The Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Tuesday, May 27, 2020 began at 5:30 p.m. Remote participation due to COVID-19.

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Members Present: Derek DeBarge, Chairman, Carmina Fernandes, Antonio Goncalves, William Rosenblum and Mr. Silva.

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

Visitations:

5:30 p.m. – Police Chief Interviews – Lt. Michael Brennan

Mr. DeBarge: Lt. Brennan, good evening you are our first candidate for interviews. Welcome, congratulations.

Lt. Brennan: Thank you.

Mr. DeBarge: Obviously this is the interview for Police Chief for the Town of Ludlow. Please we would like you to open up with your opening statement.

Lt. Brennan: Sure, let me just tell you a little bit about maybe who I am for folks at home who may be watching and don't really know who I am. So, my name is Mike Brennan, I am currently a Lieutenant within the Police Department. I have been in the roll of Administrative Lieutenant for the past five years. I served under Chief Pablo Madera in that role as acting or as the Administrative Lieutenant and assigned a number of different tasks and varying complexities and so forth. Everything from firearms licensing official, public records, professional standards, accreditation management. I saw the Department through its first official initial certification process and I was also served with second in command when the Chief was not there. So, I had some experience with that and when the Chief retired in January before he retired, he appointed me with the Acting Chief roll because I was the senior Lieutenant at the time. So, I have been the Acting Chief now and also doing the Administrative Lieutenant roll for these past 4 months and it's been quite an experience. I can tell you it's been an honor and an experience but it's just so much that I have learned and, in that time, just going forward with the experience that I have had in that roll and going through the assessment process, certainly built up a lot of confidence in that roll to continue as the Chief of Police. I'm a Town of Ludlow resident, I am married, I have two children. Both of my children go to Ludlow Public Schools, they are in the middle school. I consider myself as a Ludlow boy through and through. My family moved to Ludlow in the 1980's, went to Ludlow High School, graduated Ludlow Public Schools, went on to college and United States Army, I received a commission as a Lieutenant in the United States Army, worked up to the ranks of Captain. I began my professional Law Enforcement career with other departments but like I said I was a Ludlow guy and when the opportunity came to be that I could come back to Ludlow, I came back to Ludlow even though it was a bit of a pay cut for me to do so, this is where I wanted to be so I came here and it's been a privilege ever since. I just want to say that I am really honored to be here, to be before the Board in this roll, being interviewed first to this position. It is a tremendous honor and at the same time it's humbling to. When I think of all the men and women that I serve with in the PD that didn't get this opportunity, it's incredibly humbling. So, I just want to say that and I appreciate your responsibility moving forward. So, that's a bit about me.

Mr. DeBarge: Alright, thank you for that. Before we get into questions, I am getting texts that people at home can't hear. These mikes here, can we just move them closer to him? Let's see if that helps?

Lt. Brennan: I don't know if you can hear me know or...

Mr. DeBarge: I don't think it's your voice either I think it might me, crank up whatever you can. Alright let's get into the questions, who would like to start?

Mrs. Fernandes: Sorry, I was having technical difficulties.

Mr. DeBarge: Alright well welcome we just had Lt. Brennan's opening statement and we were just about to start questions. Mr. Silva is going to start is questions now.

Mr. Silva: Again, nice of you to come in and actually apply because as you know many of the officers just don't want the challenge. So, I have just a few questions, many of my colleagues will have and by those questions I think we will have a pretty good idea of each candidates' good things and not so good things about, you know coming into this job.

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Lt. Brennan: Sure.

Mr. Silva: What do you bring to Ludlow that you believe is above any of the other candidates.

Lt. Brennan: Well in terms of what I bring to the Department, I think I bring my diligence and my commitment to excellence in what I do and the pride in the work product that I perform. I also have some great leadership background that I had in the Army and within the Department. So, in that I can bring forth my experience within the Department as well. Like I said, I am diligent, I am also very reliable and I like to see things through and that is probably some of my greatest strengths is I am those things and competent.

Mr. Silva: Another question I have, is Ludlow is very diverse and as you know we have a lot of ethnic groups in town, different languages. Do you speak any other language besides English or can you converse in any of them?

Lt. Brennan: I can pick up a little, some phrases in Portuguese, when I was a, kind of a funny thing story I don't by nature I don't speak any additional languages. So, I had actually asked when I was a junior officer to attend a Portuguese immersion class. I had asked Chief McGowan if I could go and he kind of looked at me with curiosity, like why would I do something like that. But I thought it was important to try to learn the language of a community that has a large Portuguese population and so that's what I did and took some of the language away from that. If you don't use it, you lose it so it's not a common language that is spoken every day in my household. It is something that helped me in my efforts to try and communicate. One thing I learned too was if I made an effort to try and communicate somebody who was having trouble trying to communicate in English, a lot of times I found out that their English was a lot better than my Portuguese and I would reward them for it and in the end the conversation would shift almost entirely to English just as that confidence shifted.

Mr. Silva: What one thing intrigues you the most about the Town of Ludlow?

Lt. Brennan: One thing that intrigues me the most about Ludlow. I guess it's the community right. So, that's what brought me back. When I was a, this goes back to when I was maybe back to when I was in college when I was determining what I wanted to do for my career and I was looking into Law Enforcement, Criminal Justice and I had an opportunity to take some internships and when I got an internship through Ludlow, Chief Madera a Professor over at Western New England College at that time, now Western New England University and there was an internship that opened up so I took it and I was always interested in Law Enforcement and I had some military back ground too so I kind of knew what large organizations were like with the military. When I came to Ludlow, I found out that the community was very invested in its community and that a Police Officer here as opposed to some other departments, you are not just a badge number, you are a name first. That always intrigued me about the Town and drew me in was like I am not just going to be another face or number in the crowd, I am going to be someone who can possibly make a difference in a community and that's what intrigued me.

Mr. Silva: Thank you, that is all I have for now.

Mr. DeBarge: Thanks Mr. Silva. Mr. Rosenblum.

Mr. Rosenblum: First off Lieutenant, I just want to say congratulations for making it to this point. You should be proud of your accomplishments for being considered for this position. I mean it is quite possibly one of the most important, toughest, high profile positions in a municipality has to offer so congratulations on that. With that, with the pandemic being evident over the last 2 ½ months life has changed and also budgets will. What experience do you have in developing and operating a capital budget and also assuming that all areas of your budget are essential, where do you see the most need?

Lt. Brennan: So, in going forward with the budget and I think you know I had some training in budgets as a Lieutenant. I had some exposure as a Lieutenant to the Chief's budget or how he would come with it and plan. I was certainly able to attend those meetings with him and see his thought processes behind what, how he came up with it. He developed a line item budget to an almost a program budget where he is accounting for every position and expense and it really, I saw how it became really his plan of operation for the department. Instead of looking at it as a bunch of different lines, really look at it as a plan and in my acting Chief roll so far since January I have truly gotten, kind of a crash course. One of the first things, because you can go to school and you can do all of the theory stuff, but nothing is real than when you have to pick up something and be responsible for it. So, picking that up and looking at it, we saw that our expenses were too high. We had to start cutting things immediately in terms of some of our overtime we had to cut back and at the same time still provide the services that the community expects. So, we were able to do that, and you don't do that at on your own, you work as a team to do that. So, that was one of the first things that we had to do, really look at our current expenses and adjust and also communicating with our Town Manager where we were at, Ms. Villano. Also, with the Accountant, Ms. Collins as well as the Finance Committee. Looking to see if we could seek reserve funds for unexpected expenses for expenses that were.....and having a change of command can do that. You know when a Chief leaves there are certain things that we have to do if we are going to commit to an accreditation process. So, those were some of things that we developed immediately. In the interim we were also tasked with reducing our FY21 budget by up to 3%. We had to do that and also meet contractual obligations, pay raises and things like that. As well as other expenses that may be going up. So, we took a hard look at that as our plan and said how do we meet these expectations moving forward. So, basically developing a plan and essentially what we ended up doing is looking at our overtime costs and figuring out how we can do that as well as offset for officers we currently have on injured leave. So, there is a mechanism that is going to be built into the FY21 contract that is going to allow us to do that and that is what I factored into the plan going forward in order to meet that 3% budget reduction. I think there is a second part to your question, I'm not sure I answered yet.

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Mr. Rosenblum: Yeah, assuming that all parts of your budget are essential, where do you see the most need?

Lt. Brennan: So, where I see the most need is basically in expenses for overtime. I have certain things I may want to do in terms of programs and administration and also cover some of the contractual obligated vacation time and unforeseen sick leaves and injuries. So, in order to do all that if I want to concentrate on some of those programs what I may have to do, if I want to bring these programs to the community is really ask our officers to work on using compensatory time instead of overtime to do it and that is a leadership challenge. They have to understand you know what my goals are and the importance to the community.

Mr. Rosenblum: So, if you are appointed Chief of Police, when you retire when people speak of you, speak about your tenure as Chief what will be your defining accomplishment?

Lt. Brennan: If anything, you know I look at a department, what is your best resource in a department and the best resources that any department can have are it's people and if I am going to be seen in any way as successful, I want them to be able to look at the department's employees and see what I was able to do with my time with the employees that worked for me. So, if our employees, in my vision if I have a vision, to be anything would be to try and develop every officer to see themselves as leaders in the community, right because leaders lead by example. They go out of their way to take on more tasks and they commit to excellence and that's what I want to do. That's how I always approached things and that's kind of my expectations which are not always the easiest expectations to do. But if I can have officers see themselves as leaders and work in that way, I think I can improve the department.

Mr. Rosenblum: Okay, one last one. What is your weakness?

Lt. Brennan: My weakness, my current weakness I guess is not taking care of myself in terms of my own level of fitness that I want to achieve. I have certain things that I still want to do in my career professional development wise. I have a great opportunity to attend the FBI National Academy that has a physical component, a physical fitness component so I have to stay on top of that at the same time you know with the stress of everything and not let that fall into the rearview mirror and not make excuses for myself and stay disciplined in order to do that. I recognize that that is something I need to

do. Another thing that I think of in terms of weakness and this is not just personal but organizational, I was reflecting on this quote by Mark Twain and I will paraphrase because I don't know exactly what he says. "It's not what you know that gets you into trouble, it's what you think you know that just isn't so". I think about that and I say how to you mitigate what you don't know or what you think you know but isn't true and how do you that, I think, is by being... and always trying to improve yourself which goes against my first point.

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Mr. Rosenblum: Alright, I'm all set. Thank you.

Mrs. Fernandes: Mr. DeBarge.

Mr. DeBarge: Yes, Mrs. Fernandes.

Mrs. Fernandes: I'm wondering for the public if it might not be useful to have the camera on the applicant so that the public can see him when he's responding. Is that possible to do?

Mr. DeBarge: Yeah, it is. The corner one is. They talked about it before the meeting started Mrs. Fernandes.

Mrs. Fernandes: Sorry about that, I didn't realize that.

Mr. DeBarge: Are you ready for your questions?

Mrs. Fernandes: I am.

Mr. DeBarge: Okay. Go right ahead.

Mrs. Fernandes: Lt. Brennan.

Lt. Brennan: Hello.

Mrs. Fernandes: First of all, congratulations on making it here. You have a very impressive resume', application so congratulations on that.

Lt. Brennan: Thank you.

Mrs. Fernandes: As you know the job of the Chief requires that you fulfill, you keep three areas of the Town happy. One is the police, we would call the Chief of Cops Cop, the next would be the Government aspect of it, you know making sure budgets and things with the Town Government are running well and the other one is....and even as a Police Officer with your various experiences I'm sure you have had to deal with various aspects of these three and what do you think, what quality, what do you think that you bring that you can balance those three areas very well?

Lt. Brennan: So, I think in terms of those and I think a lot of people look at those three things as divided loyalties but the way I look at them is that your first loyalty I think is to the organization and the organizations loyalty needs to be to it's community. So, when you are the Chief of Police or the head of any department really, your loyalty should be whatever is best for the organization and if you consider that your first responsibility, I think that you can act appropriately. You know, whether it's a disciplinary matter, whether it's a budgetary matter, general accountability, the interest of the organization needs to take the first part. In terms of you know with the community I think that it's integral on the Chief of Police and what I intend to do is to build trust within the community and to be seen in all respects as our legitimacy as an organization needs to be held as unwaverable, like rock steady and that's I think the most important things that I can bring to that in terms of that question is steady leadership, trustworthy, that builds relationships with the community and that is not just transparent in what we are doing but also can be reached, you can get somebody on the phone and talk to somebody about whatever the problems may be.

Mrs. Fernandes: And I think in the community aspect one that can de-escalate issues. I know in my years here I had to deal with the Police Chief and a couple of issues with some residents and the Chiefs

at the time, there were two different Chief's and they de-escalated the issue and I think that is really important to keep that in mind too. Having empathy, I think with residents, anyone but residents in particular can de-escalate a lot of issues.

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Lt. Brennan: Yes, I agree.

Mrs. Fernandes: I'm sorry go ahead.

Lt. Brennan: I was just going to say a lot of empathy and compassion can go a long way to those goals.

Mrs. Fernandes: So, the next question is as you know this job as many jobs, they can change drastically over time. I'm sure no Chief was prepared to deal with a COVID pandemic. How do you plan to improve yourself, not just for a situation like a pandemic to prove yourself for the job for years to come?

Lt. Brennan: So, one of the first things I had an opportunity to do was, professional development wise, was to attend an FBI National Academy, which I still would hope to do and I would hope that would be supported. If it can't for budget reasons, I understand but I think that it would be an asset because I think that the skills, I could bring back would be straight to the community and one thing I would say is I'm not going anywhere for a while. I have 10 years at least in my career to go and if I would have rush back and said I have done everything I needed to now would be completely unwise. So, I realize that I need to work on my professional development every day that I am in this job and probably until I retire.

Mrs. Fernandes: Thank you. I know you responded to your weaknesses, what if myself or any other member of the Board or anybody in Town came to you and said that maybe one of your weaknesses that maybe that cops cop side of things that I talked to you about that maybe your co-workers don't feel as frustrated with you or as confident, how would address something like that?

Lt. Brennan: Well I guess I'm not sure what you mean. If cops cop a lot of times, I would relate that as a guy who doesn't hold others accountable. As oppose to maybe someone who doesn't.

Mrs. Fernandes: A cop's cop for me is what I am finding as a cop's cop would be for a Chief for example that is focused on the benefits of the police officers as oppose to the Town or the community. In doing so, you do have to have that portion of that we spoke, you have to have that respect from the other Police Officers but at the same time you have to be their leader and their Chief. So, how do you think, if there's an issue where the police and you who are your employees in this case, how would you address that?

Lt. Brennan: Well any relationship, whether it is with the community or with your own officers has to built around trust first and trust goes both ways but if I treat my officers fairly, consistently I think that and I'm seen as that, as fair and consistent, there's not too much more that you can really ask for. By the way not to overreact and to not micro manage, to let your officers and give them the skills and let them go out there and if they make small mistakes, to correct them. But hold them accountable and I think at the same time that benefits the community right. So, if you know the officers are being treated fairly and they understand how it works within the administration, I think that they are going to relay that out onto the street and into the community with whom they are interacting. I hope that answers your question.

Mrs. Fernandes: Yes, it does. How did you find the process of leading up to this interview today? Were you satisfied with it? Did you find that it should have some other aspect that it didn't cover?

Lt. Brennan: So, you know I've taken let's see four different promotional exams. I have taken a promotional exam for Sergeant, one for Lieutenant and actually this was my second time taking a Chief's assessment and I will just tell you that an assessment process is more comprehensive then some multiple choice question that you regurgitate answers that are in front of you on a page. You have to be able to articulate, think clearly and you have to have the experience necessary to answer the questions within the scenarios that are based. There is no way to study for that, you are either prepared or you are not and I thought I did well the first time I took it. Not good enough to get into the interview but it was a really good experience for me professionally. You know, when I talk to officers about taking promotional exams, I always tell them if anything it is good for your professional developments. That

was certainly an advantage taking it the first time and having that experience going into the second assessment. I found it to be comprehensive and the assessors were all Police Chiefs, I thought they were very fair, the assessment itself was very fair. It was stressful, and I think it was designed to be that way. Yeah, I would actually recommend it for any position of Chief. You might even want it for Lieutenant because that position, that is a very important position as well.

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Mrs. Fernandes: That's good to hear because I know we as a Board went to bat for that reason because from our understanding the intent...and they can put it in a way, they seek out those that have the natural ability for leadership as opposed to you know somebody who has a natural ability for tests so. Thank you very much. That's it for now.

Lt. Brennan: You are welcome. Good to see you.
Mr. DeBarge: Alright, thanks Mrs. Fernandes. Mr. Goncalves.

Mr. Goncalves: Thank you for your service and thanks for applying to be our Chief. We appreciate it. I am a big believe that the Town of Ludlow is facing a serious crisis on the streets with drugs, which lead obviously to other crime. How do you see where we have been the last 10 years to where we are now and how would you think you would want to tackle that problem, more of a community orientated policing or more of problem orientated policing and what would you implement?

Lt. Brennan: Well I tend to look at maybe all problems as community related problems. I think maybe some of the mistakes of law enforcement organizations in the past is we like to play in our own sandbox and not let the public in and maybe that kind of sent came from the secrecy of investigations and things like that. There is certainly a place for that where you can't be as transparent if you are conducting investigations. However, there is more than just an enforcement approach and what I mean by community approach the task force on twenty first century policing did a lot on this and looked at the opioid problem in general and they looked at three major things to address and one was the enforcement angle, which we kind of tried and not necessarily a true method but certainly can help to offset some but it wasn't an entire solution without community participation and the other two major ones were treatment and education and treatment relates to either we have voluntary rehab or in certain cases of involuntary commitments. Ten years ago, we didn't see involuntary commitments for substance abuse, now we see them. They have varying success you know because your forcing somebody maybe into treatment and some people have to want to get better so a lot of it is back on the individual. But the community now has the ability to see about getting their loved one, their friend into a treatment facility rather than maybe becoming a felon and you know maybe avoiding negative consequences and a black mark on their record in the future. So, that's why the treatment angle is so important. The other part is education. We recently, I just mentioned some programs that we were looking at, the DARE Program, we just recently brought that back to Ludlow. I know the DARE program had their fair share of criticism in the past, largely I think .....the criticism had to do with the curriculum being a little dated. You know having supervised that program I can tell you that some of the biggest critics of that program, the curriculum, the former curriculum are now proponents of the new curriculum which has a lot to do with critical thinking, critical decision making, giving children those skills along with social, emotional learning skills. They have updated their curriculum instead of drugs are bad obviously, it's how do you what skills can you use in stressful decisions when you have to make the right decision. So, that is largely what that program is about and it was exciting to bring that program back. I spoke with former DARE officers who were excited to hear that the program was being brought back. I think it's a great thing moving forward in the years going forward. We have two officers currently doing it, Officer John W...and Officer Gabriel Cardero, they are both training DARE Officers. Unfortunately, with the pandemic we didn't get to see it through this year but we were about to have eight classes graduate. They are the first classes to graduate in almost 20 years so it was, but we will bring the program back in the fall hopefully.

Mr. Goncalves: Great and that was the 2015 report, task force report?

Lt. Brennan: Yeah, I believe it was 2014, 2015 that was the...

Mr. Goncalves: Yeah, that was a good report. I am a big fan of the old days. You know I'm a Frank Steiner guy from 40 years ago. It seemed all the officers everybody knew everybody in Town.

Lt. Brennan: Right.

