

**Regular Session Minutes – Bedford, MA Select Board Meeting
Hybrid Participation Meeting (Zoom and Select Board Meeting Room)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=roMyBS891X8>

August 14, 2023

PRESENT: Chair Bopha Malone, Clerk Shawn Hanegan, Paul Mortenson, Margot Fleischman, Emily Mitchell

ALSO PRESENT: Colleen Doyle, Amy Fidalgo, Kerri Rufo, Town Manager’s Office; David Manugian, DPW; David Castellarin, Finance; John Petrin, Paradigm; Tony Fields, Planning; Meaghan Sturgis, Fire Department; John Fisher, Police Department; Erin Sandler-Rathe, Cheryl Millroy, Anne Caron, Walter St. Onge, Town Manager Search Committee; Dot Bergin, Joan Bowen, Mike Rosenberg, *The Bedford Citizen*; Mark Siegenthaler, Diana Siegenthaler, Megan Zammuto, Christie Martin, B. Bell, Brian Covell, Kathy Kerby, Barbara Purchia, Bette Annese, Carol Kelly, Corrine Doud, Erin Dorr, Marv Goldschmitt, Rheanna Lanoie, Hillari Wennerstrom, Christine Rabinowitz, Cathy Cordes, Meaghan Sturgis, Katherine Labrecque, Sue Swanson, Daniel Bostwick, Betsey Anderson, Mike Guzzo, Allison Johnson, Karen Willson, Ted Wirth, Susan Schwartz, Armen Zildjian

Chair Bopha Malone called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm.

23-124 Public Comment

Sue Swanson, 45 Shawsheen Road, expressed that she wants the new town manager to have an environmental orientation, stating that climate mitigation and adaptation must be a high priority for both our town and town manager.

Brian Covell, 129 North Road, asked why the meeting was being held at 4:00PM, and stated that the firm only had two candidates.

Christie Martin, 11 Selfridge Road, opposes the proposed tree cutting for the proposed new development on Railroad Avenue.

Kathy Kerby, 37 Fletcher Road, also addressed the Railroad Avenue development, and asked what happens when the town gives away something to a private developer. She advocated preserving the green space on the corner of Railroad and South Road.

Armen Zildjian, 9 Hartwell Road, also spoke in favor of preserving the Garden Club plot at the corner and stated that public land for such a project would set a bad precedent.

23-125 One Day License Application—Bedford Plaza Hotel—September 2, 2023

Ms. Doyle stated that the Bedford Plaza Hotel had previously violated building and health regulations in early July in connection with a foam party at the pool, where alcohol may have been served without a permit. Town officials have requested a meeting with the hotel owner. The hotel is seeking a one-day

license for a similar event in September. The Board agreed to withhold approval pending the meeting with the owner and confirmation that the hotel will follow all appropriate policies going forward.

Materials: 340 Great Road Plaza Hotel Foam Party, 340 Great Road Violation Notice, 340 Incident Report, C3 In Nand notice 340, Ladder Report, Plaza Application 9.2.23

At 4:13 PM Brian Covell arrived in person at the meeting. Ms. Malone informed him that public comment was over. Mr. Covell proceeded to speak for over 5 minutes without permission from the Select Board. Mr. Covell was then escorted out of the meeting by the Bedford Police.

The Select Board called for a recess at 4:28 PM.

The Select Board returned at 4:38 PM.

23-126 Contracts

1. DPW: Beta Group, Inc. PCI Contract

David Manugian presented a contract with Beta Consulting to enhance DPW's pavement treatment program through the incorporation of new technology, particularly LIDAR-based data collection, allowing comprehensive analysis within a 50-foot radius to improve roadways' condition assessment and integration with our GIS program

