

**COMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL  
MEETING AS A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
OCTOBER 10, 2017 AT 6:00 PM  
COMMITTEE ROOM  
WOBURN CITY HALL**

Voting Members:

Attending: Chair Joanne Campbell, Alderman Michael Anderson,  
Alderman Michael Concannon. Alderman Mark Gaffney, Alderman Richard Gately,  
Alderman Darlene Mercer-Bruen, Alderman Edward Tedesco  
Absent: Alderman Lindsay Higgins. President Richard Haggerty

Also Present: Human Resources Director Elaine Pruyne, Dept. of Public Works Superintendent  
Jay Duran

\* \* \* \* \*

**On the matter of interviews of finalists for the position of Deputy Superintendent in the Dept. of Public Works:** Chairman Campbell said the Personnel Committee started with 12 candidates, winnowed the field to seven semifinalists, one of whom withdrew from consideration, and interviewed six candidates on September 27. Chairman Campbell said after input from HRD Pruyne and Supt. Duran, the Committee chose two finalists: Leonard Burnham and Joseph Lynch. Chairman Campbell distributed evaluation sheets on which members of the Committee as a Whole could also write notes. Copies of the candidates' resumes were also distributed to each member of the Committee. Chairman Campbell said a prepared list of seven questions would be asked of each candidate, and then the forum would be opened to any Alderman who wanted to ask additional questions. Mr. Burnham said he owned and operated a gas station until he was asked to join the DPW in 2002, when he started working as a mechanic in the garage. He was appointed interim Deputy Superintendent about a year ago and said he is seeking the position on a permanent basis because it would be a better situation for his family, particularly his handicapped son. He said during his tenure in the garage the DPW has expanded its operations to including servicing vehicles from all other departments except the Schools and Cemetery. He said he is familiar with the environment at the City Barns and feels like he can be an effective manager at the DPW. Mr. Burnham said the Deputy Superintendent's job is the job he has wanted since he started working for the DPW, and that his abilities and skills make for a good fit for the position. Mr. Burnham said organization is a critical component of the Deputy Superintendent's job, and digital technology has made it easier to organize tasks. He said he has a good handle on technology. He said another important trait is being able to communicate with other people. Mr. Burnham said he has recently passed a D1 water certification test, though his license has not yet arrived in the mail. He said he has helped identify streets and sidewalks that require repair with Ch. 90 state highway funds and is working in collaboration with the city's Engineering Dept. to institute a 5-year paving program. Mr. Burnham said he has plowed snow since he was a kid, and remembers the horrific winter of 2015 when the DPW undertook a team effort to keep the city's roads plowed. He said reading blueprints and plans is not his strong suit, and that it has been a long time since he took a mechanical drafting class in high school, but he is