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Mr. Goncalves: You know they got out they met people, there wasn't that distance. I lived my whole life here, I probably spend more time driving the streets of Ludlow, besides you, then anybody else here or maybe Derek but I don't know any of these officers anymore. It seems rather than being out meeting people, they are parked on a side street hoping somebody goes speeding by or I'm not really sure but you know or in the school parking lot you know six hundred feet from the intersection. Would you be in favor of maybe getting these people a little closer to the action, out and meeting people, becoming more visible, more approachable because I think the officers have become inapproachable, you know.

Lt. Brennan: Yeah, I think that has a lot, some of it has to do with the way we were trained, coming through the academy to be somewhat aloof but it also goes against the community policing model where you want to be seen as approachable. The way I see it and looking at and I've considered the same kinds of things and by the way I was subjected to some of those same kinds of things that those officers are going through so I can relate to them. You are not going to do anything good you know generally if you are not interacting with the community and you know getting out there. Some of our programs are going to help do that, the DARE officer program gets those same officers maybe off that midnight shift and being able to interact with the schools. We just started a program this past year, crisis intervention teams. We are taking other officers out of maybe their general roles of policing, putting them into plain clothes and doing visits at homes with Social Workers and Medical Personnel to follow up on opioid related issues and substance abuse.

Mr. Goncalves: So, do you think right now with the, this will be my last question, do you think that the force that we have is sufficient, is it properly dedicated to let's say the Detective Bureau or traffic duties sufficient or do we need more officers, less officers, do we need to shift them amongst departments to maybe cure some of the things that are happening in Town?

Lt. Brennan: We have been struggling with staffing, although I will just say before I get too much into the struggles, there is a bright spot ahead here. We have we just graduated two officers from the Western Mass, excuse me from the Springfield Police Department's Academy and we still have two more that are currently they are doing this remotely but they are doing this at the Boylston Academy. So, that's four officers that we are going to be...up with addition we also had Matt, Officer Matthew Dent just come on through the training program and he's patrolling by him, he's eligible to patrol by himself just this year. So, you know considering what this past January well next January we will have like five additional officers that we didn't really have and hopefully you know with officers that have been injured they will be able to come back to duty or otherwise we can replace them, those who are out injured, with this additional staff. That allows us, I think a little more liberty, to you know get put people on our Detective Bureau and put people in those plain clothes roles or the more community policing related roles that you were talking about to get out into the community. It's very tough to do when you are trying to remain unfettered, so you can go to your next call and sometimes people just are, in uniform it can be very difficult. So, when you are not, and this is like an old term in policing, if you are not a slave to your radio, right you are just waiting for that radio to tell you the next call. When you are unencumbered by the radio and you are more free and more liberty to go out and do those types of roles that I'm talking about that really gets those officers out into the community and focused on those other programs that are more relatable to the public.

Mr. Goncalves: Thank you very much.

Mr. DeBarge: Alright, my turn. I will, oh we still have time. Okay, Lieutenant with so many critical issues with policing today many Police Chief's report, I did some homework on this, many Police Chief's report that the number one issue with smaller Police Department's is the recruitment and retention of new officers, fewer and fewer young people are interested in policing in this day and age. A complication to this issue in Massachusetts is the Civil Service System. How does a Police Chief build a Civil Service list with excellent candidates and what outreach efforts are made?

Lt. Brennan: Your best recruiters in any department, whether it's a Police Department or any department, are the officers and the employees of that particular department. So, if the officers see themselves, see it as they are proud of what they do, as a good place to work like I did when I was an intern, they will want to come to the department in the way that I did even though it was a pay cut for

me. So, looking at it that way your best officers or your best recruiters are your officers and it is a challenge because we are also faced with your modern day problems of use of force situations that may not occur in the Town of Ludlow but they occur within the United States and they do have an effect on recruiting within any police agency. The amount of scrutiny and lack of trust or the lack of legitimacy that police maybe see....a lot of students may look at that and say you know maybe that is not for me or I don't want to subject myself to that. For me, it was a calling like I don't think you could convince me otherwise to not come and be a Police Officer. It was a calling for me to join the military as well. So, you know a lot of those young people already have that in them. So, if we can relate to those young people so that they can see that it is a good place to work then I think we can keep recruitment up and retention is one of them.

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Mr. DeBarge: Okay according to a national census between 2010 and 2018 our Town residents ages 50 and up account for approximately 42.2% of our total population. Ludlow..... As a Police Department with outreach to our senior population, I believe we have lost a step since... retired. Excluding the initiative of any individual police officer and the somewhat.....in my opinion, what more ideas would you propose to engage, educate and protect our older residents of Ludlow.

Lt. Brennan: So, one of things that we had started kind of recently was we reached out to our Senior Center and in face they also reached out to us about a coffee with a cop program. A lot of our senior community are very interested in knowing what their Police Department is doing and when you look at the senior population in general, they tend to have more fears about the future. A lot of it has to do with what they experienced in the past and they want to know that the Police Department is there for them and you know one of the ways we did that was with coffee with a cop, not just myself but members of the Detective Bureau have gone down there and like you mentioned some individual initiatives, checking in on areas where many of the seniors congregate. Of course, it's been difficult under the pandemic, but at the same time some of those very seniors maybe in more need. So, we try to keep ourselves available as much as possible to reach out to them and provide them whatever assistance they may have. If we can't do it then we try to refer or get them referred to senior services or other elder affair services. You know it's one of those areas that is just can be underrepresented or forgotten and you just can't do that.

Mr. DeBarge: I have one more. Okay, I would like to get your feelings on this issue, someone gets arrested in town, what is the criteria between getting their picture versus their name in the paper?

Lt. Brennan: Getting their picture versus their name; so, I would say generally the photograph is taken at a booking process. So, if somebody's photograph appears in the paper, it's generally also with their name and you are saying when it is just their name that is maybe going in the paper versus not their photograph.

Mr. DeBarge: The difference between the arrest that gets their picture versus their name?

Lt. Brennan: A lot of times it may come down to just process. So, if there is an actual booking photo and sometimes it is just the media, so we may submit a photo along with a name and they just print a name. They generally tend to like photos so usually they will print the photo. But, it's often times what the media requests or when they request it. So, sometimes there will be an incident going on and they are calling before we are even finished the paperwork, you know looking for who was arrested and what the situation was and sometimes all we are able to do is just provide a name because that's all the Sergeant has the ability to do and then maybe followed up by a press release you know performed by our public information officer, which is currently Lieutenant Valadas, who will put together and actual press release which may include a photograph. So, there's not, I don't think it would suggest any general criteria in which a name would be released and not a photograph. The only other thing I can think would be for an evidentiary issue where we are unable to release a photograph but generally if that is the case we are unable to release a name and according to public records laws there are certain times when we can't do either because if it is a domestic violence type case and this is probably the biggest one we get because it is one of the more common arrests where we are unable to release anything. We won't be able to do that, we won't be able to release a photograph or name. We may be able to release it was a town resident, maybe the age but that's about it and what the charges were but other times we can release that information, it depends if they have been arraigned or not and sometimes you can go forward. So, the public records law on domestic violence is a little bit nuanced when it comes to that so

that's probably the biggest issue when a photograph or a name may be released or may not be released is maybe domestic violence.

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Mr. DeBarge: And finally as a caveat to that as Chief you get a call from a relative of yours from a neighboring town their child, a relative of yours gets arrested you are familiar with or friends with the Chief of that town and your relative asks you to keep that relative of yours out of the paper and you can do that by contacting the Chief that you are friendly with because you have been Chief for a while, what do you do?

Lt. Brennan: So, some of this is some basic integrity issues. So, what I would suggest to my relative I would say you know you can make that request yourself you know if in times there may be a situation we have gotten request somebody doesn't want a photo or a certain thing released because they don't and it's usually an attorney that will contact and request that and we try to honor that as much as possible. But, you know I think that it could be perceived as a possible ethics, and ethical violation you know and in as much as that might be possible and totally legal, I would not put the town in a situation where the Chief's ethics could be possibly called to question and thereby embarrassing the Town of Ludlow and then you know forcing the Board as a point of authority to have to step in or investigate it. So, I respect you know that as Chief of Police people are looking at me, you know what I do, am I disciplined, am I holding myself accountable. In that situation I would probably like anything else that we do I would say that's a request that you may ask yourself and I would probably guide them and tell them how to do that but as Chief of Police I don't think I could do that. I wouldn't want to betray the trust of some other Chief and put him that position or her.

Mr. DeBarge: Thank you. Any further questions? Your closing comments please.

Lt. Brennan: Alright well anyway I was very eager to come before you and answer your questions, all great questions. It made me think, some of them were really good and unexpected. So, I enjoy the challenge, I really do. It has been a real honor to serve in my capacity and as a Police Officer for the Town of Ludlow, especially these last four months. Like I told you before it has been a tremendous learning experience. I don't think that I would have any success without the officers that work for my department. You know, I can write these policies and we can put them into place and you know we can give them the equipment but it's up to the officers to come through. Just coming to work every day under the pandemic is, you know I look at these men and women of our department you know to each employee, not just the officers, the dispatchers as well. They have been coming every day and just for that alone, I am just you know a little bit of a... just something as simple as that. So, I really appreciate what they have been doing, coming together, not the best situation to be working under but they do it and they do it with pride and grace and I really appreciate that and I just want to say that I appreciate your responsibility in appointing the next Chief of Police that can't be an easy, that's not an easy task. It's a tremendous responsibility and I just want to tell you, you know as somebody who has had to have made some difficult decisions, I really appreciate what you have to do. So, thank you for that.

Mr. DeBarge: Thank you very much.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you.

Mrs. Fernandes: Mr. DeBarge.

Mr. DeBarge: Mrs. Fernandes.

Mrs. Fernandes: I did want to ask him one other question if it is possible.

Mr. DeBarge: Go right ahead.

Mrs. Fernandes: I'm sorry.

Mr. DeBarge: Go right ahead.

Mrs. Fernandes: Okay, Mr. Brennan what do you think is the Police Department's biggest weakness and where do you think you can get that department in the next ten years?

Lt. Brennan: So, the biggest weakness right now I think would be some of our budgetary limitations. We just had to cut like 3%. I'm nervous, personally nervous, I don't know what the budget projects as maybe going forward or how the economy looks. Those are some challenges that I hope don't come to fruition. I want to, I would like to expand the department to the point where we can meet some of those goals but to do so and not a rate that will cripple the town's budget or anything like that. I want to be able to grow it but to meet the expectations. Currently we have the opioid epidemic that has been raised, it's to me that we put some harm reduction measures in place, we have adopted Narcan, we have done some education but some of the overdoses or at least fatal overdoses have reduced but it is still very much a complex problem that we need to still stay on top of. I would like to see it where we get to a point where we are not in an any epidemic whether it's the opioid thing or the pandemic or whatever, we are moving on a path that we can stay confident for it and every officer can step forward as a leader and that's what I want to see addressed. In the next ten years, when I leave every officer is a leader within the agency.

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Mrs. Fernandes: Thank you.

Mr. DeBarge: All set?

Mrs. Fernandes: All set.

Mr. DeBarge: Okay. Thanks Lieutenant.

Lt. Brennan: Thank you.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you Lieutenant.

Mr. Silva: Thank you.

Mr. Goncalves: Thank you.

6:15 p.m. – Police Chief Interviews – Sgt. Davis Irwin

Mr. DeBarge: Sergeant Irwin how are you?

Sgt. Irwin: Good how are you. Wish I could shake all of your hands but fortunately I know we have the protocols.

Mr. DeBarge: Not anymore.

Sgt. Irwin: Carmina, where is she?

Mr. Goncalves: Right there.

Sgt. Irwin: Oh, there we go. Good morning ma'am, evening ma'am.

Mr. Goncalves: Carmina smile for the camera. There you go. There she is.

Mr. DeBarge: She said she can't see you yet. Alright, Sergeant Irwin welcome and congratulations.

Sgt. Irwin: Thank you.

Mr. DeBarge: Making it into the interview for Police Chief. We will begin your session with us with your opening statement.

Sgt. Irwin: Okay, thank you very much. I'm glad a chance to make an opening statement. I think there is something very important that needs to be addressed in Law Enforcement right now and that is the importance of Officer wellness and safety right now. I think that every Chief of Police needs to make it a priority going forward. We need to break through the stigma associated with having an issue, wanting

to ask for help but being afraid to ask for help right now. You know I have done some research on things; our line of duty deaths is going down which is excellent to hear, and I think a lot of that is the training that officers receive both within this department and law enforcement in general. But unfortunately, mental health issues and police suicides are on the rise. The Massachusetts based company Blue Help out of Auburn, they have been keeping track of Law Enforcement suicides since 2016 and they even admit that it is not the perfect methodology because it is either voluntary reporting or what they get from open source information. But to just give you some quick numbers, I will try not to bore you with statistics but in 2016 there were 140 reported Law Enforcement suicides that they were able to gather and that has risen through 2017 and 2018 to 159 for both years and in 2019 there were 228.

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Mr. Rosenblum: In Massachusetts?

Sgt. Irwin: No this is nationwide but they track it through voluntary reporting and the open source information that they can find. Conversely the Law Enforcement deaths, Law Enforcement Officers killed or assaulted in the line of duty has dropped from 2016 of 118 down to 2019, you know through the years to 2019 they are down to 89. So, I think the next Chief of Police for this Town needs to meet this issue head on and let officer's know that it is okay to ask for help and if they need services they will get them, they will be confidential, they will not be losing their pistol permits, they will not be losing the ability to work and provide for their families. As recently as May 9th on Policeone.com, that's my homepage when I log onto the internet at work, first thing I go to is that website. It is very informative of about all sorts of issues with Law Enforcement, I make sure to try and check it at least daily. There was a case out of the First Circuit Court of Appeals which covers Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Puerto Rico and for those that think that you know maybe the job isn't as stressful as it is if I can just read a quote from that case. "A Police Officer over an above his weighty responsibilities for enforcing the criminal law, must act of a master of all emergencies who is expected to aid those in distress, combat actual hazards, prevent potential hazards and provide an infinite variety of services to preserve and protect community safety". I challenge you to find another all-encompassing job description like that anywhere. You know since I started in 2010 the job has changed. Certain events like Ferguson with Michael Brown, the Freddie Gray incident in Baltimore, Eric Gardner, those are the more prominent ones that come to mind. Those put Law Enforcement under even more intense microscope and I'm fine having people, having critiques. It's actually a good thing, it keeps us accountable, it keeps us honest, it keeps us working to provide a higher level of service but there is no question that we are asked to do things that no other occupation has to do and that we were never asked to do before. So, with that said, some of the reasons that cause officers to have these problems are the repeated exposure to trauma. From small and midsize agencies I found a study it's called Critical Instant History Questionnaire Replication by Chopko, Palmieri and Adams from 2015 and it says over their career officers average 188 critical incidents that they respond to and imagine if you were in a fight and you were getting hit 188 times in the head, your brain would be mush all right and I think we need to do a better job as leaders in Law Enforcement to make sure that officers feels that they can come forward and get the help they need. I think there is a lot of programs out there, I don't think we necessarily need to reinvent the wheel on this. Some of the ones that are available are the leader program in Boston that was started by a Sergeant post Boston Marathon. There are resilience trainings for the University of Pennsylvania that I am exploring trying to take that, the course is actually free, I'm going to sign up to take that and see what it's about, see if it's worth bringing back to the department. There are peer support quizzes from the American Federation of Suicide Prevention, those are highlighted by Mass Cop, which another kind of union laborer organization in Massachusetts that they sponsor that and then the National Suicide Prevention life line has all sorts of resources. So, the services are out there and I want to give credit where credit is due to Chief Madera, we do have an employee assistance program and we do have a doctor, Doctor Galla who is a former Police Officer so he has credibility on this topic. But I do think that in general in the Law Enforcement Community everyone is worried about the confidentiality and being able to maintain their jobs. So, I think that we need to work through this you know I think the next Police Chief needs to take ownership of this issue, bring the doctor in even if he's just there to say hi, you don't have to go see him for anything in particular but just to start breaking down this barrier that it's not okay to talk to a professional about things. I can tell you if I was Chief of Police on the first day, I would have little key tags for the National Suicide Prevention Life Line that I put on the cruiser keys. So, that if you are having a problem, if you don't know where else to turn you see that number at the beginning and the end of your shift. Thank you.

Mr. DeBarge: Thank you for that opening statement. Very informative. Let's see, Mrs. Fernandes do you want to start us off?

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Mrs. Fernandes: Sure.

Mr. DeBarge: Thank you.

Mrs. Fernandes: Well Mr. Irwin, a good Chief, a good Police Chief has to balance the interest of three areas in the community; one as I mentioned to Mr. Brennan is being a Cop's Cop. So, as a Police Chief your Police Officers have to respect you, I feel at times like you are on their side, not always on the Town's side or whatever. The other is obviously you have to represent the interest of the Town government. So, with that falls a lot of the budgetary requirements you know administrative etc. But there also has to be focus on community reach out. What qualities do you think you have that fit within those three requirements?

Sgt. Irwin: Well I think one of the most important qualities to have is to be a good communicator. You need to be able to communicate your positions to all three of those areas, right; to your officers, to the Town's people to whom you report, Town Government to whom you report on a daily basis and then the community in general, who you ultimately serve. So, you have to be able to communicate your ideas, you have to be receptive of criticism, you have to seek out feedback, you know there's a reason that we have two eyes, two ears and one mouth. You need to listen and get good input before you can make a good decision on things like that. I know for me you have kind of let people know how you are thinking, you really do, you can't keep things too close to the chest and at work with me it's kind of a blessing and a curse. If one of my officers comes to me with a question, unless it is something urgent and has to be done right away, they need an answer right away, they get three answers, they get the short version, just enough to accomplish what they are trying to do, they get the long version you know as far as you can do the minimum, you can do the maximum and then what I call the Goldie Locks, it's kind of the middle of the road. But they get all three from me so that they see where I'm coming from and they can kind of tell they know which one I want them to kind of go with in a given situation but ultimately let them make the choice but I lay it all out there for them. So, hopefully by doing that, they learn three times as much...and make them better.

Mrs. Fernandes: What about addressing the Government Representative side?

Sgt. Irwin: I mean it kind of I guess I need to take the Town Government personnel lead as far as what the issue is or whatnot. I mean I know that I would be the Chief Executive for the agency, but I still report to the Police Commission, the Board of Selectmen and ultimately the people. As far as how we could get that message out or communicate with more people, I would be very open to having quarterly meetings. You can't have a Town meeting per se but I would like to offer a forum to residents to be able to, either to the residents directly or through their elected officials, you have an open forum whether it's questions, whether it's concerns anything that they want to mention by all means and also with that too I know that's Government and then the community. I think the community policing which we have a commitment to should be driven by the community. I don't think it should necessarily be the Police Chief actually that sets the agenda on what's important because while I have well as a Police Chief if I was to be appointed, I would have final authority and final responsibility and final accountability on the issue, I'd like to know what the Town is thinking. So, I would want to send a survey to every residence and every business in the Town to find out what issues are important to them, what's the priority in their neighborhood and then see how we can address it from there.

Mrs. Fernandes: That's a good lead-in to my next question. What do you think in your years at the Ludlow Police Department, what do you think are the current weaknesses in the Department and how would you see the department in ten years if you were to be elected Chief?

Sgt. Irwin: Current weakness in the Department is that while we have made great strides in one of the pillars of policing from the Obama report on building trust and legitimacy and policy and oversight, those kinds of blend together, I don't think we have done a good enough job tailoring the policies and whatnot to the Town of Ludlow. Policing is very different in a big metropolis as opposed to a smaller town and I think that I don't see the argument against certification and accreditation as far as...practices for building trust and legitimacy within the community but I do think that some of these policies that we

have don't best reflect what we could be doing in the Police Department. The fire arms instructor, the use of force is something that is very important to me. I'm scheduled to go to defensive tactics training to become an instructor on that and I think that for instance our use of force policy at twenty something pages is too long. In intense and rapidly unfolding circumstances that our officers can face on the street, they should not have to be thinking through twenty-two plus pages of am I doing this right. It should be clear; it should be concise, and they should be able to work with that. Along those lines, some of the policing that we have tests at the end of them that we have to complete and I would like to see those tests changed from kind of just you know pick out the verbatim answer in the policy to more of a situational based and make them gray area situational based, because when you read the policy you can understand the black and white and you know what you can do versus what you can't do you know if you have common sense and you are trying to do the right thing that will take care of itself. It's those more difficult issues, those scenarios and scenes and circumstances that you don't deal with often, I think those tests should be tailored toward those situations so that when an Officer has an understanding of those, it guarantees the Officer is going to have an understanding of the rest of the policy because to simply read a policy and then check off at the end that I read it, I understand it, I'm going to follow it and then sign off on that, that sends a mixed message to the Officers.

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Mrs. Fernandes: I'm sure Mr. Rosenblum is going to ask you a question about... I'm not asking you.... What if you...like I said a good Chief needs to appease these three areas that I already mentioned. ... You are obviously a Cop's Cop just by your opening statement, your obviously very interest in making sure the Officers are healthy and especially with the wellbeing. How would you address like the lack of experience with a Police Chief?

Sgt. Irwin: Well I would say that length of service and experience are two completely different things. Your experience is what you do, the amount of experience that you have is what you have done with the time and opportunities available to you. Now I can say personally I have sought out opportunities to assume more responsibility, take on roles that effect more personnel in the department, right now I do some certain jobs that the previous operations Lieutenant did, Lieutenant Metcalf. I'm now doing something that Chief Madera did with the Federal and State Body Armor Program where that's procurement, that's tracking, that's distributing, that's accounting for all of these pieces of equipment that we have. So, I have tried to seize every opportunity to better myself, extend my breath of knowledge, as well as my depth of knowledge in police operations.

Mrs. Fernandes: Okay, thank you and...

Sgt. Irwin: And actually, if I could just add one more thing to that and I have yet to, I have yet to get feedback from my superiors, whether it is the Chief or the two Lieutenants that my work product is poor. So, they see fit to give me ever increasing responsibilities and I am always happy to except it.

Mrs. Fernandes: Okay, and how did you find the process of getting here to this interview, you know the Civil Service Exam and the Chief's Assessment, how did you find that experience? Do you think it's fair? What do you like about it, what don't you like about it?

Sgt. Irwin: I thought it was a very fair test. I thought it was a great experience. I thought that it was actually something that I really wanted to do to prove to people who may question my experience and my abilities, that I can score the same if not better than some of my peers in Law Enforcement who have been doing this job a lot longer than I have. You know I still think that the Civil Service test is important, the actual multiple choice test that we have, that we use the process for Sergeant and Lieutenant is a very good test in that if nothing else it separates people who say they want to do the job from those who actually want to do the job because you need to study, you need to put the time in and even though the answer is on the paper, you still need to put time in over months and months and months to learn that material and be able to test well. Now as for the Chief's assessment, that is a completely different style of learning your abilities and I'm glad that I scored as well as I did in it because the answer for the detractors from a test process, multiple choice were the answer is on the paper, the answer is not there in the assessment center, you need to produce, you need to know, you need to have listened, watched and learned and seen what works in Policing and what doesn't at the command level otherwise you are not going to score well because it is former or current Chief's who are assessing you and they know they have walked the walk, they have talked the talk and they walked the walk and you are not going to be able to fool them. You know it, or you don't, and it is going to be reflective in your score.

Mrs. Fernandes: Thank you and finally I didn't plan to prove, no one is perfect and if you were to be selected as Chief, how do you plan on improving yourself through the duration of your job, which hopefully will be for many years?

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Sgt. Irwin: Well one way to improve myself would be to impower more people, have more people in the conversation to give input as I make decisions and whatnot. Like I said in our job description, it says the Chief is the final authority on policy, operations and discipline but that doesn't necessarily mean you are the only authority. Listen to people, get their input and if you constantly ignore good ideas then it will show. If you listen to people you will learn, and I call it force multiplier, you will gain that much more knowledge because you are listening to other points of view. That's more on the macro, on the micro I think that I would, my first thing upon being appointed as Chief of Police would be to enroll in an Accounting program. I've looked at Southern New Hampshire State for their Accounting program, a Police Chief is in charge of a multi-million dollar budget and I think that some of the courses that I can take, I was looking at some of them like Forensics Accounting for instance to find if we are not being as efficient as we can with the budget, find better ways to spend our dollars for the Police Department gets, I think that would be a great asset. So, I think knowing one of my weaknesses which is budgeting I would make sure to address it right away.

Mrs. Fernandes: Thank you.

Mr. DeBarge: Thanks Mrs. Fernandes. Mr. Goncalves.

Mr. Goncalves: So, actually you took one of those too, political corruption courses, didn't you?

Sgt. Irwin: Yes.

Mr. Goncalves: Yes, corruption...yeah, I remember that so. I guess I am from the old school and in the old days Police used to come out and meet and greet and be a part of the community where now it seems they are a little bit more allusive. We really don't, I mean as much time as I spend here in Town, I don't think I know, maybe I know ten officers. Where we knew them all once upon a time. Do you think it is important to bring that type of Policing back to the community? Get people involved, get the Officers involved, get them out to where everybody knows their name. They feel comfortable to an extent.

Sgt. Irwin: Yes, absolutely. I mean part of our mission statement is the commitment to community policing and promoting public safety and gaining trust and respect in return and in the twenty-first century now policing, there is no way around it, we are 911 driven, 911 is not going to stop and you do have to answer those calls for service in addition to crimes that are occurring but I think that we have one of the most untapped resources in town and in the area and that is our Special Police Force and I would like to see them used more either in community outreach activities or because the goal is to get them trained to the same level as the full time Officers to cover patrol shifts so that the full time Officers can do some of that outreach or a combination of both. But I can tell you that the Special Police wear the same uniform, 99.9% of the uniform is the same, the only thing that is different is the ½ inch letters that say Special on the patch okay but to the average citizen, whether they live in Ludlow or not that's a Ludlow Police Officer. So, I think they should be trained to the same standards and doing the same job and let's face it they want to, it's a volunteer force, they wouldn't be here if they didn't want to. So, I think that they could be used a lot more than they are currently.

Mr. Goncalves: Okay, thank you.

Sgt. Irwin: And every day, oh sorry, every day that I walk into work I see the bicycles on the rack in the downstairs garage and I think that it would be best when we get our personnel out, we have two in field training right now, we have two more in the academy, when they get out and the shifts are up to full staff, I would like to see someone out on the bike every night. Whether it's a four-hour shift or an eight-hour shift. My old department in Longmeadow you used to, you had the option, but everyone used to do eight-hour shifts because it was great, you could get out, you could see people, you could do different things, interact with people and I think that would be great. My story of Officer Fernandes, you said you remember all of the Officers back in the day, I say that Dennis Fernandes was the scariest

individual I ever met as a kid because he pulled me over while I was riding my bike one day down the street and started filling out paperwork and I am going oh I'm in trouble, wait until my parents, what did I do I was just riding my bike and he gives me an ice cream ticket to DD, when it was DD because I was wearing my helmet and I tell that story saying Dennis Fernandes was scary because it's just funny because that's not him at all but I remember Dennis Fernandes when I was a kid, he's the one officer that I remember because of those community outreach programs.

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Mr. Goncalves: It's funny you say that because I have no parking in front of my office on one side of the street and I don't think a customer ever parked there. That day Dennis go by and he was right behind, before they were in the door he was already putting the ticket on the windshield like ESP.

Mr. DeBarge: Everyone has a Dennis Fernandes story.

Mr. Goncalves: Yeah, so admittedly in the last ten years you have seen the drug issue explode here really everywhere.

Sgt. Irwin: Yes.

Mr. Goncalves: How do you tackle that? What are you thinking? How do we stop that?

Sgt. Irwin: Well, it was actually just before Chief Madera announced that he was retiring but I knew there was an open Emergency Medical Technician, EMT slot in the department so I put in for it and I got it and I was able to get through the program right before COVID hit so I am a certified EMT now. One of the things you have to do as an EMT is CPR and I think that we are doing a lot better as far as getting Narcan out into the public for people. I think there are a lot of services and a lot of groups like the Michael J. Dias foundation in town, but I think one area that we could improve upon and capitalize is CPR instruction so that these people a lot of these people, victims of overdose, they are overdosing in their homes or their overdosing in a public, you know like a Pride bathroom or something like that. If we could work with some of the local organizations to teach CPR, have a lot of CPR classes for the community so people could learn that. That would be a critical lifesaving skill that will keep them alive until we can get there and get them help and get them to the hospital.

Mr. Goncalves: Staffing, looking at our department right now, do we have the right amount of people focusing on the right amount of areas? In other words, you know are we doing community policing more or problem-solving policing and is the mix of our force, whether it's who is on traffic, who is maybe working as detectives and are we looking for the drug deals, are we looking for the drunk drivers, are we looking for the speeders? Are we in the right place, we have the right amount of people where we need them, or do you see shifting anybody within the department around to focus on something that is an issue?

Sgt. Irwin: Well, in general terms I am more of a generalist in policing. I don't, we need specializations right, you need a detective bureau, you need someone who, a sexual assault investigator you know specifically to follow up on those types of issues. But I would like to see it where, like I've tried to retain a wider breath for a lack of a better term of experience and depth of it. I'd like to see the officers get that. So, I'd like to see them learn more skills then just if you are on patrol that doesn't mean that you are always doing patrol, you can learn some of the skills the detective bureau has. You might be on the special response team but that doesn't mean that only the special response team should be able to confidently know that they can kick in a door and go get the bad guys for lack of a better term. Like I said with community outreach, I think we can be doing more with that, I really do and I have the solution to do that, which is to use all of our officers not just the regular force but also the special force. But staffing you can never have enough. I will be the proponent for that, if I was to be appointed to the Chief of Police, I would make retaining people and hiring as many people as possible my second priority after what I mentioned in the beginning.

Mr. Goncalves: Thank you. I'm good. Thank you.

Mr. DeBarge: Thank you Tony. Mr. Silva.

Mr. Silva: Congratulations for making it this far and thanking for stepping up.

Sgt. Irwin: Thank you sir. Thank you.

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Mr. Silva: I just have three pretty simple questions for you. What do you bring to the Town of Ludlow that sets you above the rest of the candidates?

Sgt. Irwin: I think what I have that certain candidates may not have as much of is the willingness and the desire to never stop learning. That's learning from other people in the community, that learning is from other people in the department, whether it's reading case law, whether it's watching the abuse of force on you tube and analyzing it, actually that is one of my favorite things to do, is at the beginning of shift when I have the officers in my office if somethings come up that I see on Police One or you see on the news cycle, will watch that clip if there's time you know for the first 15 minutes or so will watch it and then it's an open floor, we are all the same, I want everyone's opinion, I want to know what they're thinking, I want to know what are they thinking that I wasn't that's good, I want to know what they're thinking that I wasn't that I as a Sergeant didn't think was good and I feel it's my duty you know to tell them, that maybe you want to look at it this way type deal. I think that is what I have, is that desire to never stop learning. You see in my question, I said before, first thing I would do is sign up for an Accounting class or an Accounting program.

Mr. Silva: Now Ludlow is very diverse community with many different ethnic groups and do you, can you converse in any other language besides English?

Sgt. Irwin: I cannot.

Mr. Silva: Thank you.

Mr. Goncalves: He has English, English and American English.

Sgt. Irwin: Thank you, yes, yes.

Mr. Silva: Then there's southern English too.

Mr. Goncalves: No, he's from England.

Sgt. Irwin: ...if we are really getting technical but no, we will save that for post...

Mr. Silva: My final question, what one thing intrigues you about Ludlow the most?

Sgt. Irwin: One thing that intrigues me about Ludlow the most. I would say because of how diverse it is. Not only in terms of people like you said we have a lot of different groups, ethnic groups and you know along those lines. But also, the town itself, the makeup of it. I said this in my interview when I came over here, I was excited to get out Longmeadow which was very homeostasis in that it was a bedroom community, there were few businesses, what you see is what you get day in and day out. I like here, we have a different feel throughout our Town. We have more of a downtown city feel, we have a suburban feel and then we have the rural feel and all three areas of town you have that, and I think it is great. It's a great mix of people.

Mr. Silva: Thank you.

Mr. DeBarge: Thank you Mr. Silva. Mr. Rosenblum.

Mr. Rosenblum: First of all, I'd like to say congratulations, you should be proud of your accomplishment getting to this point. Also, be considered for probably one of the toughest, most high profile positions a municipality could probably offer. With that, I think you already touched on it a little bit but that's one of my questions so with the pandemic it has been evident over the last two and half month's life has changed and so will budgets. What experience do you have in developing and managing an operating capital budget and assuming all areas of budget are essential where do you see the most need?

Sgt. Irwin: So, I don't have experience operating a capital budget, but I have been introduced to that responsibility since becoming the firearms supervisor. So, I am responsible for planning for the year our two trainings, our two qualifications and everything that goes with it. I'm sure I'm going to be critiqued. Again, like I said critics are good, they keep you honest. I know Selectman DeBarge was a firearms instructor but it's everything, it's ammunition, it's targets, its target stands, you know the lumber from Home Depot, it's staples, it's paper targets, paper practice targets not just the qualification ones. It's scheduling, see who we can get out to the range in lieu of shift and then it's overtime and then it's also the instructor's cost and then can we do some ....swap, can we do some as comp time, can we do some as overtime. So, I definitely learned the process as far as trying to juggle in all of those different things and try to come up with a product that is best for the agency and for the officers. Part of your question was...

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Mr. Rosenblum: I said assuming all of the areas of the budget are essential, where do you see the most need in the budget? Line item or...

Sgt. Irwin: Sure, you know we have, I'm glad you brought that up as far as line items. One thing if I were Chief of Police that I might change a little bit would be to have a less generic, more specific budget as far as those line items. I might subdivide them a little bit further so for protective equipment I might have say for instance firearms or rifles be their own separate thing so that we can budget for purchasing new equipment each year instead of coming, you know either trying to get it into the operating budget or requesting through capital improvements. Let's say we need to replace our ...rifles, I'd like to try and get it into the budget so that were, just like our cruisers. We do two cruisers a year, I'd like to try and do something like that. But staffing is absolutely the most important, don't want to see anyone cut. I think a Police Chief has failed if they lose people.

Mr. Rosenblum: Okay. So, if you are appointed Chief of Police, when you retire and when people think back and speak about your tenure as Chief, what would be your defining accomplishment?

Sgt. Irwin: I think my defining accomplishment would be bringing the department through the period of change that is coming. I think within the next five years or ten years we will have body cameras; we will have cruiser cameras. There will be facial recognition technology. I think that the key to bring us through that transition successfully, I'm going to say it again, is collaborating and that means working with both union heads...like Selectman Fernandes said you have to answer to the officers and you have to answer to the town. So, you have to collaborate with both union heads, union boards as well as the town to come up with the policies that are air tight, support the officers, defend the town and the officers from liability as we navigate through these challenges.

Mr. Rosenblum: And I have just one more, obviously Mrs. Fernandes and I kind of close on the same question here is just flat out what is your weakness? What do you believe your weakness to be?

Sgt. Irwin: I think that I am just too much of a perfectionist. I need to separate trying to achieve perfection from actively attaining it, which you are never going to do. I know I can get frustrated with that when things don't go exactly right and according to plan. That's the biggest take away as I have progressed through my career is that planning is everything, but the plan is nothing. You have to be willing to change things, something is going to happen, I feel like as a Chief you need to be willing to accept bad news well because it is going to happen, through whether it's budgets, whether it's personnel issues, whether it's a complaint things like that but as long as you are trying to do the right thing, it will pan out in the long run. I will add one more, why not while I'm at it, I definitely could be a bit more empathetic when I'm talking with some of my officers when things come up and let me explain it a little bit. If an officer comes to me and this, I think is a great thing I think because officers do feel that they can come to me and say hey I might have messed up here, this happened.

Mrs. Fernandes: Sorry about that.

Sgt. Irwin: No, that's fine. You know this situation happened, not sure what to do and right away I go into okay what happened, is this, I go through the formula that I learned from the previous Chief. Is this good for the Department, is this good for my officer, is this good for me and I just go right through that. I'm thinking okay what would this defense Attorney do, what would this person do, what would this public....those types of things. I start thinking of everything that could hurt the officer first and I focus

on that more logic, fact-oriented part rather than necessarily concerning the officer's feelings or what happened. Oh, they feel a certain way about this, they are bringing it up, so they are thinking this. So, I am working on it and what I would like to try to do is have conversations where when they tell me something my first thing is saying it is going to be okay rather than let me think, go through it all, okay I have thought it all through, it's going to be okay now. I would like to kind of get that out first.

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Mr. Rosenblum: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. DeBarge: Okay, Sergeant Irwin again congratulations for being here tonight.

Sgt. Irwin: Thank you.

Mr. DeBarge: Oh my God my sons are going to be laughing at that. Whenever my voice cracks, they can't stop laughing. Alright, with so many political issues existing in policing today, many Police Chiefs report that the number one issue of smaller Police Departments is the recruitment and retention of new Police Officers. Fewer and fewer young people are interested in policing now a days. A complication to this issue in Massachusetts is the civil service system. How does a Police Chief fill the civil service list with excellent candidates and what outreach efforts are made to do so?

Sgt. Irwin: I think the outreach efforts could be better than what they are. We are fortunate that we get the candidates that we do. I'm happy to work with every officer that is in the department right now, but I think that we could reach out a little bit more in the high school. We could go into the high schools because the civil service list is based on residency and I think that we could start trying to attract candidates at an earlier age. Reaching out as early as middle school and where the primary emphasis is on DARE and programs like that. I think we could take it to the next step a lot of that is in the elementary schools too. I think at the middle school level and then going into high school we could and try and reach out and sort of get people on the path to at least thinking about policing. I know for me I benefited from that sort of philosophy. It wasn't with police departments coming into high school, but I took the Military ASVAB test my junior year and that is one of the reasons that I am a Police Officer today because I scored the highest in the social services areas like police, fire all that. So, one of my passions growing up was Construction Management because my father was in construction. He designed and laid every brick in our house. Unfortunately, when he passed, and it was then time to go to college and looking at $40,000 for Wentworth Institute in Boston for Construction Management or $15,000 at Westfield State for Criminal Justice and they were both passions but ultimately, I went with what that ASVAB test said which was the social services and I thought policing was the way to go. But I think that influence earlier on rather than waiting until you are a senior or in college deciding oh what do I want to do? I think if you plant the seed earlier and then let it germinate, let people do whatever they want, don't pressure them but I think if you reach out to them earlier, it would pay off in the long run.

Mr. DeBarge: Okay. Thank you. Next, according to a national census between 2010 and 2018 our town residents age 50 and up account for approximately 42.2% of our total population. Ludlow is getting older. As a Police Department and its outreach to our senior population, I believe we lost a step after Dennis Fernandes retired. I told you we all have a Dennis Fernandes story. Excluding the initiative of any individual Police Officer and my opinion the thin triad program, what more ideas as Chief would you propose to engage, educate and protect our older residents of Ludlow?

Sgt. Irwin: Well I think one thing would be to build on triad, expand it. It's not a bad program, it might be thin in your words but that doesn't mean it has to stay that way. You could put more resources into it, you could advertise more with it. One of things that they are saying for the twenty-first century policing is technology and whatnot and social media for outreach. That doesn't necessarily work with the older crowd. So, I think that it is going to come down to getting people out of the cruisers, getting people into the senior housing and areas where senior congregate in town, whether it's Evan's Egg House, whether it's Dunkin Donuts and what not. You go there and along the lines of what I said before, you utilize all of our personnel, not just the select few in between the 911 calls but have more of a dedicated program for that sort of elderly community outreach. I think it could be regulars, I think it could be specials. As far Special's they have they're once a month meeting, by all means have a sign-up sheet for your volunteer hours. You have to do 150 hours per year as a Special to volunteer. So, you have 25 and I know I have to go to the Accounting class, my math is wrong here but I'm rounding down.

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At a minimum you have 3,000 hours, of working hours that the Special's can contribute to the town. In a 40-hour work week that's almost a year and a half worth of time. I think that if you utilize them to their full potential with the sign-up sheet for these programs instead of just doing patrol hours, your voluntary patrol hours where you come in on a Sunday morning and get in a car and drive around and whatnot and that is not a disservice to any of the Special Police who do come in, try and work and do get out of the cars and talk to people but if we made it more of a consistent, not even so much a requirement or expectation but just sort of it's what you do. If you had people signing up to get out of the cars and talk to people, I think you would have a huge impact as far as reaching the elderly community.

Mr. DeBarge: Alright, my final question, I want to get your feelings on this. When someone gets arrested, what's the criteria between getting their picture versus getting their name in the paper?

Sgt. Irwin: Criteria for the picture versus their name. Um, that's more of an in-house policy decision I believe. I haven't gone to the public information officer school, but it is legal to publish pictures in addition to names. So, that would really be a decision for the Chief of Police.

Mr. DeBarge: Alright as a caveat to that, as the Chief of Police one of your relatives from a neighboring town calls you says their child, your relative as well, gets arrested in that neighboring town. Now as the Chief your friends or at least an acquaintance of that Chief in that neighboring town. So, the relative calls you and asks you to call that Chief and keep your relative's picture out of the paper, what do you do.

Sgt. Irwin: First of all, that's not going to happen with a family member of mine if I was to attain the rank of Chief or a friend. They know that that would put me in a terrible position and I wouldn't accommodate them, that's the word I'm looking for. Furthermore, if you think that you can do things like that, if any Police Chief out there now or aspiring Chief thinks that they can do that and get away with it indefinitely is solely mistaken. There, the evidence is there, the digital evidence is always there. Whether it's phone calls, call logs, text messages, emails, it's all potentially discoverable and you just don't do it to begin with. From day one at the police academy, never mind the fact that I am interviewing for the Police Chief job. Go back to the very beginning at the police academy, the first thing they tell you is integrity and don't lie. It's right along this line.

Mr. DeBarge: Okay, thank you for that. Does anybody want to touch on anything else? No, okay your closing comments.

Sgt. Irwin: I'm kind of glad that it got brought up tonight again is the question of experience. I stand by my answer that years of service and length of service does not necessarily equal experience. Last time that I was in the room for a promotional interview Selectmen Rooney said that he had never seen such a closer group of candidates and ultimately, I was not selected. There was good reason for that but there is no doubt about that. You know Lieutenant Valadas clearly served the Town in what I think is just the same manner that I try to serve the Town over a longer period of time. So, my hats off to him for that but you know having been supposedly so close with my older peers and whatnot I would just like to know and maybe Selectman Fernandes can answer this best because you have been here for every interview of mine from Police Officer all the way through now. No offense you weren't here for the Lieutenant ones, I guess I would ask having scored had the top score on the civil service test and then for this Chief's assessment, which ask any candidate that comes in here, you cannot fake, you cannot fool these three Chief's that are assessing you. Having scored well against my superiors, is there anything more that I need to do to prove to the Board that I have the experience and the abilities and the knowledge to whatever job is asked of me within the Police Department?

Mrs. Fernandes: May I answer that?

Sgt. Irwin: Yes, sure.

Mrs. Fernandes: During this interview no there is not anything more, I happened to ask that questions, it was one of my concerns. You have addressed it, so I now have to take all of the answers that were given to me today and look at all the candidates based on all the applications and make a decision on that. But I am satisfied with your answer if that is what you are asking.

Sgt. Irwin: Well, thank you and I don't mean to, this isn't meant to be an adversarial question or anything like that. I just know that the last time I was "too youthful" and might need a little more experience. Well we are two years later, I have had no disciplinary issues, I had no complaints, no complaints amongst my officers against me or against them by the community. So, I'd like to think I'm helping them get through their shift as painlessly as possible and I just like I said I just like to know. After two years getting that little bit more experience, I know there is only one job tonight and there's four people going for that job. So, I can do that math too, three people aren't going to get it but just in the future going forward, have I now met that burden of being able to take on some sort of a command level position, whether it's Chief, Lieutenant or any other duties as Sergeant and you have answered that so thank you.

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Mrs. Fernandes: I can address Mr. Irwin; you are doing a very good job. I always say to people when you are going for a job as with anything, it depends on which fish are in the lake. If you are you know competing with other fish that are stronger than you or have more qualities, you may not do so well during an interview. But at another time you might be the bigger fish in that lake. So, it really depends who is before us at the time and we as a Board have to make the best decision for this town and so we are going to have to take everything that was provided to us and make the best decision for the town. If you are selected, then you were the best candidate if you are not then you know we can certainly talk to you if there is anything that we felt that you needed to work on, but it is very difficult to say because everytime....

Sgt. Irwin: No, ma'am I'm not asking you about tonight. I'm just asking in general and you have answered my question so thank you.

Mrs. Fernandes: Okay, thank you.

Mr. DeBarge: This isn't the time for conversation. Alright, are you all set with your closing comments?

Sgt. Irwin: All set.

Mr. DeBarge: Okay, appreciate it. Anybody else? Thank you.

Mr. Silva: Thank you.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you Sergeant, appreciate it.

Sgt. Irwin: Thank you.

7:00 p.m. – Police Chief Interviews – Sgt. Brian Shameklis

Mr. DeBarge: We are ready to go Carrie. All set. Right there please. Welcome to the interview for Police Chief. Congratulations for making it into the interviews.

Sgt. Shameklis: Thank you.

Mr. DeBarge: You have been to interviews before, before we get into the questions, we will open up with your opening statement.

Sgt. Shameklis: Alright well thank you. Thank you for taking this time, I know it's a long night and I appreciate everybody's time certainly. This is incredibly important position that we are trying to fill tonight. It's not just the leader of the Police Department, we are talking about also the face of the Police Department and the Police Chief is typically one of the many town officials that people look to, citizens look to in times of crisis such as what we are in now. So, thank you for taking this time and this opportunity I appreciate it.

Mr. DeBarge: Thank you. Okay, Mr. Rosenblum you want to kick us off?

Mr. Rosenblum: Yes, absolutely. First of all, I'd like to say congratulations in obviously in making it to this point. You should be proud of your accomplishments in getting to here and also you being

considered for one of the toughest, high profile positions that any municipality can offer or has. So, with that obviously with this pandemic that we have been dealing with over the last 2 ½ months life as we know it has changed, the new normal but with that also will budgets. What experience do you have in developing and managing an operating capital budget and also assuming that all portions of the budget are essential, what part or what line item or part of the budget do you see has the most need?

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Sgt. Shameklis: I figured I'd get that question. That is probably one of the top issues before the pandemic and now after the pandemic I think we are going to see just kind of projecting forward if you look at what the experts are saying we are talking about a dip in the economics of the State, the Country, the Town whatever the case may be. So, I see in the future probably budget cuts.... That is an important aspect. As for my experience, I handled a budget in the military, I have twenty years of military experience. Roughly the last ten or so of my military experience I was in a NCO or Senior NCO position. I actually ended up as the Operations Superintendent of almost a 100-person squadron. So, I oversaw some of the operating budget of that. It's not quite the same in the military as it is in a municipality certainly, but I do have some experience in that. That is pretty much my experience with budgets. What would I do about budget cuts? That is a very difficult question. The initial response I think would be you know to cut training and overtime training, but you are cutting overtime for training at the expense of training and I think that is a recipe for disaster. So, I think what I would do under my leadership at the department within the first six months or, so we will look at the budget, we will look at our operating expenses. We would look at the processes that we have, things that are developed and how we do things, see if there's any redundancies, see if there is anything that we could just slash right off the top if there is something that is a drain on money, we could plug those holes, plug the leaks. Then I think without slashing the overtime budget we can decrease it; I think without slashing it. I think we could make some moves personnel wise, staffing, staffing the shifts to ensure that we have the proper amount of people on the street. Ensure officer safety and the public's safety without damaging that, I think we could make some moves personnel wise to decrease the amount of overtime that we end up having. Now with Law Enforcement or any kind of public safety, you always run into the unknown. I mean who saw the pandemic coming, right. We are moving along, business as usual and here comes the wrench, a huge monkey wrench into the works. So, you are always looking for that and planning for the unknown as well. So, that's the big key piece of the budget, the key to the budget and watching the budget is constant surveillance and maintenance of that budget. So, that way things don't get away from you and you know and can project a year in advance where you are going to run into kinks and where you are going to need people and a higher budget.

Mr. Rosenblum: Okay, if you were to be appointed Chief, when you retired when people speak about your tenure as Chief, what would be your defining accomplishment?

Sgt. Shameklis: Defining accomplishment, um you are talking about a legacy, um I am young enough where I don't think about my legacy to be honest with you. I think when I retire what I want people to think about me is the same thing when I retire from the military, is I was fair, I was just, I put the people ahead of my own ambitions and ahead of myself, put people first, I was very people-oriented person. Greatest accomplishment I think what I'd like to see from the department in the next year to five years, I'd like to move us more in the direction of a more proactive policing model based on community policing but that's kind of a buzzword that means a lot of different things to other people, but I think I'd like to move the department in the direction of community engagement. So, Robert Pio once said the public is the police, the police are the public. I really think engaging the public is where the future is in this. There's a lot of time where the public has a different view of where the problem is then we as the police do. That is one of the things I have learned from the Safety Committee is that there are problems that bother people more than problems that I would think would be at the top of their list. So, moving the department in that direction, updating our operational and tactical procedures to the twenty first century to where we are more proactive, and we are engaging the public would be my main accomplishment, I think.

Mr. Rosenblum: Lastly, I have one more question. Personally, professionally, what is your weakness?

Sgt. Shameklis: Umm weakness so, I think, let me just talk about a story. So, my last tour in Iraq in 2008, I was in charge of the base defense operations center of a main base in the northern part of Iraq. Anytime we would have a rocket attack or a small arms attack or any type of attack, the battle damage assessments from the sectors and there was three of them, would come through my office and we

would report out to the lead commander and we would also start coordinating a response; medical, civil engineering, additional security, whatever the case might call for. So, after an attack what I found myself doing was I was calling these command posts like every two or three minutes because I wanted that update as quick as I could, so I could start this. I think what they saw from that was that I was impatient. So, in talking with the leaders of each command post, we came up with the plan to do an every ten minute update. So, they would call me every ten minutes after the additional attack and give me an update as to how far along they were in the battle damage assessment and what they had discovered thus far so I could start working on that piece. I found myself when I work in a group, kind of falling into that same thing where I will be on people, we need to get this done, where you at, where you at. Again, I think this comes across as being impatient so, I tend to fall back on the lesson I learned in Iraq, to kind of set deadlines and we all update each other and back to work again.

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Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you, that's all I have.

Mr. DeBarge: Thank you. Mr. Silva.

Mr. Silva: Yes, congratulations and good to see you again and thanks for stepping up, not many officers would want to take the responsibility as this is quite a responsibility. What do you bring to the Town of Ludlow, that sets you above the rest of the candidates?

Sgt. Shameklis: Well, let me just start by saying, everybody that has walked into this room tonight or will walk into this room tonight, is an outstanding officer. I know them all personally, they are all friends of mine. We have all worked very close together. I know that they would all step into the role and be outstanding, there is no doubt about it. So, what makes me I don't know better, I don't want to say better, I would say what makes me different is I have a strategic vision. I don't look a year ahead, I like to look five, ten years ahead, try and find out what exactly is coming down the pike and try to mitigate any challenges, mitigate challenges head on. You know set the department up, this is what I did in the military, I set our squadron up to be able to meet the challenges in the future. Now no one has a crystal ball certainly, so no one can see those critical instances that come in but if you have a good foundation and your moving in the right direction, I think that is the key. The other piece I bring to the table is I have an extensive track record, proven track record in leadership. I have a Bachelor's Degree in Management with a focus on leadership. Leadership is something I find is extremely important. I see a lot of people starve for leadership, it's not present. So, many times I have stepped into a role and filled a gap and both in the military and my police career at the Ludlow Police Department, I have filled leadership roles and I have gained valuable leadership experience and those are the two things that I bring to the table.

Mr. Silva: And Ludlow being so diverse you know, there is many ethnic groups in Town as you well know. Do you converse in any other language besides English?

Sgt. Shameklis: No, I don't. I have just an English speaker and that's it.

Mr. Silva: What one thing intrigues you the most about the Town of Ludlow?

Sgt. Shameklis: I have lived in probably seven different countries. I have lived in dozens of different communities around the country with my military experience and the Town of Ludlow, in my opinion is unique. There is a very hometown, very tight knit feel and that's one of the reasons I chose Ludlow over any other place in Western Mass to settle down, raise my family. I have four children, three that have gone or are going through Ludlow Public Schools. I have one that's on the way hopefully pretty soon to the Ludlow Public Schools. I volunteer here in Ludlow. I have done charity events like the Josh Deforges race, I'm on the committee to host that. I have done Law Enforcement Torch run events. I try to bring as much as I can to this Town. I love this community. I love the way it bands together, and I love the home town feel and fabric of it.

Mr. Silva: Thank you Sergeant.

Mr. DeBarge: Thank you. Mr. Goncalves.

Mr. Goncalves: Thank you for applying. Thank you for your service. That's an impressive record.

Sgt. Shameklis: Thank you.

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Mr. Goncalves: You do mention the community-oriented policing and the problem-oriented policing. I'm a big believer that we have to get the police back on the street. Get the people familiar with the police. You know I drive around, spend a lot of time driving around town and I have been here my whole life and it seems years and years and years ago you knew every officer. Today, I know a handful. It just seems that they are not as visible, they are not out there meeting the people. Would you be looking maybe to get the officers, get the department a little bit more into the community. Start letting people know who they are and get them to meet the people in town. Any plans for anything like that?

Sgt. Shameklis: Absolutely, that is the crux to my answer to Mr. Rosenblum. That's what I'd like to do, I'd like to get, I'd like to push responsibility down to the lowest office right and get those officers out on the street. Get them meeting residents, meeting business owners, meeting political entities such as yourself and learning what exactly is the problem that people over in the particular neighborhood are dealing with. Here is a good example, so a few years ago, Meadow Street built there housing, right across the street there's a derelict, or not derelict, it's an overgrown wood lot. I received a phone call from the Safety Committee complaining about the sidewalk. It was along that wood lot, it had overgrown. I drove down there and frankly I didn't know there was a sidewalk there because it had been that overgrown. So, as a Police Officer driving around Town without talking to anyone, I would never know that was a problem for anybody. I would never know that somebody was being forced into the street, to walk in the street as opposed to the sidewalk. Small thing but it's kind of a big thing. So, what I did was I worked with a couple of agencies in Town, a couple different agencies and I was able to get a crew out there and actually clear that sidewalk. Those are the kinds of things that I want our Officers to be able to do. A lot of times when a problem reaches the Safety Officer or the Chief it's a problem that's been festering for a long time and it hasn't been addressed. So, getting Officers out there to meet the people and business owners to kind of identify these problems early and address them before they get to a level now where we have to take some drastic action when we could have done some minor tweaking or whatever the case might be. Along with that to also goes with building relationships with other departments like the Board of Public Works, the Health Department, the schools. You know it's not just the Police, it's the Police, the community and the other arms of Government that all need to work together to try and mitigate problems at the lowest level. The other thing I would like to do is not only get those Officers out in there in the street, schedule community meetings. They might not be well attended in the beginning, but I think as they go along, I think we will see some response. I would also like to do an annual survey for the Town and see how you know the crux of how our department is meeting your needs. What are problems that you see in the department or in the Town, what can we do to look at that and that's from the large point of view. I would love to get Officer's out on the mountain bikes but that all depends on the on our staffing and being able to fill our shifts before I can get anyone out on a bicycle but that's a great way to meet and greet you know people, business owners, children. The children are our future and we need to go out and build those bonds with the community before we can start moving forward.

Mr. Goncalves: So, the next two questions really just putting them together. Again, spending my life in this Town, we have an up and coming drug problem, it's getting worse, you have been around for ten years and you know what it was ten years ago, and you know what it is today. I think it's responsible probably for a big portion of your calls, the 911's right. It's the breaking and entering, the assaults, the domestics, somewhere there's drugs involved, opioids of some kind. How do you feel our department is staffed right now? Do we have the right people in the right place or are we top heaving with traffic, top heavy with enforcement somewhere else, detectives, what do you think we need, do we move people around, we don't move people around, we are okay the way we are? What's your vision there to maybe take care of that drug problem?

Sgt. Shameklis: That is a good question and the drug epidemic we are running into has touched lives of everybody in Town. I have personally we have a close family member who has fallen victim to this disease as well. That has given me the vision of you know from a family member seeing someone suffer like this. I think staffing wise I know it is kind of a cliché, but it bears repeating, we are not going to be able to arrest our way out of this problem. It's bigger than just the Police Department. What we need to as the Police, is focus on the dealers and then also focus on the users but the users I think there is more benefit to those users being diverted to drug rehabilitation than to be prosecuted but that is for

the courts and what not to decide. So, I think staffing wise, I think we, I think our Detective Bureau is not as adequate as it used to be at this point. I think I would look to add a Detective or two to the DB, just to focus on drugs. I mean we have two full time Detectives essentially focusing on drugs but they are also pulled in different directions as well, depending on what the DB is working with and working around. So, I think that I would like to plus that up and get some more Detectives working those dealers and users, identifying users.

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Mr. Goncalves: Are we still involved with other communities with helping each other on that aspect or?

Sgt. Shameklis: Yes, the, you're talking about the Hampden County Drug Task Force. Yes, we have both of our Detectives are members of that. So, we get assets from out of town to come in and we send assets to other towns to cooperate. That's a good point. I think another piece too, we have a couple of Officers, I think there are four Officers that are trained and staffed to go with public health officials to do follow ups on known users that have been released. It's kind of their release package. I'd like to double down on that also because I really think that rehabilitation is the answer to what we are talking about, but I think its education at the beginning. So, there's three pieces to this, there's education, there's enforcement, you are prosecuting the drug dealers and then there's the rehabilitation. The education comes from inside the schools. We have our DARE Officers. I love that program. You know we need to see how...out but I would like to get more Officers into that program and into the schools. Talking to the kids and really getting to them prior to them getting the drugs in the first place. Right, if we can head that off, head the new market for the dealers off that's huge and then the enforcement part is to increase our DB and then the rehabilitation piece would be try to increase that program where we are going out and doing our visits and making sure that people are rehabilitating and I have seen some great in my time at the Department, I have seen some great success stories. There have been some people that were just lost you know and they found their way up to rehabilitation and drug rehab and programs and they have been successful and then I have seen the opposite where people showed some promise and then they fell right back in and then showed some promise and then you know it's frustrating but I think what we are playing here, in the end of the situation, we are playing the long game, we are playing okay you have had a handful of failures but keep trying. You know the fact that you are trying in the first place tells me that you want to get out of this lifestyle.

Mr. Goncalves: And I think that you guys don't have a choice but maybe go in that direction because the courts aren't helping you. You kill yourselves to get an arrest and ...

Sgt. Shameklis: Right, yeah from the users yes but for your dealers but then you have your dealers that are dealing to support their habit so you there is a lot of gray in between. But, yeah, you're right the courts, if I had any control over the courts it would be a different set up there.

Mr. Goncalves: For all of us yeah. I'm good. Thank you.

Mr. DeBarge: Okay. Mrs. Fernandes.

Mrs. Fernandes: Yes, Mr. Shameklis as I had asked the other candidates as well, a good Police Chief has to balance three interests, one is being a cop's cop, next is the Government end of it which is making sure budgets and administrative issues are in place and operations and then the other is community. How do you think you would be a good candidate to balance all of those three things?

Sgt. Shameklis: Thank you.

Mrs. Fernandes: And how would you do it?

Sgt. Shameklis: Oh, I'm sorry I didn't catch the last piece?

Mrs. Fernandes: And how would you do it?

Sgt. Shameklis: Oh, ok well thank you, thanks for the questions. Leadership is all about balance. I'm not sure what screen to look at, I guess I will just look at this one. Leadership is all about balance. If you tilt in one direction or the other, then you are not getting an efficient team working in the right direction. You got people in going in different ways and it kind of hurts the effort, there is not unity of effort. So,

how do you balance that, I think the key is to balancing personnel issues, your Officers, is knowing your people. You have to know what makes them tick. You have to know what their baseline is, to know what motivates them and what demotivates them. You have to keep that in mind at all times. In regard to the balance of the budget, that takes constant surveillance and constant maintenance of that budget. You have to make sure you are not tilting too far in one direction on that and then the community, the community is really who we are working for. I mean we are working for you know Mr. and Mrs. Ludlow who live in Town. So, I have to keep their interests at the top of my list as well. So, it really is all about balancing and I think in regard to the community, having that outreach with my Officers we get a pulse from the community. We get an idea of what is going on in the community and we can control it that way, not control it, but we can at least keep in balanced in that sense. So, on the Police side you know your people and you know what makes them tick and you understand what you have to do. Your budget is a huge piece and you have to make sure that you are balancing that and then on the public side that pulse of the community through outreach and surveys is key.

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Mrs. Fernandes: What about....conflict you know for example the Police versus the Government side with special Unions involved, how would you approach a conflict between those two sides?

Sgt. Shameklis: Yeah, again that comes down to balance. So, if you lean too far into the side of your Officers then you are going to run into problems with discipline and you are going to run into problems with ethics and a myriad of other issues that we don't want to go down the road of. If you lean too far in the Government side, being too hard line, now we are dealing with morale issues, you are dealing with Officers that maybe are afraid to do their job. They are afraid to make a traffic stop for fear of causing a problem for themselves. So, it really is a balance and the best way to do that is to be and it's a moving crux too, it is not just a there it is I said it, forget it, it is a constant measuring of what is going on and your Officers morale and the Government or the Town's side to have good order and discipline.

Mrs. Fernandes: Okay, and how did you find the process, you know the civil service exam, the multiple-choice exam and the Chief's assessment, the entire process to get you here to this interview?

Sgt. Shameklis: The process for Chief alone, is that what you are asking, I'm sorry?

Mrs. Fernandes: Yes.

Sgt. Shameklis: So, it was an assessment center. There was no multiple choice, there was no written exam for this. So, the assessment center actually thought was interesting, it was challenging. It made me think outside the box. I definitely had to look at it from a 30,000-foot view for lack of a better term. So, from a Chief's view I had to answer these questions and kind of look at it, it's difficult for me to role play, I will admit that and it's hard to be someone else but I thought the process was good in the fact that it got down to the issues that a Chief is going to run into on a regular basis or a weekly basis and it kind of tested you on how you would handle those types of issues.

Mrs. Fernandes: Okay and what do you find are the Ludlow Police Department's current weaknesses and how would you right those in the next ten years? What improvements would you make?

Sgt. Shameklis: Alright I think that one of our and I don't want to call it a weakness, I think it's something that we need to do better and I will go back to community outreach. I think the idea was there, Chief Madera did a great job of updating all our policies and procedures and getting us into the future without administrative side, but I would like to see the operational side and the tactical side follow suit. I would like to see us reach out to the public like a spoke about before. I think that is one of our big weaknesses. I'd also like to see us talk about the things that Officers do on a regular basis that you know that are heroic. I mean they are none the less heroic, but we don't hear about them because they don't meet the level of heroics. We had a very serious car accident, Mr. Rosenblum was witness to that, I had some of my Officers respond there and use some of the training that we implemented over the last year or two and applied some lifesaving treatment to one person. We had a gunshot victim who received some lifesaving treatment from the same training that we received. Those are the things that I don't really think we get them out enough. We had a CPR save just last week. I don't think most of the public knows about that. So, I'd like to celebrate our successes because in the news you see all too often, it's the big things or the Police have done something wrong there really is no, there is no celebrating of the Officer that is out there every day you know doing what he is doing, leaving his family,

missing holidays, birthdays to serve the greater good. I mean they are sacrificing for everyone in this Town and I think I would like to see us celebrate that more.

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Mrs. Fernandes: Okay and my last question, I'm not saying you have this weakness, there have been hypothesis....question, if you had a weakness of either not being considered a cop's cop, you know lacking in that area or having a little more experience....being the Police Chief, how would address that? How would you overcome that?

Sgt. Shameklis: Alright so I think you mean a cop's cop is always siding with the Officer um I don't think I have that reputation...

Mrs. Fernandes: Or not, not having that side.

Sgt. Shameklis: Oh, I see, I see...

Mrs. Fernandes: Just a weakness that we found that you had but we still chose you, how would you overcome that weakness?

Sgt. Shameklis: I think any way to overcome that weakness, you have to identify that weakness right. You have to first know that you have the weakness to begin with and then once you have identify it, then it comes down to seeking out training or reaching out to other Chief's with more experience in larger departments, smaller departments and see if they have ran into the same issues and how they have dealt with it. Everybody has different personalities so there may be an Officer or a Chief that maybe like oh that was easy, this is how I handled it and you know I am a quick study there is no doubt about it. I have learned a lot in my many years on the planet and I am not afraid to learn more by any means and I'm not afraid to admit weaknesses either. That is one of things that we harp on on the SRT team all the time is if you make a mistake, you have to own that mistake because you need to learn from that mistake and if you don't learn, then now it is not a mistake it's just negligence at this point. So, I have always been someone who is willing to admit weakness and work on it.

Mrs. Fernandes: Excellent answer. Thank you.

Sgt. Shameklis: Thank you.

Mr. DeBarge: Okay, thank you Mrs. Fernandes. Okay, congratulations for your success in the assessment center and making it into the interview. I have a couple of questions for you. With so many critical issues existing in Policing today, many Police Chief's report that number one issue of smaller Police Departments is the recruitment and retention of new Officers. Fewer and fewer young people are interested in Policing, a complication to this issue in Massachusetts is the Civil Service system. How does a Chief of Police fill the Civil Service list with excellent candidates and what outreach efforts are made?

Sgt. Shameklis: That is an outstanding question and that is the problems I foresee in the next one to five years or three to five years. We are seeing it already actually when you get the Civil Service list now for new Officers. I am deeply involved in the Board, the Police Board with those Officers and you used to when I first took the Civil Service exam, I think there was probably a couple hundred people on the list for Ludlow and Agawam and every other community and if you weren't a veteran or you know you did really well on the test you had a tough time. So, that has changed a lot over the last ten to fourteen years absolutely. So, Civil Service puts a lot of restrictions on us certainly. I think one of the ways that we can reach out to is to reach out to the youth of today. What I would love to do, what I had brought up before, is have a junior police academy. During the summer time you have like a two- or three-week junior police academy to kind of introduce high school junior, seniors you come up with some stipulations on it to police work. You know if you get kids that are kind of on the fence or they are interested, even more interested in policing and especially if they are home town children you know Town youth then you have a feeder system. The other thing I would like to do, is do a citizen's academy. I think that a lot of people are interested in what we do, and I think that once they see what it is we do, we bring them in and expose them to what policing is all about, we might get some candidates out of that as well. I know other towns do it, Belchertown does it, I think Wilbraham does it. I don't see any

reason why we wouldn't do it. I would institute that probably in the first year of being Chief. That way you create that feeder system. I think that is a big key.

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Mr. DeBarge: You think our current fiscal restraints would probably...those programs at least for the next few years?

Sgt. Shameklis: I would have to look at how we would do that. You know we could that, there might be some ways we could make that work without costing extra funds on that. Though I think that is a piece that we invest in now and it's going to pay dividends in the future.

Mr. DeBarge: Okay, alright moving on. According to the national census between 2010 and 2018, town resident's age 50 and up account for approximately 42.2% of our total population. The town is getting older. As a Police Department and its outreach to our senior population, I believe that we have lost a step after the retirement of Dennis Fernandes. Excluding the initiative of any individual Officer, in the, my opinion, thin triad program, what more ideas would you as a Police Chief propose to engage, educate and protect the older residents of Ludlow?

Sgt. Shameklis: Yes, I would absolutely agree with you, Dennis Fernandes was asset that I was very sorry to see go, he was fantastic in that arena. I think there are Officers in the department now that could step into that role it is just a matter of pushing that responsibility down to them. Identify them, get them some training in getting into that role. I don't see any reason why you can't do that and stay within fiscal restraints. But you are right, we have lost a step in that respect and that is a huge chunk of our population that is kind of underserved at this point, you are right. So, that would be a piece also of my community policing platform or my community outreach program is to reach out to seniors as well.

Mr. DeBarge: Alright. So, when someone gets arrested, what is the criteria between having their picture versus their name in the paper?

Sgt. Shameklis: I think it all comes down to, well there are some, let me step back. There are some...in the laws that prohibit us from even posting some crimes you know in the paper or releasing it to the public. I think in regard to an average crime, I guess it's more about the interest level of the crime than anything else when it comes to posting a picture. I mean the Police....has your day to day situation but if you have someone who attacked an Officer, threatened an Officer, this person may be a danger to the public. You are putting their picture in the paper certainly as a public service I guess for lack of a better term is probably the criteria I would use as a Police Chief. Anyone who is a violent offender, bank robbery, murder those are things that we want to make sure the public sees the person.

Mr. DeBarge: Okay, as a caveat to this question, as Police Chief you are contacted by a relative you know from another town. Their child is arrested in that neighboring town, you of course have been the Police Chief for a little while now, so you are friendly with that Chief in that neighboring town. So, your relative calls you and asks you to call that Chief and make sure your relative does not have their picture in the paper. What would you do and why?

Sgt. Shameklis: Well, this is integrity all day and this is a public trust, I mean the public needs to trust the Police. Alright we didn't get our power as the Police from our badge, we get it because the public cedes that power, they trust us to make the right decision, to do the right thing. So, anything that I would do or any of my Officer's would do that would hurt that integrity and that public trust is a no go in my opinion. I would have to tell my family member I'm sorry whatever happens in that town, happens in that town, you know I'm not going to intercede in another towns business or another Chief's business because you know you are a relative of mine. It's not my place, it's not my place.

Mr. DeBarge: Okay thank you for that. Anything else from any members of the Board? Okay your closing comments please.

Sgt. Shameklis: Alright, okay thank you again and it's much cooler in here too. Thank you again for your time tonight, I really appreciate, and I'm honored and frankly humbled a little bit to be in this room. Especially coming into this room after some of the great gentlemen and before the awesome Lieutenant that is about to step in here. I think you have a very difficult choice, but I think no matter what choice you make, it's the right one. We work as a team in the department. That is one of things I love about

the department, is it is very close, it is a family and we look after each other. I would be honored to be the next Police Chief of Ludlow, Mass. I think I have the leadership to take the department into the future in 2020. I think I have the vision; I think I have the strategic planning that is needed. I hope you make the right decision and thank you again for your time.

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Mr. DeBarge: Thank you very much.

Sgt. Shameklis: I wish I could shake everyone's hand.

Mr. DeBarge: We will do that. Thank you.

Sgt. Shameklis: Thank you.

7:45 p.m. – Police Chief Interviews – Lt. Daniel Valadas

Mr. DeBarge: Lieutenant, how are you?

Lt. Valadas: I'm wonderful, how are you? Good evening everybody.

Mr. DeBarge: Living the dream.

Mr. Silva: Good evening.

Mr. DeBarge: Alright, Lt. Valadas congratulations for making it into the assessment center and being here for the interview for Police Chief. Before we get into questions you have the floor for your opening statement please.

Lt. Valadas: I want to thank you first of all for the opportunity to be here. I have a statement; I have a letter I would like to read at the end if I can also.

Mr. DeBarge: At the closing statement, yes sir.

Lt. Valadas: I want to basically state the importance of this. I can't stress enough that this a position here that you are not looking for an Accountant, you are not looking for a public relations person, you are not looking for someone who is an HR person or something like, you are looking for a Police Officer. You are looking for somebody who you know the community is tremendously important to them. I have spent almost my entire life in Ludlow. My parents, my father immigrated here, my mother decided to start a family here and other then when I was in the service, I haven't had any other addresses. I am very invested in this community. I raised my family here and this is tremendously important to me. I am excited. I can't believe it has been six years since I last interviewed for Chief. Time flies by but judging by my kids, I'm not surprised. But again, I am incredibly excited to be here, and I thank you and the Town of Ludlow for being good to me, they have been great to me.

Mr. DeBarge: Alright, thanks very much. Mr. Goncalves kick us off please.

Mr. Goncalves: Alright, I have said this, and I have said it four times now. Old Ludlow was the guys around walking the beat, meeting the people not sitting in cars parked somewhere you know hoping someone flew by if that's what they are doing and would you think about bringing back that type of policing, maybe into the neighborhoods, I don't know if it's even legal walk the beat but you know the downtown is a nice area maybe or the bicycles or whatever it is and get because we have a drug problem in this town, right and I think that the only we get that out there is you're not going to have someone calling and saying there is a problem. Maybe we can kill two birds with one stone, it's actually the second question. Take that community policing to a different level and maybe tackle some of the problems that are out there whether it is drugs or domestic violence whatever. What is your vision for retooling the force to combat some of these problems that we have?

Lt. Valadas: I think that is a wonderful question, I'm glad you asked that Mr. Goncalves. When I started as an Auxiliary Officer, it was May of 1990, they would literally, the Officers would drop us off basically at the old Big Y Plaza, the newsstand was there. I remember it was King's for a while, this was, Big Y was

still on the right side. It was after Princess Parlor and all that, but they used to drop us off and I used to think oh my God this is the greatest thing in the world. I'm walking around with a partner because we were always partnered up, we weren't getting paid anything of course, we were doing our volunteer hours. For me it was the pride of wearing the uniform and we used to walk the triangle basically up to Walgreen's Plaza come up go around Hubbard Street go to Whitney Park and we interacted so much with people that to me that was something that was invaluable. I don't mind talking to anybody, with anybody, you know you can ask anybody that works at the Police Department. I'm certainly not short winded but I think that it is incredibly valuable. To that end, I was one of the Town's first community Policing Officers right. So, myself, Bill McBride, Paul Madera trained as bike Officers Dennis Fernandes, I mean we would go out and I literally would pinch myself going like Dan you are riding a bike, I mean I felt being a juvenile because we were in the parks a lot but we had some serious stuff going on. We had in the mid 90's there was gang war between the Los Solidos and Latin Kings and we had literally Los Solidos and Latin Kings, especially recruiting in Ludlow. It was like and you were right on the front line if you were a bike officer. Literally I would...you have to be kidding me, you just took a picture of like three gang members that you, I would have never thought a few years earlier that this ever happened in Ludlow and we dealt with it routinely. We need to bring that back and what happened Mr. Goncalves was money that, we dried up our we built our dispatch, myself, Bill Metcalfe, Paul Madera, we went to grad school together. We came up with a plan to civilianize dispatch. The Police Officers wanted out of the dispatching center. The job was becoming much more odious and you had to do a lot of training. Police Officers didn't want to sit behind a desk. So, therefore we decided you know we took all of our grad school information, work we did, scheduling, budgets and what not and we got a grant for like $450,000 right. So, we civilianized our dispatch and it relocated those officers into more proactive policing. So, we were able to do a lot more bike patrol, we were able to do like saturation patrols. We even did plain clothes, you know we called them like gang patrols right and we used to do that routinely and then we got cops more money, we got cops fast money. But just like I saw, and I have seen it in many other Police Departments across the state and across the country. When that...crime bill money dried up you saw these programs go into moth balls. I mean rag programs; I mean you know the DARE programs. You just saw that; we need to get back to that. Now, I don't want to say that with like oh we need oodles of money. We have to learn to do that with what we have and maybe less and judging by what we have in the next few years, probably less. But I have motivated our officers there Mr. Goncalves and they want to do this, and I want to empower them to do that and I will be out there with them. One of things that there is a Police Chief in Pittsfield, Mike Wynn, great guy. He was a staff instructor with me at the Police Academy...that kind of thing right. I look up to the guy. That man once a week, grabs his patrol car, goes out and goes on patrol. That's invaluable. I'm like Mike I think that's awesome. He goes absolutely because I am a Police Officer and my men and women need to know that I am out there and those people need to see me because I am here for the city. Well, I am here for the Town of Ludlow and I am going to be that, I am going to do that. I'm going to endeavor to do that and we need to do more of that without a doubt we must be able to be a lot more progressive when it comes to making contact and meeting people and the businesses and get out there and we must be visible. You can only do so much in static post and we have to get away from that.

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Mr. Goncalves: Thank you. Do you think the way the department is right now staffed, as far as patrol, Detectives is adequate, or do you think we should be shifting people around? What is your vision for our department right now? Do you have the right amount of people in the right departments, are we concentrating on the right things?

