

**SELECTBOARD MEETING - CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS  
TUESDAY, JUNE 21, 2016  
SELECTBOARD MEETING ROOM – 6:30 P.M.  
MINUTES**

Present were Members: Chair John R. Hine, Vice Chair Sarah Etelman, Clerk Bruce C. Forcier, Ira J. Brezinsky (6:35 p.m.) and Francis J. DeToma; Town Administrator Michael J. Sullivan.

Chair Hine opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m., noting that SB Member Brezinsky was not present but was expected shortly. The purpose of the meeting is to conduct interviews with applicants for volunteer appointments, he confirmed.

**DAVE BALDWIN – APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION**

He applied for appointment to both the Community and Economic Development Commission (CEDC) and the Agricultural Commission, Mr. Baldwin confirmed. He does not bring with him farming experience, but he is an avid gardener and member of GROSouth Hadley and does bring youthful enthusiasm, he assured. He is a Town Meeting member whose job previously precluded him from volunteering, but with a new job, he now has more time.

Chair Hine informed Mr. Baldwin that the committee has not met for a while and that, as of now, its status is uncertain.

Mr. Baldwin said he and Agricultural Commission Chair Tony Judge discussed that fact and the requirement that the committee consist of three members actively engaged in farming but that he still decided to submit an application. They discussed setting up a calendar and possible meeting times for the summer [if the committee were to be reactivated].

SB Member Brezinsky arrived at 6:35 p.m.

SB Member Etelman asked if he would still be interested in appointment to CEDC if for some reason the Agricultural Commission were not continued, and he confirmed he would be willing and interested in serving on both boards. As a political science major in college he studied urban policy and community development, so he has a long-standing interest in economic development. He would love to help bring more business to the town. There are openings for two additional members on the CEDC, Mrs. Krutzler confirmed.

As a member of the Redevelopment Authority (RDA), SB Member DeToma assured Mr. Baldwin that he would be welcome to join the RDA's advisory group.

**RYAN LAFOND – APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO CAPITAL PLANNING COMMITTEE, HISTORICAL COMMISSION OR HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY COMMITTEE.**

He responded to a posting on the town's Facebook page about openings on various committees, Mr. Lafond explained. He moved to South Hadley with his wife in April of 2015; the two bought their first home and he thought it would be great to become more involved in the town, establish roots and give something back. He has always had a strong interest in history, having earned a bachelor's degree in history from UMass Amherst. His interest in finance and capital planning stems from his pursuit of an MBA from Boston University. He described himself as a "jack of all trades."

With his finance background, he should consider throwing his hat in the ring for the Appropriations Committee, SB Member Brezinsky suggested. He noted that the Town Moderator appoints this committee. Mr. Sullivan said he would refer his name to the moderator.

When asked if he had a preference as to which board to join, he said he would be willing to serve on either the Historic Commission or Historic District Study Committee.

**RACHEL HERNANDEZ – APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO CULTURAL COUNCIL**

She also saw the posting on Facebook, Ms. Hernandez said. Her motive for volunteering stems from her feeling that there should be more activities for kids in town. She has two small children and finds herself going to Amherst, Northampton and her home town of Chicopee more often than she would like. She is an accountant but doesn't really have other experience, she commented.

Being a mother of two children certainly counts, SB Member DeToma assured.

She is interested in any of the committees that involve children, she added. She is a good planner.

SB Member Etelman commented that she has a strong interest in getting new blood on the Cultural Council and seeing it expand its role to include bringing more activities to South Hadley. She asked if Ms. Hernandez would be interested in this, and Ms. Hernandez said she would.

**A.J. PROVOST – APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO RECREATION COMMISSION**

He has been a resident of South Hadley for 14 years, the last 12 of which he has lived on Tampa Street, A.J. Provost shared. He is the parent of two students at the Michael E. Smith Middle School (MESMS), both of whom have played sports through the Recreation Department since they were in kindergarten. He has been involved in their teams throughout the years and is president of the South Hadley Baseball Association, a booster club for the baseball program. He really enjoys seeing the Recreation Department grow and serve as many children as it does and is pleased to see the wide variety of programs offered for adults. He expressed the opinion that having such a large and active Recreation Department is a great benefit to the residents of South Hadley.

Chair Hine asked if he sees the need for anything in particular, and he said he does not see a particular need but would just like to see continued growth.

