

August 23, 2021

Pioneer Valley Regional School  
97 F. Sumner Turner Drive  
Northfield

Selectboard Present: Heath Cummings, Chair; Barbara “Bee” Jacque, Vice Chair; Alexander Meisner; Mary Sullivan-Bowen

Selectboard Absent: Bernard Boudreau, Clerk

Also Present: Andrea Llamas, Town Administrator; Floyd “Skip” Dunnell, Moderator; Tyler Bourbeau, BNCTV

Others Present: Speakers: Andrew Vernon, EMS Chief Mark Fortier; Steve Stoia, Brian Bordner; Cate Woolner; Nancy Billings; Gary Sibilia; Andrew Goodwin; Joan Stoia; Jen Tufts; Tim Bowen

Moderator Dunnell called the forum to order at 6:34pm and explained the structure of the forum: Four topics to be discussed within a thirty-minute limit on each topic.

### **Public Input for the Police Chief Search**

- Dunnell noted additional members of the Police Chief Screening Committee Cate Woolner, Michelle Gamache and Heather Tower in attendance

#### **Community Interaction Comments**

- Is the position administrative, working in the community or both?
- Shared with other departments, has this option been investigated?

**Moderator read the posted advertisement:** The Town of Northfield, MA is seeking a progressive, community-oriented Police Chief to lead this full-service police department (approx. budget \$450K) consisting of 3 FT officers, 9 PT officers, and PT Administrative Assistant. With approximately 3,000 residents, Northfield is a quintessential New England community on a border shared with New Hampshire and Vermont in northwest Massachusetts; the Connecticut River divides the Town. With easy access to I-91, Northfield is just 46 miles north of Springfield, 94 miles northwest of Boston, and 183 miles from New York City. The Town is governed by a 5-member Selectboard, with an appointed Town Administrator. A bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice, Police Administration or related field is preferred. At least ten years progressively responsible law enforcement with at least five years in supervisory, command and administrative positions, or any equivalent combination of education and experience which demonstrates possession of the required knowledge, skills, and abilities; or any equivalent combination of education and experience is required. Salary range to \$105,000; starting salary commensurate with qualifications. Excellent benefits. Northfield is an equal opportunity employer. For additional information related to the search contact Sean Kelly, Director of Services, Municipal Resources Inc., at 603-279-0352, x321.

- The Selectboard commented the position would be both administrative and working in the community. This early in the process, additional options have not been discussed and the purpose of this forum was to bring ideas forward
- Visibility
- Protection of citizens’ rights
- Opportunities to meet officers
- Leader of the team and community

#### **Familiarity with new Massachusetts policing law & changes comments**

- Former Northfield Police Chief Gary Sibilia (ret.) gave an overview of new policing laws, training changes and the affect it will have on town finances
- Police and EMS have required certifications. Can these departments be financed using just taxes or should regionalization be considered for shared resources?

- Police Chief should not interpret the law and needs to understand use of force
- Unfunded mandates cannot be forced on towns
- Police Chief needs to know about and administer reform law

**Collaborations-inside & outside community comments**

- Fix collaborations with other towns; public safety leaders need to collaborate
- Someone to outreach to certify (2<sup>nd</sup> amendment rights)
- Encourage gathering within the community through leadership
- Work with social services
- Attend Selectboard meetings regularly, structured communication

**Qualities in a new Chief comments**

- Respect on both sides
- Sensitivity to cultures & races
- Be able to change with the times; understands humility; community policing
- Qualifications and experience
- Less intimidation; good sense of humor; kindness
- Get to know individuals
- Community-Good Will Ambassador
- Consistency-need to be fair/firm
- Competency-professionalism with methods in the field
- Accountability-same standards for all
- Investigate where they came from and why they left
- Visit businesses

Time frame moving forward was reviewed by Llamas

Meeting adjourned at 8:07 pm.

Recorded by Sandra L. Wood, Secretary

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Selectboard Clerk

9/7/21  
Date Approved