr. Silva: If we could just thank everybody, including those that weren't chosen to come through to the interview for their interest. Also, to keep these people that weren't chosen in mind in case something happens with one of these individuals if they are not able to fulfill these duties or they might not wish to be an alternate.

Mr. Goncalves: I really hope that these people, maybe they can find another board. If they're passionate about the town I hope they would consider some of the other openings that we've had



for a while that nobody wants. If they seem to be interested, hopefully it's at any level that they can help and they would come forward for one of those other positions.

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

Mr. Gennette: There's certainly a lot of openings.

2023 SEP -6 P 3: 34

Mr. DeBarge: I hope the 8 of you that are watching and those that will watch later for the interviews understand that this board has made a huge effort in moving this topic of changing our government. As soon as we could with the changes that we made we're trying to get this better and this committee, this charter, hopefully will be able to do that. My point of saying this is I hope that when there is time for when we have open meetings, open forums for public invited to some speak to the charter commission, I hope people come in and get involved with that because there's a lot of people out there that don't like the way things are moving in this town, whether it be departments or this town as a whole. So, I hope you're going to come in and participate in this.

TOWN OF LUDLOW

Mr. Rosenblum: I'd just like to say thank you to everyone that came in and expressed their interest, even those who didn't come in the room for an interview. To Mr. Goncalves' point, there's some great people there. Honestly, Ms. Dahan, would be an asset on our board or any committee in town. She brings a wealth of knowledge. Any of them. We've got some great candidates who one way or another have some kind of experience with it. I agree with Mr. Silva that you need to have some kind of background in order to understand where we're going with this. Again, thank you to everybody. It's impressive.

Mr. Gennette: For me, Jennifer Aldworth and Marissa Dahan were probably the 2 most impressive candidates that we saw come through. They were absolutely phenomenal. I have to say, we've made a lot of changes. This board has been pushing, along with the town administrator, over the past year and a half to make a lot of changes. With all those great changes we've made, we still agree there needs to be a change in government. So, that's where we're at.

Mr. Strange: When and how would you like us to notify everybody? Tomorrow morning via phone call, emails?

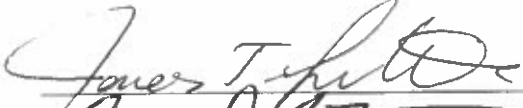
Mr. Gennette: We're public so we should probably give them a call because they're going to need to know sooner rather than having to watch it on LCTV.

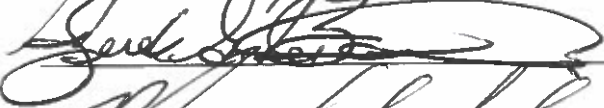
Mr. Strange: I'll call them tomorrow morning.


Mr. Gennette: Please make sure we at least send a letter to the people that didn't.

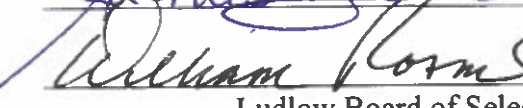
Mr. Strange: Absolutely.


Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to adjourn the meeting at 7:17 p.m. Mr. Goncalves second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.

 _____ Chairman

 _____

 _____

 _____

 _____

Ludlow Board of Selectmen