Ms. Fleischman asked if other communities currently use Beta Group. Mr. Manugian confirmed, and said the Town Engineer had recommended Beta. Ms. Fleischman also asked if the findings would alter the pavement management program's investment strategy. Mr. Manugian said the potential to capture detailed infrastructure data through the LIDAR surveys would improve the estimation process. Ms. Mitchell asked whether private roads would be included in the survey, and whether the department had concerns about privacy and data ownership. Mr. Manugian confirmed the Town would own the data, with some rights retained by the company. Ms. Fleischman questioned the flexibility to transition to a different vendor in the future. Mr. Manugian explained the challenges of transferring large datasets. Mr. Hanegan inquired about the safety of the Delta Mist Fog seal material used in pavement treatment. Mr. Manugian assured its safety and provided information about its application. Ms. Malone sought clarification on the project's timeline. Mr. Manugian confirmed that the work would commence immediately, involving a comprehensive LIDAR survey and subsequent yearly analyses of pavement conditions.

Mr. Mortenson moved that the board approve the contract with Beta for the amount of \$94,250 as described in the memo from Public Works dated August 14, 2023. Mr. Hanegan seconded. The motion passed 5-0-0.

2. Public Safety Contract-

Continue to the August 28, 2023 Select Board Meeting

23-127 Extension of Financial Articles Appropriated Prior to FY23

David Castellarin, the Finance Director, proposed extending a total of \$362,381 into fiscal year 2024, encompassing articles dating from 2016 through 2021, while noting that other articles would automatically carry forward, since they were within two years of appropriation.

Mr. Hanegan inquired about the timeline for concluding the zoning reorganization process and its presentation at Town Meeting. Mr. Castellarin said the process had recently started, and spending should occur by the fiscal year's end, possibly leading to a discussion at the next special or annual town meeting. Asked if there was a deadline for spending by fiscal year end, Mr Castellarin clarified that any article could be carried forward, requiring the board's approval of the extension. Mr. Mortenson asked about projects pushing forward. Mr Castellarin explained that efforts were made to accelerate spending, with a staffing boost aiding progress.

Ms. Mitchell asked Ms. Doyle about the status of new bathrooms at Sabourin Field . Ms. Doyle confirmed that the bathrooms would be incorporated into the larger field updates, due to construction dependencies. Ms. Mitchell also asked about recommendations to close certain appropriations, and expressed interest in retaining funds for specific purposes. Mr. Castellarin clarified that departments had provided these recommendations, including schools and facilities, based on their assessment of project statuses. Ms. Mitchell asked whether certain appropriations that were recommended to be closed related to library projects could be integrated into the ongoing library HVAC project. Mr. Castellarin affirmed that re-appropriation would require a Town Meeting vote.

Mr. Mortenson moved that the select board approve to extend the capital articles as proposed in the memo dated August 9, 2023 by Dave Castellarin, Finance Director, totaling \$362,381.00. Mr. Hanegan seconded. The motion passed 5-0-0.

Materials: 1-BETA Standard Agreement, Bedford, MA - Asset Management v2, SB Cover Memo for BETA PCI Contract

23-128 Consent Agenda

No Items

23-129 Liaison Report

1. Hanscom Letter to the Governor

Ms. Mitchell shared version 3 of a letter intended for submission to the Governor, representing the four Hanscom towns in expressing concerns about the environmental impacts of the proposed North Airfield expansion project. The letter integrated comments from the Bedford, Lexington, and Concord Select Boards, which were also included in the meeting packets Ms. Mitchell expressed her comfort with this version and noted that, even if the Select Board approved it, the letter would still need approval from the other three towns and could undergo further revisions.

Mr. Hanegan moved that the Select Board approve version 3 of the HATS letter to the governor on behalf of the Select Board. Mr. Mortenson seconded. The motion passed 5-0-0.

Mr. Mortenson attended a Planning Board meeting, where the Old Billerica Road project was discussed. He is anticipating offer coming from the developers of a \$20,000 contribution toward

affordable housing. He also attended the Taxation Aid Committee meeting, where members discussed qualifications and the application form.

Mr. Hanegan said the Depot Park Advisory Committee met and discussed additional work that needs to be done on the Bedford Depot building. The Select Board can free up \$75,000 from the Historic Preservation Fund for this work. The Volunteer Coordinating Committee meets on Friday and will be spotlighting the housing committees. The Housing Partnership meets tomorrow and will discuss creating a form for submission requests for developers when the BHP and the Select Board have common interest in a project (e.g., the proposed Carlisle Road LIP).

