



# TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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## BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES March 29, 2011

### **PRESENT:**

Mark Kaplan, Chair, Board of Selectmen  
Tina Helm, Selectman  
Peter Bianchi, Selectman  
Jessie Levine, Town administrator

### **ALSO PRESENT:**

Hardy Hasenfuss, Personnel Consultant

Chair Kaplan called the meeting to order at 10:30 AM.

The Board of Selectmen met with Hardy Hasenfuss to review the results of the job attributes on-line questionnaire. The Selectmen and Mr. Hasenfuss discussed attributes that candidates ought to have, such as self-management, teamwork, interpersonal skills, and so on.

Mr. Hasenfuss said that based on responses, self-management appears to be the most important attribute; if an individual cannot manage him- or herself, then they cannot manage an organization full of people. The next attribute is teamwork: Ms. Levine and Ms. Helm rated this attribute high, Mr. Kaplan rated it lower, and, though he rated it lower than the others, it was the highest score for Mr. Bianchi. Mr. Hasenfuss debated its rank because he thinks personal accountability ought to be rated higher because we want a person who runs the Town on a day-to-day basis and is accountable for their actions. Mr. Hasenfuss said that generally, personal accountability ranks among the five highest general attributes of the most successful people (the other top five attributes of successful people are self-management, interpersonal skills, influencing others, and goal achievement).

Mr. Hasenfuss stressed that there should be reasonable agreement among the first six or seven attributes.

Chair Kaplan said that teamwork is important if you are one of many, but in a position of authority, then teamwork is not as important and decision-making or management is more important. Mr. Hasenfuss said that this office is a bit more hierarchical and there are decisions this position needs to make when the Selectmen aren't present. Ms. Helm said that there are two definitions of teamwork: one is organizing a group of employees to work toward common goals and objectives, and the other is to empower those same individuals to work together for common success.

Mr. Hasenfuss read from the official definition of teamwork: "The ability cooperate with others to meet objectives, discarding personal agenda to cooperate with other team members to meet objectives; contributes positively and productively to team projects; builds and sustains a trust relationship with each member of the team; supports other team members." He explained that this definition is more about cooperation than leadership.

Mr. Hasenfuss asked Ms. Levine to define teamwork from her perspective. She said that she rated teamwork high because the success of the town and the town administrator depends on the success of the

team, and that the unsuccessful managers are those who operate entirely independently of the rest of the people in the office.

Mr. Bianchi said that that attribute reflected his highest score because he does think that should be high. Chair Kaplan said he believes in teamwork but also believes in leadership as far more important.

Discussion of the decision-making category, where Ms. Levine and Ms. Helm ranked the attribute lower than did Mr. Bianchi and Chair Kaplan. Ms. Levine said that she had ranked it lower because of trends and changes over the last year that more decisions would be made by the Board of Selectmen and not the Town Administrator.

Mr. Bianchi said that it skewed the results that people made choices based on Ms. Levine and not the position as a whole. Ms. Helm said that they may be basing the responses on the job that Ms. Levine has done, but it may also be that those are qualities that are necessary. Mr. Bianchi agreed.

Mr. Hasenfuss said the purpose is to identify what attributes the candidate should have to do the job well. For instance, if they are not good at self-management or personal accountability, then they are not going to survive in this job (and Mr. Hasenfuss said that there are lots of people out there like that and that will not come through in a reference check). This questionnaire will help the citizens committee and Selectmen know what questions to ask. Ms. Levine asked Mr. Hasenfuss if he could help the Selectmen develop the questions for the various search groups, and he agreed to do that.

After some review and scaling of the results, the Selectmen ranked the top eight attributes as:

- Teamwork
- Self Management
- Diplomacy and Tact
- Problem Solving
- Personal Accountability
- Flexibility
- Conflict Management
- Interpersonal Skills

Job Rewards/Culture Composite: Mr. Hasenfuss defined the top three attributes of what the rewards of the individual job: “theoretical,” “traditional/regulatory,” and “aesthetic.” He cautioned against candidates that ranked high on “individualistic/political” and “utilitarian/economic.” The other attribute is “social,” as in caring for others.

Organizational Rewards/Culture Composite: This category shows the attributes of the organization as a whole and what will be rewarded, and they are the same: “theoretical,” “aesthetic,” and “traditional/regulatory.”

Behaviors Composite: Mr. Hasenfuss said that this section is “the clincher.” Mr. Hasenfuss explained the charts based on “DISC.” He explained that the D represents “dominance,” or forcefulness of decision-making. High D’s are on the forceful side, and low D’s are on the meek side. I is the ability to communicate verbally or in the written form. S is “steadiness,” which tells us how one would handle a steady pace or steady work environment. High S likes a steady environment and little change (difficulty multi-tasking) and a low S thrives on change and challenge (loves chaos and multi-tasking). The C stands for “compliance” with rules, regulations and procedures and paying attention to detail and accuracy.

- C/S: “alert and aware to the consequences of your actions and decisions” – we will affect how we see the job by who we are ourselves. Tina & Mark possessed this but Peter did not.
- C/D “accommodating and adapting to what other people want, what the town wants.” All three show that the candidate should possess this quality (Mark 12, Peter 14, and Tina 8).
- I/S = people focus, S/I is task focus. Peter has the attributes of the latter, and Mark and Tina the former.
- D/S is “urgency” or “get the job done now.” Tina is even, Mark shows some urgency, and Peter is saying he would rather have the time taken to do it right.
- I/D is “good will,” and all agree that people should be treated with good will (Mark – 8, Peter – 12, Jessie – 12, Tina – 20).
- C/I – “perfectionism,” of which Mark and Peter have a small amount. Someone with a strong C/I may be so anal about getting everything right that they will miss a lot of the game.
- The opposite of perfectionism is “projected self-confidence,” I/C, which both Tina and Jessie have. Projected self-confidence means that you can be less of a perfectionist because you inspire trust and can convince people that you are right.

Mr. Hasenfuss reviewed the behaviors composite, which primarily will be disregarded in favor of the individual candidates’ DISC scores.

Emotional Intelligence: Mr. Hasenfuss explained that emotional intelligence reflects one’s self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation (passion beyond money and status), empathy (ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people) and social skills (managing relationships and building networks).

Process: Ms. Levine asked when the questionnaires would be administered to the candidates: would it be the first 10-12 filtered through LGC or would it be the three-four finalists. Due to the amount of time that Mr. Hasenfuss would need with each candidate, it was decided that it would take too much time in the first round, and should be used only with the final few candidates. The Selectmen will not see results until after the last round of interviews, and will make a decision with input from, but not based entirely on, the results of this process. Mr. Hasenfuss will raise red flags (if there are any) and the Selectmen can proceed based on that information.

Discussion about whether the hiring decision should be unanimous. Ms. Levine strongly suggested the Selectmen needed to work on a unanimous decision because no incoming administrator should be asked to work in an environment in which they are not fully supported by the Board.

The meeting adjourned at 12:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessie Levine  
Town Administrator