Chair Hine thanked all the applicants for coming down, stressing how "incredibly important" public participation is to the quality of life in town. For some of the requests before them, there are more applicants than available seats. He expressed the board's appreciation to everyone who stepped forward to volunteer and urged anyone not appointed tonight to please consider one of the many other opportunities to serve.

**JEREMY RAMONDETTA – APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO MUNICIPAL GOLF COMMISSION**

He has been a South Hadley resident for 25 of his 27 years, Mr. Ramondetta related. He graduated from South Hadley High School and worked at the golf course for about four years; the Ledges is where he personally learned to golf and improve his game to the point that he was able to play in college. Golf is something he personally has enjoyed, and since he and his wife would eventually like to have children, he would like there to be a place in town for them to play. Since he thinks it is important, he would like to do what he can to help the course and keep it alive. He played there last Friday and it is one of the best courses around in terms of quality.

Mr. DeToma referred to the fact that struggling to operate the golf course 'in the black' has been a long-standing challenge to town officials, who have a responsibility to tax payers not to operate at a loss.

Asked if he golfs regularly, Mr. Ramondetta joked that, as an adult he has to work and make money, so he is down to playing about two dozen times a year. He has a 40 handicap and plays at the Ledges 80% of the time.

SB Member Brezinsky asked if had a sense of what is right and what is wrong at the course.

Condition-wise, it is one of the better courses in the area in terms of dollar-for-dollar value, he said. He acknowledged the town's diligent efforts to restructure operations to lower expenses and expressed the hope that a fresh set of eyes coupled with the experience of someone who has actually worked at the course might help. As a golfer himself, he understands the needs of the clientele, he suggested.

**MICHAEL J. WOZNIAK – APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO MUNICIPAL GOLF COMMISSION**

He grew up in town, graduated from South Hadley High School and moved back to town six years ago, Mr. Wozniak related. His background is as a business manager; he spent 27 years in management positions in various companies before retiring in 2004 from Chicopee Comprehensive as a business teacher. He is extremely interested in the financial aspects of the town. He plays golf and has played frequently at the Ledges. It is a beautiful course, he commented.

His main thrust is to see what the town can do to increase revenue, reduce costs and get to the black as soon as possible. He played three courses this past week; two out of three have senior tees but Ledges does not. He doesn't understand why operators don't offer senior discounts. He expressed the opinion that, especially during the week, the course should cater to seniors as much as possible since it would encourage more to play. He would be interested in canvassing companies throughout the area to see if they would be interested in league play and seeing if they could steal some league play from other golf courses, he added.

SB Member DeToma asked if he had any thoughts about the restaurant operation.

Mr. Wozniak expressed the opinion that the restaurant lacks atmosphere and that this pushes people away. "It's not like going to Dockside or Yarde House or Johnny's," he observed. He doesn't know what could be done to make it more conducive to diners, but this is an opportunity for improvement, he suggested. Right now it is only serving a limited menu with snacks and hot dogs, he pointed out.

He stressed that he is definitely interested in the Appropriations Committee and Capital Planning Committee. He now serves on the Bylaw Review Committee. He also brings youthful enthusiasm, he quipped.

**JOHN LAVIN – APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO MUNICIPAL GOLF COMMISSION**

He only just moved to South Hadley a year ago but wanted to become involved, having always volunteered and found public service an interesting way to get to know a town. He has served as an elected official (Board of Health) and advisory board member and worked on a feasibility study for a golf course, he shared. As a professional engineer, he has done a lot of subdivision development and permitting for storm water and wastewater facilities and served as a peer review consultant for Planning Boards and Conservation Commissions. He has golfed throughout New England and is a member of the Ledges, and it is one of the better golf courses. He was actually amazed; conditions are great. He compared it to courses on the cape that charge a \$100 and said they are in no way in as good a shape as this one. He expressed his understanding that the course is operating somewhat in the red and alluded to ways to boost business, such as offering "Jack and Jill" events to expose new people to the course. He agreed with Mr. Wozniak's earlier comments about the restaurant. He thinks the course itself has huge potential, and he would be more than happy to share his knowledge. He has owned an engineering company for 14 years, and one of the things it taught him is the necessity of making decisions and going with them. He can make decisions quickly but understands the considerations that go along with serving on town boards; that decisions must be made in the best interests of the community. He served on an advisory committee in the Town of Norfolk to study the feasibility of opening a golf course, he confirmed.

Members thanked all of the applicants. **Upon motion made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 7:01 p.m.**

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,**

**LAURA KRUTZLER  
ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY**