

Approved: 11/23/2020
Released: 12/28/2020

**TOWN OF WINCHENDON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2020**

Town Hall, 109 Front St., 2nd Floor Auditorium, Winchendon, MA 01475

Present:

Michael Barbaro, Chairman
Rick Ward, Vice-Chairman
Barbara Anderson
Audrey LaBrie
Amy Salter

Keith R. Hickey, Town Manager
Linda Daigle, Executive Assistant

List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- None
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EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Exemption No. 2 to conduct strategy session in preparation for negotiations with non-union employees and to reconvene into public session for the sole purpose of adjournment.

Chairman Barbaro called Executive Session to order at 7:48 p.m.

Town Manager Keith Hickey wanted to make the Board aware with one year left of his contract, the Board must notify him six months before if it is decided to not renew his contract. One thing he doesn't like is insecurity and a lot is moving around. He is aware he is the type of person who gets pretty anxious about this stuff so he's been looking around to see what is out there. He has been notified he is a finalist in Kingston, Mass. He's been invited to interview with the Board of Selectmen in Kingston sometime this month. He is doing this for his own security. From his point, he loves it here and also knows that it is just an uncomfortable time for everybody and ensuring he's protecting himself and his professional life. If the Board was not to renew his contract, he would have a hard time.

Kingston is making the names public tomorrow night at their Selectmen's meeting. He's not sure of the process, trying to schedule an interview sometime before Thanksgiving. He does not know their timeframe. He doesn't know what inquiry will be coming here from staff or residents there. He reached out to Chairman Barbaro today seeking for this Emergency Executive Session because he felt he needed to do that. He informed his office staff this morning and feels the need to tell Department Heads in the morning unless the Board has a reason to go in a different avenue. He would like people to hear from him.

Hickey continued in he wanted to let the Board know what is happening and that they will be the first to know. He hopes they understand why he is doing what he is doing just trying to protect himself. He is not actively looking anywhere else and thought this was just an opportunity to take a look at and consider. As you guys do my evaluation and have discussion of what if anything you want to do about negotiating a new contract, it will all come into his thought process.

LaBrie thanked the Town Manager for informing them directly and expected nothing less from him. She understands he needs to look out for himself, and speaking for herself would hate to see him leave.

Referring to a comment he made at one of their Board meetings about the Board being a bit separated and was sorry he was hearing this from the public as the Board coming across as fractured and not cohesive.

Anderson commented she was stunned and this was not something she expected to hear and is still processing what she just heard.

Ward commented that he hopes the Town Manager stays.

Salter asked the Town Manager to give the Town a chance to at least meet with them before he would accept a position.

Hickey commented he was not trying to hold the Board hostage or make them react. That's not how he operates and would absolutely talk to them and let them know where he stands. He appreciates their comments.

Barbaro told Mr. Hickey that he has done wonderful work in this community, with this board over the last six years and he couldn't thank the Town Manager enough. He is saddened thinking about him leaving. He commented that there are times every Board has disagreement that spills out to the public more than they would like them too.

Barbaro said he would submit a public announcement to the paper that he is a finalist. He notified the Board that after hearing from Mr. Hickey, he has reached out to Bernie Lynch and they would be having a discussion at a future Executive Session.

Hickey said that Winchendon is an amazing place and applauded the Board, the public, the Finance Committee, the employees who have all worked together and helped him make some impressive things happen. He has used every single person in his disposal to help make decisions or recommendations he thought was for the best interest for the community without any real political reasons behind them. This Board has done the same. You might have differences of opinion, but you have made decisions in your mind and your heart this is what is in the best interest of the community. Can't ask for anything better than that, Hickey said. A lot of good things have happened and he is just trying to help.

ADJOURNMENT:

LaBrie moved to close Executive Session; seconded by Salter. With a roll call vote of all aye, Executive Session adjourned at 8:03PM

LaBrie moved to adjourn from Open Session; seconded by Ward. By a vote of all aye, the meeting adjourned at 8:04.

Respectfully submitted,



Linda Daigle
Executive Assistant