Ms. Mitchell noted that Ms. Fidalgo presented a check-in on the fire station to the HDC. The Fire Station Building Committee meets next Monday. The Cultural Council also meets next Monday; their grant cycle runs September 1st through October 17th.

Materials: Hanscom Letter to Governor DRAFT v2 -- BEDFORD SB COMMENTS, Hanscom Letter to Governor DRAFT v2 -- CONCORD SB COMMENTS, Hanscom Letter to Governor DRAFT v2 -- LEXINGTON SB COMMENTS, Hanscom Letter to Governor DRAFT v3

23-130 Town Manager's Report

The week of August 20th the Tour de Cure will be coming through town. There will be police details at certain intersections to help the riders cross.

Charlie Ticotsky in the Town Manager's office accepted another position. His last day will be September 8th. He will be greatly missed by all.

Ron Scaltreto has been promoted to the Director of Facilities. He has been working in Bedford for over 30 years.

23-131 Preparation for Town Manager Interviews

John Petrin from Paradigm went over the process of the Screening Committee and invited questions from the board on the interview process. The Select Board confirmed the order of questions and rotation of speakers.

23-132 Final Interview of Town Manager Candidates

1. Matthew Hanson

Ms. Malone asked about the candidate's interest in the position and the reason for leaving his current role.

Matthew Hanson acknowledged Bedford's strong reputation and its appeal as a career advancement opportunity for town managers. He mentioned the town's positive attributes, such as a robust bond rating. He was specifically drawn to this posting by the unique aspects of the position and the Town's ongoing projects, particularly the design process for a new fire station. He shared his background in municipal construction projects and pointed out his involvement in similar ventures, including a DPW building and middle school building in Tyngsborough.

Mr. Hanson also emphasized the strong cohesion within Bedford's board and staff. He referenced a previous meeting where the former town manager, Sarah Stanton, had praised the diligent and collaborative nature of the staff and board members. This was reinforced when he spoke with Stanton privately before applying for the position. He found her assessment consistent with the public comments, confirming the positive working environment.

Mr. Hanson highlighted the emphasis in the job posting and community discussions on the qualities sought in a town manager: communication, collaboration, and consensus building. He saw these qualities as his strengths and believed they would be valuable contributions to the community.

Mr. Hanegan asked about Mr. Hanson's leadership style and approach to leading teams and managing change within organizations.

Mr. Hanson emphasized the significance of leading by example as a fundamental aspect of his leadership style. He highlighted the importance of showing up on time, maintaining a positive attitude, and working hard to set a standard for his team. Hanson stressed his commitment to open communication and being approachable. He shared that he regularly engages with his staff and takes the time to address their concerns and issues.

Mr. Hanson further discussed the importance of equitable treatment for all employees. He expressed that while he values having good relationships with his staff, he also maintains high expectations and enforces a fair approach to management. He explained that, as a town manager, he occasionally needs to take on the role of disciplinarian or enforcer, but he believes that trust and fairness are key to handling such situations effectively. He provided examples of instances where he had to discipline employees, emphasizing that his approach is constructive and maintains positive working relationships even after disciplinary actions.

In response to Mr. Hanegan's question about the balance between being liked and being respected as a leader, Mr. Hanson noted that while it's important to build positive relationships, the primary focus should be on fairness, respect, and doing what's right for the community and the role. He cautioned against prioritizing being liked, as it can lead to complications in the long run. Instead, he advocated for treating people equally and fairly, fostering respect through consistent and principled actions.

Mr. Mortenson inquired about instances where negative feedback from townspeople or staff has led to being disliked by the community and staff. He asked for examples of such experiences.

Mr. Hanson shared that he has encountered several situations of this nature. He provided an example involving the planning and economic development staff, who are sometimes perceived as being overly supportive of economic development. He explained that they often meet with developers to help them understand the process before submitting applications to the board. In response, some board members or residents might express displeasure, claiming bias towards development.

Mr. Hanson highlighted the importance of effective communication in addressing these situations. He recounted how he handles such cases by clarifying the staff's role in facilitating the process for developers, while also assuring concerned parties that their final decision-making authority remains intact. He stressed that these interactions are aimed at ensuring the best possible project is presented to the board, regardless of whether it is approved.

Hanson emphasized that receiving complaints is more common than receiving compliments or inquiries, especially in a town manager's office. He underscored the significance of a town manager's ability to manage and diffuse such issues through effective communication.

Ms. Fleischman asked about communication and collaboration, highlighting the engagement and passion of the community's residents. She asked Mr. Hanson about his strategies for effective communication with internal and external stakeholders, including volunteer boards, committees, and engaged residents.

Mr. Hanson provided insights on various aspects of communication and stakeholder engagement. He mentioned that the town employs diverse methods to reach the community, such as sandwich boards, message boards, social media, and email distributions. He added that they also utilize the reverse 911 system more actively to inform residents about meetings, elections, and major events.

Mr. Hanson emphasized the significance of clear communication with volunteer boards and committees. Drawing from his experience, he highlighted the importance of recognizing the value that volunteers bring to the community. He expressed his positive approach towards volunteer involvement and explained that while managing various boards can be demanding, the benefits far outweigh the challenges.

Addressing a question about managing situations where board members' priorities differ from staff's, Mr. Hanson emphasized communication again. He shared an example where a staff member might not perceive a board's request as a top priority, and he underlined the importance of clear expectations and open dialogue. He explained that this communication helped prevent misunderstandings and ensured smoother collaboration.

Responding to Ms. Fleischman's question about setting expectations across multiple boards and committees, Mr. Hanson outlined several approaches. He mentioned implementing a code of conduct and providing continuous training for board members. He also explained how they resolved issues with overlapping responsibilities by clarifying roles through policy and discussions, citing an example involving the council on aging and its affiliated boards.

Mr. Mortenson presented a hypothetical scenario involving a new employee and the communication of deadlines. He asked Mr. Hanson if he had ever refrained from disclosing specific instructions to see if the employee would inquire about the deadline.

Mr. Hanson responded by emphasizing his commitment to open communication with new employees during the onboarding process. He mentioned that he encourages them to ask questions and reassures them that his door is always open. He shared that he strives to provide clear instructions and deadlines upfront to avoid confusion.

When asked about setting long-term goals for himself, the board, and the town, Mr. Hanson explained that they combine Select Board goals with Town Manager goals in Tyngsborough. He noted that he brings his vision for the community into the goal-setting process and collaborates with the Select Board to establish both annual and longer-term goals.

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Mr. Hanegan expanded the conversation to address disagreements between the Town Manager and the Select Board. Mr. Hanson discussed his role in providing advice to the Select Board while respecting their final decision-making authority. He shared experiences of different approaches by board chairs in seeking his input before making decisions. Mr. Hanson stressed his commitment to providing valuable information and advice while respecting the board's role in setting policies.

Mr. Hanson offered an example of his approach in a situation where he didn't personally agree with a decision. He recounted a scenario involving the purchase and management of a golf course. Despite his reservations about the financial feasibility of the project, he presented information and options to the Select Board as requested. He emphasized his role in bringing forward the best information and supporting the board's decision-making process.

Ms. Mitchell asked about Mr. Hanson's experience in municipal finance, budget preparation, and budget ownership. She asked about his management philosophy and how his finance team collaborates on strategic planning and development.

Mr. Hanson explained that he has been deeply involved in budgeting, serving as the lead architect of the budget during his time in Tyngsboro. He discussed differences between Tyngsboro and Bedford's finance committees, highlighting Bedford's more active involvement. He talked about his extensive experience in various aspects of budgeting, going back about 20 years when he began by filming local government meetings.

Mr. Hanson elaborated on his role in Tyngsboro's financial growth, including the improvement of their bond rating. He discussed the development of five-year and long-term capital plans, a facility assessment, and changing the capital planning process. He also described his involvement in major projects like a new middle school and sewer expansion, detailing his approach of phasing funding and collaborating to find reasonable solutions.