Lt. Valadas: Mr. Goncalves, when you look at when you look at our Police Department it is very emblematic of Police Departments across the country. You know I have had the privilege of going to other Police Departments teaching classes and I see that we are plagued by the same type of problems that they have. When you get a municipality like ours, it's not it's a small town but it's not too small and we have sometimes some bigger city problems like homicides and whatnot. You must be able to adapt from the patrol and then provide everything else. Most of what we do is patrol driven. You must know your beat, you must know your you know your districts, where you work, and a good successful Police Officer knows that. The two groups in the Police Department that we run thin on is the two smallest groups. We have six patrol supervisors that have to cover 365 24/7. Six people, that's difficult to do. A lot of our overtime costs is to help with that. Now you have two Lieutenants, you have an Operations Lieutenant, you have an Admin Lieutenant and certainly we endeavor to work as much as we can. I mean, I routinely go in for patrol shifts, I will go in for 4 am shifts. I will do whatever I have to do. I mean obviously because there is a need there, but you can't be there all the time. We may need at

some point in time, even in these tight times to maybe add that little bit on top that we have oversight which is we have so many things that we have to meet. I sit there, and I say to myself, could you imagine if we implemented a great program like body cams. Honestly with the staff we have between the hardware, the software, the management of the program. I would love to do it; I don't think we could. I just wouldn't have the manpower to do that. Accreditation, I know that Lt. Mike Brennan does a fantastic job with certification. We have looked at each other and gone like could we try to be accredited with more standards. I mean he is a hard-working man, it's difficult to do. I don't think we will be able to do it. The other group that I think we run thin on, we set up our civilian dispatch with 9 dispatchers, again, group 365 24/7. Probably a little thin. What you are always going to have people that work less overtime and people that work more. You are always going to have people that get sick or vacation time, they have time off. Especially as they progress, they become more skilled and they have more time with the Department right. It is a benefit of working. We are probably a little thin there. As far as investigative services, we have a four officer, four investigator Detective Bureau. There main asset is giving us the things out of jurisdiction that normally a Patrol Officer can't do. They do a fantastic job, they liaison exceptionally well with the State Police Detectives that we need when we have the big things that we don't normally see. They do a fantastic job, Sgt. Tulik and then later on Detective Sgt. Kornacki, all the detectives in there. Could we do more, you know if someone asked me in the community right now what are things that you could do to really impact. Without a doubt, impaired driving because it's everywhere but drugs like you mentioned, illicit narcotics, we have been in an epidemic with that for literally seven or eight years. You are talking about thousands of people you know what I mean that have been dying from overdoses because we have these incredible analgesics and anesthetics that can literally kill people. We have just started to round the curve with that and now we get hit with COVID. As far as the DB could we add something, absolutely. I find that if we could increase our narcotics...a bit, maybe have a supervisor in there at night. I think that would certainly help out. They have to be able to have the ability run their operations and a lot of times you can't do that with two or three people. They can't even safely watch each other and when you bring a patrol asset in there, it's a uniform patrol and you take from the patrol division who it's difficult to predict if you are going to have 20 calls at night, 30 calls at night, 40 calls at night, it's difficult. Are we a little thin, maybe, maybe? I know we are going to go through some tough economic times. I'm going to ask my staff to probably more with less money. I hope in the future, bless you, I hope in the future that maybe you know maybe in the long run we can start to look at some of these things. Maybe I can draw up some proposals and go like okay here is the cost, this is how cost effective it is and this is what the Town is going to see in benefit and we can't show it quantitatively, if we got to look at it and show the numbers then I'm going to make that as successful as possible. I promise. I'm going to give it everything I can to make those things successful. We do need to change some of the things we are doing.

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Mr. Goncalves: Okay so, your idea community-oriented policing or problem-oriented policing or a mix of the two, what type of a philosophy?

Lt. Valadas: When you look at, you try to interdict, there are things that you can prevent. There is always a large aspect of policing that is reactive. Somebody will call the Police Department every day in distress and it's reactive. But if an officer truly knows his district and truly knows the people and businesses in his district, he knows his troublemakers and Ludlow is not that big. It has gotten larger than it was like you said twenty or thirty years ago or forty years ago but it's not that big that we don't know who the people are that we have to watch. In my opinion it is that reach out, if you can, if they know that things are going to be arduous, if they know they have a Police Department that is on the ball, they are going to be less likely, in my opinion, there is going to be a deterrent. Are you going to have the dangers there? Absolutely. You are going to have a Crips gang member from Philadelphia that is living somewhere in a house in your town that you hope doesn't get involved in something and if they do that your officers are prepared and can handle it. I think they are; I think they are and we have to watch for that. So, in my personal opinion it is that problem you know you look at a problem, you try to solve it. For many years it was you know smoking marijuana in Whitney Park, it was graffiti you were dealing with. I mentioned gangs before that. I mean right now, noise, literally just noise complaints are like overwhelming. We try to be everywhere but the moment that you move something else happens. Driving, erratic driving. Last Saturday a truck ran me off the road. I dialed 911, I'm shocked that I'm here, I would have been severely injured and there was nothing I could have done about it. I didn't get the chance to...

Mr. Goncalves: How long did they have you on hold?

Lt. Valadas: They actually one thing I did not, I was actually surprised by was I was only right by the reservoir. I got sent to the state police routing center and they had to route to the dispatch center here. So, again and I felt that frustration, wait. That truck is long gone, see the plate, I'm lucky I could get off the road, miss the telephone poll and the guard rail and somehow miraculously not get struck. Literally and that's frustrating for people. I can only imagine; I was frustrated, like go get that guy and I'm a Police Officer and there was nothing I could do and that's frustrating. We can't be everywhere, but we are certainly going to make sure that, we are going to do as much as we can, as much as we can. We have to do right now our services increase them like I said probably with less.

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Mr. Goncalves: Thank you.

Mr. DeBarge: Thank you Mr. Goncalves. Mrs. Fernandes.

Mrs. Fernandes: Mr. Valadas thank you for being here.

Lt. Valadas: Thank you ma'am.

Mrs. Fernandes: Congratulations.

Lt. Valadas: Thank you very much. I'm glad you are well.

Mrs. Fernandes: Well getting there.

Lt. Valadas: You look wonderful.

Mrs. Fernandes: So, the question I have for you is a successful Police Chief has to balance three areas...one they have to be a cop's cop so we have to make sure your Officer's trust you, that they respect you, that you have integrity with them. Then you have to think about performing for the Government, which a lot of it is for example administrative, operational, budgets and things like that and the other one is community and sometimes that is the most important one because you can either deflect issues or make it worse. Today, in the media you are seeing a lot of that. So, how would you, how do you think you are going to be able to balance those three areas that are going to be pushing and pulling at you? Especially when one or two of them might come into conflict?

Lt. Valadas: I think that, thank you Mrs. Fernandes, I think that when you look Police Officer's in general, they are hybrids. So, they have to do many different things. They have to be a Social Worker. They have to be an EMS person. They have to be a Family Counselor. They have to make arrests. They have to be willing to stand up to bullies and criminals. I think that plays into your role as a Police Executive. It might sound like a little bit of a stretch but it's not. It's the experience that I have had over the years, learning how to deal with people and managing people. I have been a Police supervisor for 17 years. I was promoted in 2003, August of 2003. I mean, you I have to deal with all sorts of different scenarios and a lot of it are your people are human beings as well. So, you have a lot of the issues that you mentioned before where you are juggling payroll, your juggling hours of scheduling, your juggling people having bad days, your juggling somebody involved in a very serious incident and I think a Police Chief has to build from all of that. He is an administrator, yes. He is you know he has to manage his people, be a people person, yes and he can't lose sight of the fact that he is a Police Officer. If he, in my opinion, if you ask a Police Chief last Friday Chief there was an arrest made, did you see what our guys did, did you see what our Officers did, and I say again I say guys but it's men and women. Did you see what they did? If that Police Chief looks at you and he has a blank look on his face, that's wrong because that Police Chief should know exactly what his people are doing. He can't know everything, but he should know what his men and women are doing. That's the most important thing that he does, is know what his men and women are doing. If he can't have accountability for himself and knowing what is going on, how can he have accountability for the people that expect them to lead them and I think I have that balance where I can manage people, manage administration and I have help, I have help you know what I mean. I have Mrs. Villano, Mrs. Collins, I have Mr. Ribeiro. When I have specialty issues, you know I'm not an Accountant but obviously these things are manageable and I'm going to reach out and get help from the people that I need, as well as from the people in my staff. There is nobody there from the person who does the janitorial services, which is probably the most important person we have right now to our clerical staff who are coming in. Other people are home and they are coming into work. My

officers have not changed a thing. Mike Brennan and I have not taken a day off in probably I don't know, unless we were doing something, teaching a class or something like that I don't know nine weeks or something like that because we are going to work, we are doing our job because we are supposed to be there. We are supposed to be there. The people need us, and we are going to be there. I think that I can manage all of the duties of executive. I can take everything that I built from my career over thirty years, which puts me in a good position to manage all of the things that you mentioned, including outside agencies, Government mandates, whatever it might be.

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Mrs. Fernandes: Thank you. What do you think is the biggest weakness of the Ludlow Police Department and how would you make improvements in that area in the future, the next ten years for example? The biggest weakness.

Lt. Valadas: I think that right now the morale of the Police Department needs to be uplifted a bit. I think that there's, the people at the Police Department, they trust me, and I trust them and I know that what I am going to do is going to be based upon fairness. It is going to be based upon doing what is right. Everyone makes mistakes, okay and I think that what we have thankfully; and I have been there for the bad times. I have been there for Officer's resigning. I have been there for Officer's getting arrested. I mean bad things, but we have a good staff. We have a very young staff. We looked at our Police Department, you are talking about 2/3 of our Police Department is under the age of 40. Totally different generation then what I grew up. You have to be able to get along, communicate with that generation and I think that I have been, I have had the ability maybe it's from training, maybe it's from being an instructor at the Police Academy for 17 years, dealing with a lot of recruits. You have to be able to motivate people and I think that I do the best I can every day to like to reach out and make contact with every person that is working. We need to uplift that little bit because I feel that sometimes the Officer's feels a little bit like they are getting a little squeeze, they are getting a little crunch and they feel that pressure and you don't know it unless you are a Police Officer but it's a fight, it's a struggle. That 32-year career I mean I tell the recruits all the time right you know it's difficult to have a long career you know what I mean. I worked with Mr. DeBarge here, it's difficult, longevity in policing is difficult. Of the 34 I don't know recruits that I graduated with I think probably maybe there is a dozen that are still on the job. I know two are in prison and one committed suicide by putting a bullet in his mouth. I mean it's just it's a difficult job. It is a marathon, it's perseverance, you have to have that fortitude and I want to give Officers that motivation to like look a day at a time, look a day at a time. When they need something, come see me, I'm going to do the best I can. I can't do everything, I can't solve all of their problems and they're going to do things that I am not going to be happy about but there are mistakes of the heart, there are mistakes of the head, there are mistakes that you can survive and there are mistakes that you can't. I am certainly going to hold them accountable but I'm going to be there for them. I promise you; I'm going to be there for them.

Mrs. Fernandes: Okay thank you and how did you find the process of the whole application of Police Chief? You know going through the Civil Service to the Chief's Assessment Center and to the point that you got here, even your experience in the Police Department to the point where you got to the interview? How did you find the process?

Lt. Valadas: I think when you look at promoting Police Officer's, it's difficult especially the Civil Service system okay. I don't know how people can come from somewhere and not know Ludlow and make a judgement, a discretionate, subjective judgement about you and your performance in 5 or 6 hours. They don't know what it is like to do what I have done in my Town, okay. They don't know what it's like, this would have been my 30th Festa if I worked it okay, I mean they don't know what it is like to go to a... at the club. They don't know what it is like to go somewhere and meet some people for breakfast that you know these people and you have known them most of your lives. I don't know how you quantify that into a number and how you say to someone this is your number and this is your rank. Without, it's easy to do it on an exam. So, then you look at the flip side of that well is a written exam a total look at a picture of a person, absolutely not. Someone could pass exams or be you know, and big Police Departments do this a lot. They will have someone who is a fast riser and they are going through it, in ten years they are Lieutenant, a Captain whatever and they are good test takers. Does that make them a successful Police Officer and I would say to you no, it's not necessarily, you know it's not correlate, it doesn't necessarily predict that you are going to be a successful Police Officer or a successful Supervisor just by the fact that you can either speak well or that you can take an exam very well. I think you have to have a balance. What do I think Mrs. Fernandes about this process; I think it's difficult to condense

my thirty years, my whole adult life since I started Holyoke Community College at 18. You know I was a Criminal Justice student and then I raised my six months later or four months later I raised my hand and I joined the Army. I mean how you quantify that; I don't know how you quantify that into here's your score, congratulations. It is only your entire adult life; I mean I think it is difficult to quantify that. That's my answer, thank you.

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Mrs. Fernandes: Okay thank you. I know one of our members is going to as you about your weakness, but this is about the, hypothetical weakness. Let's say you had a weakness as an applicant for this job. Maybe you weren't the best cop's cop, maybe you lack experience, maybe you weren't number one on the testing side, how do, I think you answered a little bit on the testing side but let's say you didn't have one of the other qualifications needed by we still hired you, how would you address that weakness that you might have?

Lt. Valadas: I would try...

Mrs. Fernandes: Maybe it's budgeting you know whatever it is. How would you address that if you were hired?

Lt. Valadas: Thank you Mrs. Fernandes. What I'm going to do, the weaknesses that I have and obviously we all have weaknesses right, I'm going to try to strengthen as much as I can in those weaknesses and I already mentioned, you reach out to people. You reach out to people that have skills that you don't have. Like you mentioned I'm not a CPA, I mean I don't think what we do is incredibly complicated, but I will be the first to say I mean I contracted my house, I manage a six-person household and it seems like I run a fleet of cars. I have three different jobs, but Ludlow is my police job and that's what I do and It's primarily what I do. The other things obviously you do for economic reasons. Is there, I would try to strengthen as much as I can anything that I don't know about and I certainly don't know a lot of the things. I am going to reach out to people and I know that Ludlow has the resources that we need, and I want to be open and objective to you know getting as much help as I possibly can on something I absolutely, there are plenty of things that I'm going to need help on. And I'm going to go with it, the motivation that I have, the drive that I have. Has the job taken a burden on me, sure, sure. I mean it's taken a toll on me; I will be the first to admit. I mean if my wife was sitting here, she would be like, yeah, he wakes up once, my kids it is a joke in my house hey dad's yelling again, dad was yelling last night, he was yelling at somebody. I mean do I have a problem, no, is that my way of dealing with it, I like to work out, I like to get together with friends, my family is wicked important to me that's the way I get through it okay. Am I, when something goes south, I'm going to work to rectify that I promise you that.

Mrs. Fernandes: Thank you.

Lt. Valadas: Thank you.

Mr. DeBarge: Okay, Mr. Rosenblum.

Mr. Rosenblum: Lieutenant first of all I'd like to say congratulations for making it to this point. You should be proud of your accomplishments in being considered for one of the toughest, most high profile, important positions a municipality can have. So, with that, you kind of touched on it a little bit but I mean the question is going to be there so with the pandemic that we have had over the last two and half months a lot has changed, there is a new normal. Budgets are going to change. So, what experience do you have in developing and managing an operating capital budget. Also, assuming that all parts of that budget are essential, where do you see the most need in the budget?

Lt. Valadas: I mean I have some budget experience in the Police Department. I mean I am the director of the Special Police, which is kind of like a sub unit of the Police Department. We kind of use them like a reserve force. You have recruitment issues, you have personnel issues, you have accounting issues. I have applied for grants before for breath testing devices for instance and I have contributed to community policing grants in the past. So, I mean the COVID problem, we I want to knock on wood here, we haven't done that bad. Our first priority was of course we have to keep our staff healthy because if they're not healthy we can't respond anywhere okay. I have a unique opportunity to be able to teach a weapons of mass destruction class and part of that is a biological weaponized virulent type

pathogen like this. It's a worst-case scenario, highly contagious, highly spreadable fomites, air droplets. I don't know, there is no way to absolute protect against that, absolutely not. What we can do is try to make sure that with the staff that we have, we adequately place them. We have had to make some adjustments. In Ludlow, immediately, when we increased our staffing on the shifts, we knew that if we were going to be thin, it was going to be on Officer's going somewhere. People are going to call us, the EMT's, the paramedics are going to need help, the Fire Department is going to need help, we need to go places. We need to increase that visibility. Right off the bat, we got lucky, we brought two school resource officers, reassigned them, they helped us out during the week. So, most of the additional costs that we have seen has been on the weekends, that is where we are a little thin sometimes okay. We have a four-man detective unit, they have made themselves increasingly more available to participate in the more reactive patrol work and they have had to subjugate some of their investigative processes, but we had that reserve force there. These are excellent trained Police Officers that are there. I have talked to you already about we are a little thin with the Sergeants. It is not comforting to me to know that on most shifts there is not a street supervisor. There are plenty of Police Departments where the Lieutenant rank is a street commander. So, we need to, if we can at some point in time, it would be beneficial to at least have increased that capability, maybe even by 20%. If that's the number one thing we can do for our Town, is to use what we have, reallocate the people and we haven't generated that much cost because I think the reimbursements, I think they are going to come but I think it is going to be slow in coming okay. We maintained our operations and increased our effectiveness and our visibility and our patrol shifts with relatively not a bad cost and Lieutenant Brennan and I have looked at it, we haven't done too bad. Hopefully we can continue that. I think we are on that back side of that curve a little bit. I think a lot of people had it okay and they don't think they had it okay. My father was hospitalized in January, 10 days, he was intubated for 6 days. They diagnosed him with an upper respiratory virus. I mean I am not a doctor, but my wife is a nurse and she's like he probably had it. It's probably something that has been around, maybe since October. I don't think that that is a shield okay, but I think that is a positive way of looking at it. I think that we are going get around this, for some high-risk populations, immunosuppressed you know hypertension, you know diabetics, people of age and you have to sympathize with them. My parents, my father in-law, my mother in-law these are great people, worked their whole lives, things might be a little bit different for them. They are going to have to take those precautions. Police Officers are in a unique situation, every year, even our Specials get trained in hazmat, hazardous materials and they get training OSHA, mandated training on communicable diseases. This is something that we have been looking at for years, you know highly communicable diseases that are spread quickly. We are always taking precautions, sometimes you are just a little flipped about it, we have to be much more, much more zealous about you know knowing that there, use your barriers, use your PPI proper BSI precautions. You must be able to do that, and I think we are and our staff is aware of that okay and stay healthy of course as much as they can. I don't think, I think the budgetary issues, I think we are going to get some reimbursements, I think that that is going to help. Our dispatch staff has been excellent. We have covered all our shifts. Our patrol, like I said, we reallocated some people. We are actually seeing a little bit of a pullback you know what I mean, seeing a little bit of a pullback but we are not seeing so many holes. I have met with this Board before where we have talked about holes. We are always filling holes, seems like we are constantly filling holes. It hasn't been that bad. Granted a lot of people haven't been taking time off either okay but you know I think we are going to be okay and I think that it is going to be a relatively, I want to say this, I want to knock on wood, knock on the table, I hope it's going to be at relatively low cost.

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Mr. Rosenblum: Okay. So, if you are appointed Chief of Police, when you retire when people speak about your tenure as Chief, what will be your defining accomplishment?

Lt. Valadas: Cared about Ludlow. I mean um he managed to have a prosperous career with integrity, fortitude. I'm glad to have known him. He's a good man. I'd be good with that.

Mr. Rosenblum: Okay. So, as Mrs. Fernandes eluded to the cross over question is with me, what is your weakness? Personal weakness?

Lt. Valadas: I tend to, my staff knows me as a, I'm an excitable guy you know what I mean. I'm a passionate person you know if you can't tell to say the least. I get cooped up behind a desk sometimes, I really do. You know, but I have people that help me out, you know Lieutenant Brennan is a machine. You know Chief Madera was an excellent administrator and I need to kind of balance that a little bit. I need to get, to bring those skills and to also maintain, you know I'm in charge of operations, that's what

I do. So, I want to be there for everything. When someone comes up to me and asks me something, hey you want to participate in this, absolutely please. I need to kind a look at that administrative role and I got some people that will help me out with that. So, that's where I need to improve.

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Mr. Rosenblum: Okay, I'm all set. Thank you.

Lt. Valadas: You're welcome.

Mr. DeBarge: Thank you. Mr. Silva.

Mr. Silva: Good evening. Nice job again.

Lt. Valadas: Good evening. Thank you.

Mr. Silva: What do you feel that you bring to the Town of Ludlow that is that sets you above the rest of the candidates?

Lt. Valadas: Mr. Silva I think that I have everything I could have done. So, I have tried to build a career where no one should start this job and go like I'm going to be the Chief of anything. When you start this job, you are hoping for like hey I don't want to accidentally hurt anybody, and I don't want to put anybody under arrest, under a false arrest situation. You never start off with those long-term goals. I was a patrolman for ten years even before I got promoted and I sit there and I look back on it and I'm like okay you served your country for ten years, you went through college, you have a graduate degree, I have been teaching for 17 years, um you know one of those prideful things. I think it is an honor for me and the Town of Ludlow and the Ludlow Police Department that tomorrow morning I'm doing a zoom class for officers and dispatchers of the Lowell Police Department on drug recognition and impairment. I think it is an honor for the Town and you know for the Police Department on Friday, I'm lecturing 90 recruits from two separate academies on juvenile law and it's not because you know I'm better than anybody else but I'm willing to put in the work, I'm willing to put in the work and I feel it's important, I feel it's important to do that. I think I put a lot of that effort into that Mr. Silva and I think that that's helped translate to the Police Department, with our training you know with the ability to train people. I have had classes with just about all of my officers. I have had, we are hiring officers that were my students okay and it helps me a lot when they tell me you know you really motivated me, you motivated me that I could do this, and I could be this and I think that is where the benefit is.

Mr. Silva: Okay now I pretty much know the answer to this question, Ludlow is so diverse, there are so many languages spoken everywhere. What languages do you converse in?

Lt. Valadas: Well, I mean when I'm with my parents I try to speak as much Portuguese as possible. I am pretty fluent in it. I can get by with some Spanish. You know we have like you said, we recently hired some officers that can speak Polish, we hired an officer that can speak Turkish. I think that is wonderful. I try to communicate as much as I possibly can, regardless of the language. I think that it is wonderful to build those language skills. I think if you can communicate with people, there is a lot of nonverbal communication you can have with people and if they truly believe that you care about what they are telling you about anything even in another language, if they see it, they can see it in your eyes. They can tell if you give a damn or not and if you do, I think you are going to get that across and you can help them as much as you can. We have other technical things like language...that help us out. Oh yes certainly we have more people that come to the Police Department now that speak other languages that you know we have to go to the interpreted service and other Police Departments they face even worse, Medford and all these other different Police Departments like Chelsea, Revere all multi-cultural, Lynn I mean they and it's difficult. I am, I recently was reached out by a Police Department, it was Lynn and they were looking for to set up a list of Police Officers that were bilingual that maybe could help out with like interviews and things like that. I have in Ludlow I have helped out in a few cases like that, quite a few as a matter of fact. But I would like to be able to that. I hope my Portuguese is good enough. I think it's not too bad. My father and mother would probably be like eh he's okay.

Mr. Silva: Me too. Being in Ludlow this long, what one thing really intrigues you the most about the town?

Lt. Valadas: Wow. To me, even now that we are growing, it still feels like a small town, like a friendly town. You know what I mean? It's like I go to these other places, I have had the privilege of going to these other places, especially the Commonwealth right and I come back to Ludlow and it's like you know I bring people into my staff and everybody's pretty friendly you know what I mean. People you know, my wife and I were walking and see people doing different things and people are still very friendly and you know we have had some growing pains. You know we are not necessarily; we are not the town we were back in the 70's and 80's, you know there was one or two or three traffic lights. I find that encouraging, I find that tremendously encouraging. A healthy town has community centers. A healthy town has a senior center. A healthy town has a nice athletics complex. I understand that we have to be cognizant of people that are on limited income. Trust me my in-laws, my parents, I feel for them, it's a challenge. Families have to step up and help them out. But I think that with Ludlow it is that small town feel still you know, I love the fact that you know I can go to the Gremio and have lunch you know. I probably know a lot of people in there you know what I mean. I you know my wife and I can go to breakfast somewhere. My kids are always like dad you go to Randall's and it's like you know all of these different people. I'm like I don't know, I might not know their names, but I certainly recognize them, and you know that I think that that friendliness is very visible. I think that has helped out with the COVID situation. I think that has helped out tremendously.

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Mr. Silva: Thank you. All set.

Lt. Valadas: Thank you.

Mr. DeBarge: Okay. Now you get me. Again, congratulations.

Lt. Valadas: Thank you Mr. DeBarge.

Mr. DeBarge: Alright. With so many critical issues existing in policing today, many Police Chiefs resort that the number one issue of smaller Police Departments is their recruitment and retention of new officers. Fewer and fewer young people are interested in policing. A complication to this issue in Massachusetts is the Civil Service system. How does a Police Chief fill the Civil Service list with excellent candidates and what outreach efforts are made?

Lt. Valadas: We have been lucky Mr. DeBarge. We have had some excellent candidates. Like a lot and again being a Staff Instructor, I've worked at the Police Department a long time, Police Academy a long time this is something I'm pretty familiar with okay. In college, teaching college classes. You, you policing is I feel it's that different. Where it's only a select number of people that can do it and you know if you can do it because you really want to do it. I have a young nephew now he is going to be an intern okay you know and I'm going to embarrass him right now, Lieutenant Michael Brennan was my intern on the second shift when I was a patrolman alright. We have officers on that force who were interns, that started out like that. I think that is wonderful to be able to cultivate that. I think we are going to be okay because of our populous size. That we are going to have enough candidates. Recently, we have had the stipulation where you have to pass a physical test, a PT test like we used to have to. That has become a real big hurdle for many Police Departments. They can't get the people to pass the PT test. I think that if I got, you know we will get two Sergeants working on this as far as helping the people on the list. I think we are always going to have enough candidates, Mr. DeBarge to fill the needs that we are going to have because we don't have like I said we are young and we don't have that many openings. You know I will give you an example alright you know the list that probably if we have to look at limiting you know reducing my budget, I'm probably going to look at the people sitting on the list right now and I know one young man, I think he would be a great Police Officer right. But he might be the sacrifice there, we might not ever get to him but if he doesn't quit, he will be a Police Officer someday, he will get up on that stage. I took my nephew to the last...graduation here in Springfield and I sat him and I brought him down and he was next to my father and I said listen Ben, here is your goal, you really want to do this, in your heart if you really want to do this, you are going to do everything you can to get on that stage. Mr. DeBarge knows what that is like, that's a proud moment. You are going to do everything you can to get on that stage. Whatever you need to do, go to school, night classes you know take firearms courses, whatever you got to do you are going to want to get up there. You are going to work for free because you are going to want to get up there and so far, I think we have been good. Our Special Police have helped out too, a lot of our officers started out as Special Police Officers and they became full time Police Officers and you can lose people too. We have lost good people, where they

have gone to other agencies okay. You are always going to have a little bit of that, but Ludlow offers a lot, Ludlow offers a great town and I think that we are going to be okay with retention and recruitment.

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Mr. DeBarge: Okay. Alright according to our national census between 2010 and 2018, our town residents between age 50 and up account for approximately 42.2% of our total population. Ludlow is getting older. As a Police Department and its outreach to our senior population, I believe that we have lost a step since the retirement of Dennis Fernandes. Excluding the initiative of the individual Police Officer and again in my opinion the thin triad program, what new ideas would you as Chief propose to engage, educate and protect the older residents of Ludlow?

Lt. Valadas: I think we have that increasing aging population Mr. DeBarge because we are that community. We are a healthy community. People want to retire here. I think that's a sign of a healthy positive community. Now what can we do? We did things that before that we don't even do now. We used to have a community policing program. Most of the program were seniors. These people wanted to do absolutely nothing but listen and hear what you do. Anything at all with what you do. Our...program same thing, people really wanted to sign up and do that. We can institute in my opinion, the community meetings and maybe a civilian police academy would be the way to go to try to get people to not only to bond with because and let me give you an example, cybercrime is on the rise without a doubt, internet crime, people call us all of the time. If they are younger people, they are tormenting each other with their devices, if it is imagery. If it is older people, it's the scamming. It's a big problem everywhere. We are not unique in any way. We must be able to reach to that populous, my parents, my in-laws and be able to help them and help their families but a lot of these people don't even these families around, help them as much as possible and I think it's the informational meetings, the community meetings and we have staff at the Police Department that can do that and I think that's the way we are going to do it. Is to go back to doing some things that we used to do, granted with community policing but we used to do, we need to get back to that.

Mr. DeBarge: Okay, so we are saying more under the blanket of community policing?

Lt. Valadas: I think the community meeting and the venue for like that community center and there's all of those community rooms. I will tell you what, I'd like to be the first person to go in and talk to those people. I will talk to as many of them as I can because I'm going to look at them like I look at my parents, like I look at my in-laws. They need to know things, they need to know that they need to be vigilant, they need to be observant. They need to watch for the things that maybe we could show them things that they don't know to be aware of and they can show us things that we don't know. They can be the eyes and ears that we need in the community especially when you have a population like that and a population that cares. This is a generation; I mean I am an X-er but these people are baby boomers and you know in some ways you know traditionalists. These people they care, they care about what they do, they care about their communities and they respect police. I think that it is a great audience to have and I think we can do more of that. We need to do more reach out like that.

Mr. DeBarge: Okay, I have one more for you. So, someone gets arrested and this is actually more up your alley, what is the criteria for putting the arrestee's picture in the paper versus their name in the paper?

Lt. Valadas: Well, I mean being the public information officer and I have done it for many years, I mean you know I did it under Chief McGowan somewhat, he kind of let us kind of roll with it a little bit as a shift supervisor kind of thing and thankfully most of the time it came out okay. You do have to watch the information that you release. So, what I try to get out of it, what I try to see for the Police Department and for the community, people need to know what you are doing. I used to get that question a lot. Hey officer what are you guys doing and if people ask you that question, you have to be able to turn to them and to show them well no we actually do quite a bit and I think that the public relations and the press releases and our social media platform and we have got a lot of young officers that are really, really good with that. I think that it is way to inform people about what is going on in their community, it's been shocking in a lot of respects, the balance in doing that. The District Attorney, the State Police Detectives, critical investigation, you leak, you give the wrong information, you could jeopardize an entire case. Jeopardize and informant, you could blow the whole thing. There is a sensitivity there. I think as an executive and the experience I have doing that, I think that I could balance that. I would like to get some other people helping me out with it. I think it is a valuable conduit for

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people to know what is going on. You have to weigh a little bit the perspective of okay if you are going to out this person, there is going to be an effect. So, if you are going to go to that brevity, you better make sure that it is something that not that first of all it's public information and I like to say to people, but you would be surprised. You can sit in an open court, not now but before, you could sit in an open court and once domestic laws for instance, when that person is arraigned and gets arraigned in open court somebody, a reporter could sit right there. Go to Superior Court every day there is a reporter sitting in the corner. That's public information unless the judge shuts it down and you would be surprised, the media knows that, the journalists know that, hopefully you get a good journalist that is respectful, and you can kind of like give just enough to keep people informed. Just enough but not too much. I don't ever want to hurt people, but I do want people to value what we do and if someone attacks one of my officers, I think the community should know about it. I think that that's pretty important.

Mr. DeBarge: So, is there a difference for us for a picture to name?

Lt. Valadas: The pictures, the images themselves aren't necessarily protected, I mean the booking photos. I probably have done 1,200 bookings at the Ludlow Police Department, I mean certainly crime scene photos, yeah that's not something you are going to give out.

Mr. DeBarge: Right.

Lt. Valadas: It is sometimes has a value to show imagery because these young generations the images of I don't know methamphetamine, some new way that fentanyl is being produced or packaged. That has a value to it. My officers do a great job. I take as many images I can, keep them in data banks, gang members, drugs, whatever it might be, and I try we try to share that as much as we can.

Mr. DeBarge: I just mean the arrestees.

Lt. Valadas: The arrestees themselves?

Mr. DeBarge: Yeah.

Lt. Valadas: I mean most agencies, most media agencies they do ask for a booking photo. There is not a whole lot of protections to that. They might have to wait 10 days. They are going to get it anyway. They can get it.

Mr. DeBarge: Sure.

Lt. Valadas: And I just mentioned to you if they find the arraignment date or the first appearance date, the open court date, they can film everything. So, as much as sometimes you try to not glorify anything or show anything that is maybe too demeaning to someone. We are not here to demean anybody, but I do think the public has the right to know, I really do.

Mr. DeBarge: Okay. As an addition to that or caveat to that, so as Chief you get a call from a neighboring town, your say nephew gets arrested and your brother or sister calls you because you have been Chief for a little while, you are friendly with the Chief of that neighboring town and your relative asks you to call that Chief and make sure that your nephew doesn't get his picture in the paper. What do you do and why?

Lt. Valadas: Depends on what exactly occurred, that's going to be an incident-based decision as far as I'm concerned. You know that many of the arrests we make are misdemeanors, you can certainly have discretion when it comes to certain misdemeanor crimes. Again, we don't, the media doesn't even want most of the things that we do because it is routine police work. I mean they don't want to know about every OUI liquor arrest, why because it's common and disturbances...cases, even larceny cases, they don't want to know about those. They want the sensational ones. If you are to tell me that person was involved in a serious assault or maybe an assault on a Police Officer, I mean I think that it's difficult, the public should know these things. I mean the person has to stand with their actions, they have to be responsible for what they do and what they did and that's the way I feel about it. You have to take responsibility for how you live your life and what you do. Certainly, can you show discretion, I'm going

to show as much discretion as I possibly can. I'm going to try and be sensitive to not only the residents of Ludlow but like you said to outside executives okay. The outside Chiefs, who you know we are trying to do the best we can you know to ask you hey can you help me out here and I'm going to try and do the best I can. I know most of them because I try to help them out as much as I can.

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Mr. DeBarge: Alright, thank you. Anybody else have any comments before Lieutenants closing comments? Nothing, your letter.

Lt. Valadas: Thank you. I'd like to read something to you. I just you know, to the entire Board of Selectmen please indulge, indulge my final comments on the Police Department for the Chief of Police position. It is great pride that I appear before you today as a Police Officer. As a resident of Ludlow. As a husband and as a father. I have served as a sworn Police Officer in Ludlow for over thirty years. First as an Auxiliary Police Officer, then as a Special Police Officer and in May of 1993 I had the honor of being appointed as a full-time patrolman of Ludlow. I have done this with pride and honor as I did when I served my country as a Military Police Officer in the United States Army. It has not been easy, the burden of being a Police Officer are many and there have been many times in my career that I left the station exhausted, frustrated and anxious. I except these burdens as a cost of doing what I believe I am supposed to be doing. It is an honor to be a Police Officer. One of the best days of my career, was seeing and holding a young newborn boy that I and a Firefighter helped deliver. When he cried out, we both felt extremely relieved and we both took a breath ourselves to say the least. These and many other positive moments have helped me persevere in my career. I recently met two young boys at the Police Department who love the Police. Both dressed in their little versions of their Police uniforms with all the toy equipment. I will always remember the immense smiles on their little faces when I told each one of them that my department needs young men like them. It is an honor to be a Police Officer. The worse days of my career have been seeing violence and death and then notifying families of loved ones of the deceased passing, even on Father's Day and just before Christmas. Some of these people I knew personally. All of them, I will never forget. You live with that. You try to make that bond with those people and I have not been alone, I have been with people. That Father's Day death notification, I was with a young officer, his name is Michael Brennan and we did it together as a team. Just in the past twelve months the Police Department has responded to three shooting incidents, one with an injured victim. We have responded to two fatal motor vehicle accidents and many other serious motor vehicle accidents with injured persons. Our Police Officers have made numerous arrests for violent and dangerous felons, many domestic violence offenders, fights and disturbances and drug related arrests and many both misdemeanor and felony OUI liquor and OUI drug arrests. Every day in our Town someone calls the Police Department in distress and it is the men and women of our department that respond to help those residents. It is for these reasons that I believe that the most experienced Police Officer is needed to lead the department as Chief of Police, especially during these trying times. I believe in the men and women who work at the Police Department and I will endeavor to lead them with integrity, fairness and fortitude. They deserve this for the responsibilities that they assume every day. We are a team. We are not alone. We care about each other and we care about our community. Ludlow needs us, and we will be there. It is an honor to be a Police Officer, thank you.

Mr. Goncalves: Thank you Dan.

Mr. Silva: Thank you Dan.

Mr. DeBarge: Thank you very much.

Lt. Valadas: Thank you.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you Lieutenant.

Mr. Goncalves: Captain take 10?

Mr. DeBarge: Yes sir, we will take 10.

Mr. Silva: 10?

Mr. DeBarge: Can you shut the mics off. 5, 10 whatever.

Mr. DeBarge: Okay, now begins the discussion part of the interview process. So, I will begin with before we get into any individual discussions. Well actually why don't we just get into initial comments, if we want to do that first.

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Mr. Silva: I will start with some comments. I mean I am just happy that we had the assessment and that we stayed within the Ludlow Police Department. I have always been a proponent of promoting within. I know several years ago I was on the Board and we had discussions about going outside and to me I don't feel that's anyway that I would want to go. I think we have qualified people and these four candidates are just I mean they are just top notch. I would be good with anyone of them as a Police Chief quite honestly. So, I know we have had the assessment and it is a difficult situation and it is a very difficult decision that we are going to be deliberating here and discussing. However, we can only have one Chief. Maybe we could have four, one, two, three, four and be done with it but we can only have one. I will say that Mr. Valadas really impressed me with his interview, that's one. I'm impressed with the number of letters that I have or recommendations that I have for I don't know I have maybe 20, between phone, between the texts and all of these that he has here, I'm just impressed with that. And I think he's done his, he is due for a promotion. Just listening to him, he's done everything. He knows practically everything about the job, he to me, I have known him for a long time. He actually impressed me more today than I thought. Now as far as the other candidates, they were very, very good. Very good, I just can't get past the tenure that he's had. You know the time that he has put in, it's just incredible. So, there's where I am for now.

Mr. DeBarge: Okay.

Mr. Goncalves: I agree with Manny has said. We have four great candidates, amazing. I think Sergeant Irwin is 10 years on the job, what a great thinker. I mean he is methodical in the thinking, it's fantastic. Sergeant Shameklis, the military service you can tell the pressure doesn't bother him. He's been there, he has seen it all. With Lieutenant Brennan and Lieutenant Valadas both one of the things and I didn't come in here with a closed mind on what I thought the perfect candidate would be but one of the things I was looking for and you guys heard it in my questioning. I have a serious problem with what I see on the street's crime-wise. I have been close to Louie Tulik for a lot of years and I know what he goes through, I know you mentioned gangs, Danny mentioned gangs. I know they are here and we can't hide it, we can't not talk about it. It's important you know, and I think Lieutenant Valadas gets it, there's gang issues here, there's a drug problem here. You guys heard me one time with Chief Madera about getting more Detectives on and how important I thought Detectives were because we don't need to do traffic stops, I mean we need to do them but hopefully for a lot of other reasons not just the speeding part. I think our community needs a good hand with the crime that is going on here. The serious crime, the cyber-crime, the drugs the B & E's the assaults. I think 99% of it is drug related today you know. For me, I think I needed a balance of a cop's cop and an administrator. The idea that Lieutenant Valadas isn't afraid to ask someone for help and he understands that he might have some short-comings with accounting, but you know that you have Kim Collins, you have Ellie, you have Carrie if you have a hiring question or whatever. I think the excitement level is there. You sounded a little bit like me, good salesman. But you are excited about what you do, I still go to work every day, I love my job and I think you love your job every day and you have been then probably almost as much as everybody put together, the other three guys. It's exciting that you want the same things for Ludlow that I want. A great place for our kids to grow up, a great place for seniors to live safe. The idea that you want to get involved with the seniors, you want to bring them in, you want to talk about cyber-crime. You have the grant writing experiences which I think is huge. I don't think we do enough grant writing in this town. We leave a lot of money on the table. You know after Jim... left I think we missed out on a lot of stuff. Maybe we missed out on a lot of stuff when Jim... was here I don't know. The idea that we are not doing a bunch of grant writing, you have the experience there and I think you are probably, Lieutenant Valadas you are here I will speak directly to you indirectly to you, for me you have an edge on everybody and you have the package that I'm looking for and that we need in this department. So...

Mr. DeBarge: Is that it?

Mr. Goncalves: That's not enough? Yes, that's it, yes.

Mr. DeBarge: It's just that I'm used to you talking a lot longer. Anyone else?

Mr. Rosenblum: okay, I will go. I mean I have to be honest, I mean once we knew that we were going to be that we had to appoint a new, that we were going to be appointing a new Chief and just discussing the process with other people and just having the conversations of understanding the importance of this position, I have dreaded the decision. I mean honestly, I have sat here, and it's been something that's ate at, it's eating at me a little bit because you know in one way or another, I think just about every candidate that I have touched in one way or another. I have talked to him, met him, had conversations be it anything about down or even just about family. There are four people here that anyone of them could fill the position and I look at two people in particular in Lieutenant Brennan and Lieutenant Valadas as the two that I, I came into this with an open mind but I kind of also felt knowing the history that they were going to be strong candidates and it showed tonight. What impressed me the most was really boots on the ground. I think when it comes down to and Mr. Goncalves and I have had plenty of conversations about drugs, the neighborhoods, community is that I kind of knew you were going to go that way with your questions tonight and none of us really talked about any of this. We all kept to ourselves and I knew that is where you were going to go. My questions were basically back door questions to your questions, I think. Budgeting, yeah budgeting is important, but you also do have the help of your departments in town. You have, there is experience there. Lieutenant Brennan has the same thing also as having been acting Chief. It is, the sense of community I think is something and being in the neighborhoods and the drug problem that really drives a lot of us crazy is the fact that it is drugs, it is worse than people think, they don't know the truth. I mean we don't know all of the truth; you do. That affects a lot of things in town. That affects our school system. That affects our property values. There is a lot that goes into that and being in those communities and being in those neighborhoods and being able to vet that out and make as I have said to people they said well why do you want to be a Selectmen, I go you know what I just want to make my little corner of the earth just a little bit better and I see that especially in Lieutenant Valadas and Lieutenant Brennan. You know it is a tough decision. Do I like it, no but we have to make it and I don't think the decision we make will hurt this town one bit.

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Mr. DeBarge: All set? Mrs. Fernandes.

Mrs. Fernandes: Yeah this is a very difficult decision. Probably one of the most since I have been on the Board. I wish I could bring them all together as a Chief. They all have great qualities that you know that together would make a perfect Chief. But we can't do that, we have to select one and my conflict with this is you know you have Lieutenant Brennan with the top score which is phenomenal. But then you have the others that you know Mr. Valadas, like Mr. Silva I had a lot of people reaching out to me about recommending you know they would like to see him as a Police Chief. A lot of people not just from the community but I actually reached out to some Police Officers and they really liked how he reacted with other Police Officers and like my colleagues you saw from my questions what I thought was most important for a Police Officer and it's someone who can bring those three areas balance in those three areas as much as possible. I'm going to be honest with you, I don't think any of the candidates here had all three areas covered and that's where my difficulty is with this, but I do have to make a choice. I'm going to cover; I'm going to just talk about some of the qualities that I saw in all of them. Again, Lieutenant Brennan top score, I love how he wanted to develop others to become leaders. I'm not sure you can develop everyone into a leader. I think a leader is born with that quality. I think you can maybe develop it, if that person already has it. But I thought that was a really great answer and vision that he had, that he wanted to develop others. Mr. Irwin, I agree with Mr. Goncalves, what a great thinker. He has a wonderful vision. He had some great ideas that I even highlighted while he was interviewing. Some of them, for example to deal with our drug issue, to train community members on CPR. I thought that was a phenomenal idea. He had many, many others and that was really great that he is one of the youngest, I think one of the youngest, appears to be one of the youngest and he has this drive to and new ideas to bring in. ....and then you had Mr. Shameklis he is calm, I can see he is well respected by everyone. He also came up with some great ideas to have the Junior Police Academy, to have...surveys. He, to me is a natural leader. One of those calm leaders that a lot of people respect and then you have Mr. Valadas you know he fits at least two of those three qualities that you need, I think for a successful Police Officer. I think the other officers respect him and I also think that the community you know likes him. He is very expressive, he is out there, whether it is on the bike or whatever. So, I think he has those two areas covered. With the Administrative, the Government part I think he is also...with grants. I don't think grants are the end all to everything because grants sometimes finish, the monies finish. So, I hope if he gets elected, he would think about that. Mr. Brennan, well I did speak to other Police Officers and I was kind of hoping for more you know positive, not that they said negative, but I was hoping for

more. So, with that I am really conflicted with that right now because we had four candidates here that I wish I could bring all of their qualities together to make one Police Officer.

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Mr. DeBarge: Thanks Mrs. Fernandes. Okay, so for me it goes without saying obviously this appointment is an important one. I mean everybody here has mentioned it. Anytime we as Town Government are taxed with hiring or appointing any department head it can't take lightly. We all understand that. Appointments for Police Chief, Fire Chief has more added stigma to it obvious reasons that their responsibilities for public health, public safety. Add that, you know just have that added responsibility to it. For this position we as a town decided to hire an assessment center and we did that for a couple of reasons. The assessment center is used to evaluate and observe each candidate. We did it so the assessment center can remove politics, subjectivity from the selection process, a very critical process and it allows a professional, neutral, balanced and objective approach to the candidate selection process. Under Civil Service, specifically Chapter 31 Section 27, we have guidelines to follow for selection, bypass and removal of candidates and I let me first say I have the ultimate amount of respect for every candidate that makes it into the room for every process. Whether it be Sergeant, Lieutenant and especially Chief of Police. I sat in the assessment center, the process of what each candidate was going to go through with the owner of Legacy Assessment Incorporated with the candidates so that I could understand what process they would go through. Each testing process or each test that they would go through and was, I was absolutely impressed with each test...that they would go through during the day. Again, I have the utmost respect for each candidate. Having said that, there is a process, there is a process to the assessment center and what we paid for, what they give us as Selectmen. That is why we are not privy to the scores. We are just privy to the list that the assessment center gives us and sorry, with the candidates that came in tonight, with their resume's, background information, looking at the same information all of us have looked at, I have I have my own kind of rating system that I have used off of some of the information that we got from our HR Director that other cities and towns have used in their Police Chief interviews and kind of did my own type of rating system. But I have seen nothing nor have I heard anything that would give me any cause or reason to bypass the first position given to us by the assessment center and let me state why and again this is about the process not about any individual. In the Civil Service guidelines that we have under that chapter and section that I mentioned 31/27, bypass reasons are stated number 1 results of the interview which all of you have stated you were impressed by everyone, background information check, conviction of felony or misdemeanor, refusal to complete application or comply with request of information, charge of felony or misdemeanor and a continuation without a fine, departmental incident or record, medical capacity, other negative reasons that would make candidate unsuitable for position or military candidates cannot be bypassed due to service obligations. None of these, none of these that I read fall into place for any of this process and again not about any of the candidates but about the process and that as Chairman is what I am concerned about. And I would be remised if I did not bring this up because of our Civil Service obligation and because of what we paid the assessment center to do for us. I even went back today and looked at the interview from July 1, 2014 when Chief Madera was chosen as Chief by the Select Board and one of the candidates that was at the time provisional Lieutenant Joe Metcalfe who was number three on the list even cautioned the Select Board at that time not to bypass number one who happened to be Chief Madera at the time due to the fact that he was number one given by that assessment center and the money that the Board spent or that the Town spent on that assessment center. I even wrote down what he said, "the Board paid for an assessment center to give a subjective ranking of candidates, absent of politics" there was some more but I ended the quote there. I see no reason to bypass number one. I don't think there is cause and that was from as I said Joe Metcalfe. Again, I want to make this perfectly clear from my position as a Selectman and as Chair, nothing to do with any individual but to do about the process.

Mr. Silva: Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DeBarge: Mr. Silva.

Mr. Silva: I totally agree with you but answer me why I just spent, we are going on how many hours now sitting hear listening to the candidates for a reason to find out what it is from the candidates we are getting. If that is the process let's get the assessment center to give us the names, number one is number one, he is Chief, done.

Mr. DeBarge: Well you should know why.

Mr. Silva: I do but then we are done right. I mean it makes no sense to sit here for four or five hours listening, asking these questions that we are asking and then we are saying that's all for not.

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Mr. DeBarge: I will give you a perfect example. We selected number two over number one for Lieutenant.

Mr. Silva: Okay.

Mr. DeBarge: So, in a previous interview. So, that's why we interview.

Mr. Silva: Yes, that's what I'm saying. We interview the candidates; the assessment center has given us this and again not that...any other candidate or stuff like that or anything. It's just the feeling that you have by interviewing you find the best person that you possibly think and actually Mr. Valadas made a good point and on of the reasons, he made a point that those people don't know the Town of Ludlow. They have no idea what the Town of Ludlow is, he does.

Mr. DeBarge: I don't know what you mean by those people?

Mr. Silva: The assessment center. Whoever, all three of them. They have no idea what this Town is like, he does.

Mr. DeBarge: Listen I'm not really here to argue with you.

Mr. Silva: I'm not arguing, I'm just saying you know.

Mr. DeBarge: I'm here to state my position as Chair for the process and again I have nothing against any candidate at all.

Mr. Silva: Me neither, me neither.

Mr. DeBarge: I'm not here to argue with anybody. I'm here to try and protect the process and protect the Town from anything going awry from that process. If we don't agree with it, then we can change that.

Mr. Silva: You know.

Mr. DeBarge: In the end, I only have a vote, that's it. But I needed to bring this up for the process.

Mr. Silva: Yeah, and I at least I, I absolutely understand the process. I was here the last time and I have gone through it several times and yes, we have had some bypass and understand it made it far more difficult first of all to really to do this but...

Mr. Goncalves: I think Carmina wants to say something.

Mr. DeBarge: Yes, Mrs. Fernandes.

Mrs. Fernandes: You now I happen to agree somewhat with Mr. Silva. Even in your own reading of the bypass reasons that you can use, the results of the interview, I think using an assessment center is definitely something we need that we chose to use because to me it makes sense to use a center that is based you know formed by Police Chiefs that know what this job entails. To put these candidates into certain situations and we probably would never be able to and then they give us this assessment. But I also agree with Mr. Silva you know; I think the interview plays a big role. I disagree with you about Paul Madera, I was one of the Board of Selectmen members when they selected him. He did well, there is no question about it but I thought he was the best candidate based on everything at the time, the interview, everything in his packet and you know this is my conflict here. You have to think about the Town in all aspects, not just bypassing and all of that but who is going to be the best Police Chief for this Town. Who is going to be the best Police Chief and I'm not sure that we can't use the interview and how that person, not just did they completely care about the interview but who interviewed the best at the end and then add that to all the other qualifications. You can't just use the interview, you can't just

use, in my opinion the assessment center because then I agree with Mr. Silva if you are going to just use the assessment center then don't take our time, residents time and these applicants time to come in to interview. That's just a waste of everyone's time if we are just going to go with whoever you know the ranks the best. I'm conflicted because the assessment center like I already said is a pretty intense assessment and it's conducted by Police Chief's and some of our candidates, I think what Mr. Irwin said you either have it or you don't, you can't prepare for the assessment center. You either have it or you don't, just sort of like I said with a leader, a natural leader, you either have it or you don't. Then I also, you know Mr. Valadas pointed out that some people just don't do well on these things and it is true these Police Chief's don't know the Town of Ludlow. It brings me back to a time in my life that I had this argument with someone where it was about grades and when people just use grades you know and they have two great candidates and one has better grades then the other but then you look at the personal, you know the person behind those grades and you find that this person with the lower grades is an African -American that had to work 5 jobs while going maybe to law school or medical school and the other person that did better in grades, you know had a little trust fund that the parents had already put aside for them so that person could focus on all of this. I am not saying that that's what happened here but there's that conflict in me you know that can happen. So, that was just my point that I think the bypass reasons you can take into consideration the results of the interview. So, that's why I interjected and wanted to put my point of view on that. But this is a tough choice here in my opinion from all of our candidates.

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Mr. DeBarge: Okay. Carrie did you have anything from HR at all before we go further from anybody from the Board. No, okay. Any more comments?

Mr. Rosenblum: Yeah, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DeBarge: Mr. Rosenblum.

Mr. Rosenblum: I kind of reiterate what my fellow Select Board members have said is that if you have an assessment center and I know that we voted on it, we voted to use it and we get to this process, this interview does seem moot to me and I mean but I do understand the assessment is that it pulls at me because the same thing is if we bypass we bring ourselves into possible issues down the road. It could be six months, a year anything to that and do we do that to the Town? Do we want to do that to the Department? Do we want to do that to just anyone in general? If I were to think it over again and I would say yes and again the point that was made that everyone else has said, this is an assessment center that is peers judging peers. It is Police Chiefs that have done the job but haven't done it in Ludlow. So, I it's just a tough decision. I just wanted to throw that out there.

Mr. DeBarge: I don't personally get the Ludlow factor in it. I mean assessment centers tour around so that they can assess Police Departments for promotions. So, I don't get the they're not from Ludlow factor. I mean you can't hire an assessment center and then….

Mr. Rosenblum: Then this whole process is ridiculous. This is a ridiculous process.

Mr. DeBarge: Well you can't hire an assessment center and if you don't like the outcome, just say you don't like the outcome.

Mr. Rosenblum: I didn't say I didn't like the outcome. What I'm saying is…

Mr. Silva: Sometimes the outcome is fine. I was at Chief Madera's and I believe Mr. Valadas was one of the candidates.

Mr. DeBarge: Yeah.

Mr. Silva: And we went with Mr. Madera because obviously he was the best candidate. He came out fine through the interview, he interviewed great. So, there is different times, there is different candidates, there is different you know what I mean.

Mr. DeBarge: I understand that, but you are saying that…

Mr. Goncalves: Mr. Chairman, I get the assessment center thing and I there is probably good value to the assessment center to make sure that we are not totally blindsided by someone who scores a 50 or a 60 and someone scores a 90. But I think we are probably like 7 or 8% between them, nothing enormous and I think that in my opinion anyways the difference in the interview was well beyond the 7 or 8% difference there might have been in the scores. I think from the interview standpoint, Lieutenant Valadas might have been 25-30% better than the other candidates and if he was 3 or 4 or 5% short on the assessment center, I think that the interview outweighs whatever the difference was on the other side. Again, total package, he didn't flunk the assessment center, he didn't get a 60 but the interview he got you know a 95 and everybody else got an 80 or a 75, you know what I'm saying? Now I'm looking at those two things together, my conscious says the assessment center did the right thing by letting us know that we had four great candidates within 6, 5, 4% of each other whatever it is. But now with the interview, the scales got tipped from what those other results are in my opinion.

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Mr. DeBarge: Okay.

Mr. Rosenblum: And to that point I just think, I believe the assessment center got it right, they got it right. They gave us the best candidates. I mean they gave us three or four of the best candidates. It's almost to that point you know at that point when they come into the interview it's almost like the choice becomes your Board. I mean that's I don't know.

Mr. DeBarge: Okay.

Mrs. Fernandes: Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DeBarge: Mrs. Fernandes.

Mrs. Fernandes: Yeah, I think these are all tools to make our because we are the final deciders, these are all tools. We got a package from each candidate you know that are that thick and we go through them. We spend our time to go through them. We get the assessment center because we want to use you know their conclusions in making our decision. We have these interviews to make a final assessment of all these tools that we have before us. I think, you know I don't understand Civil Service law, I don't know regardless of which one, like I said we have four candidates here that I wish I could put them all together to be one Police Chief. But I just think that these are all tools that are given to us but we are the final deciders based on all of this as to who the best Police Chief is going to be for this Town. Or we can you know not decide yet and do something else. That's another option too.

Mr. DeBarge: Ms. Ribeiro.

Ms. Ribeiro: If I may just say something. I just want to clarify the assessment center performs their job with the exercises they gave the candidates and they rank them accordingly and they sent them to Civil Service. The list that you have, the certified list from Civil Service is separate from the actual list from the assessment center even though the numbers I think were very similar. So, the assessment center happens, that company assesses all of the candidates, ranks them, sends the list to Civil Service, the Town never sees it. Civil Service then takes that list and then they give each candidate points for years of service, military, that type of thing and then we get the top three candidates. That is when the Town is notified of the top three candidates and clearly, we had a tie that is why we had four because we had a tie at third place. So, I just want to make that clear that the list you are looking at is the certified list from Civil Service. Everybody is talking about the list from the assessment center. The assessment center, yes started the process but Civil Service dictated that list at the end of the day with the final points that were given to each candidate. We don't see scores. We don't know scores. So, I just want to clarify that.

Mr. Goncalves: Derek can you read the bypass again?

Mr. DeBarge: Say again?

Mr. Goncalves: Can you read what read before about bypass please?

Mr. DeBarge: Bypass reasons, results of interview, background information check meaning reference check, job performance, military record, etc, convictions of felony or misdemeanor, refusal to complete application or comply with request of information, charge of felony or misdemeanor and continuation without a fine, departmental incident or record, medical incapacity, other negative reason that would make candidate unsuitable for position. Military candidates cannot be bypassed due to service obligation. Any more discussion or does anyone have a motion or?

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Mr. Silva: Just one more thing Mr. Chairman. I just can't get passed, Lieutenant Valadas has given his whole life to this and to I just don't understand. I'm a progressive type person, a progression you know he has done is due process. He has everything that he should do. I don't believe that he has any flaws in his performance, I just don't understand whether it is Civil or whether it is the assessment center or whatever it is, I just don't understand it. So, I move that we appointment Lieutenant Valadas as Police Chief.

Mr. Goncalves: Second for discussion, can you amend that to include based on the results of the interview.

Mr. Silva: Well we have been talking about that the whole time.

Mr. Goncalves: Oh, we have to wait for Ellie.

Mr. DeBarge: Yeah, wait for Ellie.

Mr. Silva: Where did she go?

Mrs. Fernandes: While we are waiting for Ellie, Mr. Chairman, can I just make a comment?

Mr. DeBarge: Yes.

Mrs. Fernandes: You know, I'm not so sure I agree with Mr. Silva on the fact that because somebody put in so much time, that should be a big basis for promoting them. They have to put in the time and then they have to be the most qualified from the people before us. So, I just wanted to point that out. The one thing that I think it was Mr. Shameklis or Mr. Irwin that he made a good point, you know if you really want you can't just say you want a position, you have to really want it and go after it. That is where the conflict that I'm having, Mr. Valadas I think he fit you know in so many ways as an excellent Police Chief, but you know that little thing is with me, did he just say he wanted it or did he go after it. I don't know. That's the only little conflict I have within me between these candidates are some of these things and with my other members of the Board and their comments.

Mr. Silva: There is no doubt that we all have those same issues quite honestly, but we have to get to a point where we...

Mrs. Fernandes: Yes. You can understand my conflict here. I came into after to this meeting after having looked at all the packages and everything and I thought okay there is one here that is leaning more to the decision I'm going to be making. But then the interview has changed my position somewhat because I'm going to tell you Mr. Valadas did a very good job during the interview and that's where I'm conflicted, but I have to make a decision so.

Moved by Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. Goncalves to appoint Lieutenant Daniel Valadas as the Ludlow Police Chief as a result of the interviews effective May 28, 2020. Vote 4-1. Mr. DeBarge opposed.

Meeting adjourned at 10:06 p.m.

Ludlow Board of Selectmen

All related documents can be viewed at the Board of Selectmen's Office during regular business hours.