Ms. Mitchell asked about financial policies. Mr. Hanson explained that there was initially no financial policies and procedures handbook in Tyngsboro. Around four years ago, he and his colleague developed such a handbook with input from various stakeholders, addressing topics like free cash and stabilization.

Ms. Malone asked Mr. Hanson about how he would collaborate with the school committee to enhance education and improve the learning environment. He emphasized transparency in budget discussions and mutual openness between the town and school side. He described their efforts to avoid surprises in budget changes and highlighted the importance of compromise and collaborative decision-making when balancing town and school needs.

Mr. Hanegan inquired about handling division within the community. Mr. Hanson stressed the significance of ensuring everyone feels heard, even when decisions don't go their way. He advocated for compromise and collaboration to find common ground, often suggesting additional efforts or improvements to address residents' concerns.

Ms. Mitchell questioned how to address misinformation in the community. Mr. Hanson proposed close collaboration with the Select Board to maintain consistent messaging and clear communication. He mentioned Select Board members who actively correct misinformation on social media and explained

how he seeks guidance from the board chair on communication strategies to avoid conflicting messages.

Ms. Fleichman asked Mr. Hanson about his perspective on the role of local government in addressing climate change and the progress towards climate goals. Mr. Hanson emphasized the importance of not underestimating the impact of local actions and cited his experience in achieving green community status in Tyngsborough. He believes that local government can make a significant contribution to climate goals by implementing changes in municipal buildings and fleets, adopting the expanded stretch code, and engaging with homeowners and businesses.

Mr. Hanegan raised concerns about the difficulty in filling the Energy and Sustainability Manager position. Mr. Hanson suggested adjusting the job description to attract a wider pool of applicants, focusing on communication skills, and clarifying that the role will work collaboratively with various stakeholders and town departments.

Mr. Mortenson inquired about the town's transition to the MUNIS financial system. Mr. Hanson mentioned the challenges of the transition process but believes it's worthwhile. He highlighted some of the immediate benefits, such as improved reporting and time-sheet management, and mentioned further enhancements planned for AP and payroll functionalities.

Ms. Mitchell prompted Mr. Hanson to discuss relationships with citizens, government transparency, and stakeholder engagement. He emphasized his commitment to transparency and communication, citing examples of his efforts to enhance access to meeting information and engage with regional partners. He believes in taking a community-oriented approach to decision-making and fostering strong connections with various stakeholders.

Mr. Hanson shared a personal mistake he made early in his career, which involved miscommunication with the schools due to avoiding a potentially minor issue. He learned the importance of transparency and open communication from that experience.

Responding to Ms. Mitchell's question about team building, Hanson drew from his experience in Tyngsborough, where he assembled a team of department heads. He prioritizes finding the right person for a position over rushing to fill it. He values collaboration, team spirit, and creating a supportive work environment through activities like regular cookouts, yoga classes, and bonding events.

In response to Ms. Fleischman's inquiry about collective bargaining experience, Mr. Hanson highlighted the significance of this aspect in a town manager's role. He discussed his experience with collective bargaining, noting that he has successfully negotiated contracts with multiple unions in Tyngsborough, avoiding arbitration and handling grievances collaboratively. He mentioned handling the voluntary recognition process for the fire department's unionization and settling their first contract.

Ms. Fleischman asked about Mr. Hanson's approach to ensuring accurate cost estimations in contracts. He explained that he often collaborates with the finance department to develop various costing scenarios for negotiations. Having accurate data and forecasts for different union contracts helps facilitate discussions with the union representatives, leading to successful negotiations in some cases.

Mr. Mortenson inquired about preferred contact methods. Mr. Hanson expressed openness to communication, with his office number and email readily available for residents, and he's open to in-person visits. He mentioned that many board members also have his cell phone number for direct communication.

Mr. Hanson concluded the interview by seeking clarification on any questions he had answered and inviting the board to elaborate on any topics. He asked about immediate priorities and challenges.

Ms. Fleischman mentioned that their annual goal-setting meeting would be a high priority for the new town manager. Mr. Hanegan highlighted the importance of engaging with citizens and ensuring everyone feels heard. Ms. Mitchell emphasized the need to keep the fire station project on track.

Mr. Hanson emphasized the importance of listening and understanding the community's needs before making recommendations. He expressed gratitude for the interview process and praised the welcoming atmosphere created by the subcommittee and search firm. He reiterated his belief that his background aligns well with Bedford's needs and expressed enthusiasm about potentially joining the team.

The Select Board thanked Mr. Hanson for his participation in the interview process.

2. Greg Johnson

Greg Johnson, the current town administrator of Maynard for five years, said he seeks new challenges. He noted similarities between Maynard and Bedford in terms of community pride, complex relationships, and commitment to progress. Mr. Johnson's diverse background includes Marine Corps leadership and government roles like Boston's mayor's office and the state's A&F department. His involvement in state-level finances connected him to Bedford through the National Guard and Bedford VA. Mr. Johnson said he is drawn to Bedford's welcoming, forward-thinking, and inclusive atmosphere. His management style emphasizes collaboration and consensus-building. In Maynard, he closely collaborates with the Select Board, acting as a chief of staff, to guide and achieve collaborative goals.

Mr. Hanegan asked Mr. Johnson about his leadership style and how he manages teams and organizations. Mr. Johnson described himself as a cheerleader, attributing his approach to his early experience as a Marine Corps leader. He emphasizes patience, active listening, and collaboration, adapting his leadership style to fit individuals' needs. He cited mentoring as essential, particularly in a smaller town like Maynard, where resources are limited, and he strives to help ambitious staff advance in their careers.

Regarding the balance between being liked and being respected as a leader, Mr. Johnson acknowledged the importance of being approachable while maintaining standards. He seeks to foster respect through his role and recognizes that, as a boss, he must provide direction and guidance while valuing input.

In terms of community participation, Mr. Johnson detailed his methods for ensuring alignment within departments and collaboration with volunteer boards and committees. He holds department head meetings monthly, allowing open communication, sharing of expectations, and updates from the Select Board. He also stressed his proactive approach in building relationships with various boards and committees, demonstrating receptivity to their goals and actions. He encourages staff to collaborate directly with relevant board members and chairs. Mr. Johnson highlighted the significance of shared objectives, particularly during town meetings, and pointed out his engagement with forums like the

budget subcommittee, involving Select Board, school committee, and finance committee members to ensure a unified approach to common goals.

In response to Ms. Fleischman's question about community participation and stakeholder management, Mr. Johnson outlined his approach to keeping departments aligned, working with volunteer boards and committees, and engaging external stakeholders. He highlighted his practice of conducting department head meetings, which provide a platform for communication and alignment among different departments. These meetings are held monthly, allowing Mr. Johnson to share his intentions and expectations while also conveying updates from the Select Board.

Mr. Johnson emphasized the importance of collaboration and consensus-building in his interactions with volunteer boards and committees. He cites his experience with a sustainability committee in Maynard as an example of relying on volunteers' initiative and expertise, even in cases where there is no dedicated staff. He appreciates the value these committees bring to the community and their ability to take ownership of projects.

In terms of community engagement, Mr. Johnson mentioned that his interactions extend to smaller committees like the community garden club, demonstrating his reliance on and respect for community initiatives that enhance the town's environment. Overall, Mr. Johnson's approach emphasizes open communication, cooperation, and valuing the contributions of all stakeholders to promote a unified and engaged community.

In response to Ms. Mitchell's questions about financial management and budget preparation, Mr. Johnson described his approach to the budgeting process in Maynard. He emphasized the collaborative and transparent nature of the process, starting with early discussions and collaboration between his office and the superintendent's office to align their understanding of the state budget and projected needs.

He mentioned that Maynard's budgeting philosophy is conservative due to limited resources and the need to be sensitive to taxpayers' demands. The town operates with a city-like infrastructure and services, necessitating careful budgeting to ensure responsible allocation of funds.

Mr. Johnson explained that the budgeting process involves multiple conversations with various bodies, committees, and departments. He employs an online financial transparency and budgeting platform to work closely with his town accountant, making the process more efficient and collaborative. He highlighted his engagement with the capital planning committee, which is volunteer-based and responsible for intricate long-term planning and spreadsheet work. The committee follows a set of criteria to ensure responsible allocation of funds for capital projects.

When asked about the budgetary guidelines and the process for setting budget priorities, Mr. Johnson explained the role of the Select Board in Maynard's budget process. He contrasted Maynard's approach with Bedford's, noting that in Maynard, the Select Board takes a more active role in the budget process compared to the finance committee.

Mr. Johnson elaborated on his collaboration with the school department and the finance director to communicate the financial realities of the community. While the official authority to set the budget lies with the Select Board, Mr. Johnson mentioned that he has ongoing conversations with the superintendent about projected impacts of different budget scenarios. He plans to present his

projections to the Select Board in an upcoming meeting, outlining the potential impacts of different budget levels on the community.

He explained that by December, all departments and committees should have submitted their budgets to him. He has the authority to accept the budgets as submitted or make adjustments as needed. His recommended budget is then submitted in January, with the goal of keeping stakeholders informed throughout the process, particularly the finance committee, who represent the voters and need to have a clear understanding of the budget's evolution.

In a discussion with Ms. Mitchell, Mr. Johnson shed light on Maynard's financial policies, or lack thereof, particularly regarding free cash and budget stabilization percentages. Through a state community compact grant, the town embarked on financial forecasting and policy development, acknowledging resource constraints and the ambitious, aspirational nature of these policies. With the challenges posed by the pandemic, adhering to financial policies has proven complex. Mr. Johnson highlighted the guiding nature of these documents, fostering common understanding and shared definitions among stakeholders through ongoing collaboration with the Select Board and various committees.

Shifting focus to employee interaction and morale in a heavily unionized environment, Mr. Johnson detailed his engagement with six unions and individual contracts, fostering collaborative negotiations and transparency. He maintains open lines of communication and accessibility, holding office hours and engaging with department heads to ensure a positive work environment. Mr. Johnson's proactive approach extends to participating in field visits and organizing events like cookouts and parties, nurturing a sense of community. He stressed the importance of training and professional growth, allocating budget resources to empower department heads. Mr. Johnson recognized diverse motivational factors driving individuals in public service, from altruism to a desire for positive change. He underscored his commitment to municipal aspirations and the impact on individuals and communities.

During a conversation with Ms. Fleischman, Mr. Johnson delved into the intricacies of collective bargaining and how he ensures that contracts are priced appropriately. He emphasized the importance of detailed negotiations, employing spreadsheets and caucus sessions to align both sides on financial aspects. Mr. Johnson's proactive approach involves budgeting for contract settlements beforehand, allowing him to understand the financial ceiling and prioritize resources effectively. He highlighted his satisfaction with successful negotiations and maintaining a collaborative atmosphere, noting that grievances are rarely escalated.

Mr. Hanegan raised the topic of addressing divisions within the community, particularly on hotly debated issues where emotions run high. Mr. Johnson stressed the significance of meeting with concerned individuals beforehand, even before issues become public, in order to comprehend varying perspectives. He advocated for patient, open dialogue and emphasized identifying common goals. Mr. Johnson's approach involves acknowledging the passion and genuine concerns of individuals and striving to create receptive, collaborative solutions that cater to the community's needs.

In response to Ms. Mitchell's question on managing misinformation, Mr. Johnson addressed the challenge of misinformation in the age of social media. He discussed the importance of disseminating accurate information through various official channels such as the town's website and the adoption of

the opt-in stretch energy code. Mr. Johnson acknowledged the importance of accessibility to information and official messaging, particularly in addressing misinformation effectively.

When Ms. Fleischman inquired about the role of government in addressing climate change, Mr. Johnson emphasized the government's role as a role model and advocate for change. He highlighted the importance of strategic planning and aligning the pace of change with the community's expectations. Mr. Johnson discussed Maynard's initiatives related to sustainability, from building energy-efficient schools to adopting opt-in stretch energy codes and implementing solar panels and electric vehicle charging stations. He also touched on Maynard's experience with the municipal vulnerability program and how government actions can provoke positive change.

Continuing the discussion on Bedford's efforts in addressing climate change, Mr. Johnson acknowledged the town's ambitions, such as hiring a sustainability director and engaging the populace through programs like the community electricity aggregation program. He noted the complexities of tailoring approaches to each community's unique needs and resources. Mr. Johnson brought in insights from his participation in the Massachusetts Municipal Association's energy and environmental agency, providing a wider perspective on innovative approaches and potential state-level developments.

Mr. Hanegan asked Mr. Johnson about Bedford's commitment to sustainability and its struggles to fill the Energy and Sustainability Manager position. Mr. Johnson acknowledged the challenges that communities face in finding the right candidates and suggested that crafting a comprehensive job description and being patient with the hiring process could help attract suitable candidates. He expressed his anticipation of having a dedicated sustainability expert to work in partnership with the community.

Mr. Mortenson inquired about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in municipal government. Mr. Johnson emphasized the value of diverse perspectives and the importance of being open and inclusive in hiring, decision-making, and community engagement. He discussed his experience in involving different interest groups in Maynard and highlighted the significance of including various voices and perspectives in the decision-making process.

Ms. Mitchell raised the topic of transparency and relationships in local government. Mr. Johnson explained his approach to building relationships within the community by being present, accessible, and open to communication. He emphasized the importance of clear communication channels, a user-friendly town website, and regular interaction with stakeholders. Mr. Johnson anticipates the complexities of external relationships in Bedford, particularly with organizations like Massport and MCC, and discussed how he plans to navigate those complexities through regular communication and engagement.

When asked about a past mistake or a situation he could have handled better, Mr. Johnson reflected on the pace of introducing financial policies in Maynard. He acknowledged that he might have moved too quickly for the finance director to adapt, and he learned the importance of aligning the pace of change with the readiness of the team. Mr. Johnson also talked about healthy relationships with the Select Board, emphasizing his role as an adviser who respects the board's decisions while providing his input and recommendations.

Addressing team-building, Mr. Johnson acknowledged the challenges of turnover and building teams when there are new members or recent retirements. He emphasized the importance of personal

communication, vulnerability, empathy, and regularly scheduled meetings to facilitate better understanding and collaboration among team members. He anticipates the opportunity to build strong teams in Bedford by fostering an environment of open communication and mutual respect.

Mr. Johnson expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to speak with the Select Board and inquired about advice that the Select Board might offer to the next Town Manager for their success. Mr. Hanegan advised the importance of meeting with a diverse range of people within the community to understand their perspectives, aspirations, and areas of concern. He also emphasized the need for effective communication and bridging any existing divisions to foster a unified vision for the town.

The Select Board concluded the conversation by thanking Mr. Johnson for his interview and acknowledging the strong performance of both candidates.

23-133 Deliberation on Town Manager Selection

Ms. Mitchell moved that the Select Board extend the offer for the Town Manager position to Matthew Hanson, pending contract negotiations. Mr. Mortenson seconded. The motion passed 5-0-0.

Materials: Bedford TM Finalist Report 2023_Redacted

23-134 Executive Session

1. Strategy and Preparation from Contract Negotiation with Non-Union Personnel

Ms. Mitchell moved that the Select Board enter into Executive Session for the purposes of strategy and preparation for contract negotiation with nonunion personal, not to return to open session. Mr. Hanegan seconded.

Mr. Mortenson-Aye, Ms. Fleischman-Aye, Mr. Hanegan-Aye, Ms. Mitchell-Aye, Ms. Malone-Aye. The motion passed 5-0-0.

Adjournment

The meeting ended at 7:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Kerri Rufo

Approved at the August 28, 2023 Select Board meeting.