working with Supt. Duran to improve that aspect of his skill set. Mr. Burnham said facilities maintenance takes up a big part of his day as the city is responsible for the upkeep of City Hall, the Clapp School, the Plympton School, an array of public rest room facilities and fire stations. He said it seems like the DPW repairs a damaged door at a fire station on a monthly basis. Mr. Burnham said he has accomplished a lot of city projects of which he is proud. He said making arrangements for all the events associated with the city's 375<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration has been challenging, particularly the event at the First Congregational Church that was preceded by a snow storm. He said he was proud the DPW team was able to clear the snow so the event went off as scheduled. Mr. Burnham said there are situations, especially in the winter, where DPW employees get tired from plowing snow all night and conflicts may ensue. He recalled an employee who came back to the City Barns three times after his plow was dislodged from hitting the same manhole. He said that type of stuff happens all the time, and those instances have given him experience with conflict resolution. Mr. Burnham said one of the most controversial scenarios in which he has been involved was the decision to promote him to the interim Deputy Superintendent's position. He said there may have been other people who were aggravated by his promotion, some of whom he works with on a daily basis, including some at the DPW who thought they were more qualified. Mr. Burnham said he enjoys hard work and likes to be as organized as possible. He said he has always liked to be in a role that involves helping people, because he thinks he's good at it. He said people who require DPW services need to know you're taking them seriously. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said she thinks Mr. Burnham is going a great job as interim Deputy Superintendent. She said it is important for the Council and the DPW to communicate to avoid costly mistakes. Alderman Anderson asked Mr. Burnham if he is willing to accept an \$86,000 salary, which is less than his predecessor's. Mr. Burnham said he is ready, willing and able to accept the posted salary, though he would like to make more money. Alderman Gately told Mr. Burnham he was basically a mechanic, albeit a great mechanic, before he was promoted to interim Deputy Superintendent, and that riding around in a black truck for a year doesn't necessarily qualify him to hold the job on a permanent basis. Alderman Gately asked about a drainage project in Central Square. Mr. Burnham said he believes a 6-inch pipe is being installed, but he is not sure and said he could find out from the Highway Foreman, who is handling that job. Alderman Gately asked Mr. Burnham if he can read a street, referring to his ability to discern the location of underground utilities. Mr. Burnham said he is confident he can. Alderman Gately asked Mr. Burnham how many catch basins there are in the city. Mr. Burnham said he does not know. Alderman Gately asked Mr. Burnham how many fire hydrants there are in the city. Mr. Burnham said there are about 2,000. Alderman Gately replied there are 1,775. Alderman Gately asked Mr. Burnham if he knows where Janis Terrace is. Mr. Burnham said it is off Waltham Street. Alderman Gately asked how many miles of streets there are in the city. Mr. Burnham said there are 165 center line miles. Alderman Gately asked if he has every fixed any of the 800 roads in the city. Mr. Burnham said he has not performed any milling or repaving, but he has conferred with Supt. Duran about which roads should be repaired. Alderman Gately asked how much the city spends on inflow and infiltration. Mr. Burnham replied the city's MWRA sewer budget is about \$12 million, and it needs to be cut down. Alderman Gately said the sump pump reduction program has been a huge success. Alderman Gately said there's a lot to the city and a lot of stuff needs to be done. He said there were more qualified candidates for the Deputy Superintendent's position who were passed over, and a lot of people are upset that Mr. Burnham was given the interim Deputy Superintendent's role. Alderman Concannon asked about the Deputy Superintendent's interaction with the Highway Foreman. Mr. Burnham replied he has a

good working relationship with the Highway Foreman, who he respects as an integral part of the DPW team, and that he looks forward to continue working with him. Mr. Lynch said he has 35 years of related experience - including 25 in the public works realm, in three communities, including a small town, a medium-sized city and a medium-sized town - during which he ran the gamut of technical and practical duties. Mr. Lynch said he left his most recent job in Milton due to political circumstances. He said he is 59-years-old and is looking to continue in the public works realm with 6-8 more years of good, solid work with hands-on operations. Mr. Lynch said over the years he developed an appreciation for a skilled labor force, and that DPW folks are proud folks who provide a great deal of effort. He said an important characteristic of management is being able to juggle. He cited the winter of 2015 when he would have to attend town meetings in blue jeans and a fluorescent vest after plowing snow all night, because it was his responsibility to present a budget. Mr. Lynch said he has worked with an array of utility companies on underground lines. He said he has installed easily more than 100 miles of roads. Mr. Lynch said an important component of snow and ice removal is pre-planning. Weather forecasting has improved over the years and communities are now able to pre-treat roads as far as 2-3 days in advance. He said it is important to work with public safety entities during storms. Mr. Lynch said he has extensive experience working with plans and blueprints since he is a civil engineer. He said he has a little bit of experience in water treatment and water distribution, but he has a lot of experience in facilities maintenance from working in the three communities which have employed him. Mr. Lynch said he is a firm believer in cross-training and not pigeon-holing employees into particular tasks. He said cross-training also leads to better morale. Mr. Lynch cited an instance where a DPW employee who was deaf and mute missed a call to report for snow removal, and when the employee eventually showed up, he was sent home and it created a conflict. He said he that is an example of how quickly things can deteriorate, and the situation resulted in serious repercussions. Mr. Lynch said one of the keys to effective management of a DPW is communication with residents. Mr. Lynch said is an Eagle Scout, which is more than a designation but also a commitment to a way of life that involves integrity and trustworthiness. He said he has two sons who have also become Eagle Scouts. He said he attended a military college that stressed a credo of citizen soldiery that has carried over into his life in both the private sector and the public works realm. Alderman Anderson asked Mr. Lynch if he is willing to accept the approximately \$86,000 annual salary for the DPW Deputy Superintendent's position. Mr. Lynch said that number is the absolute lowest he could go. He said he is aware of the predecessor's salary but also acknowledged that person had worked with the DPW for in excess of 20 years. Alderman Gately said he is very impressed with Mr. Lynch's resume and noted he was formerly the DPW Deputy Superintendent and Highway Foreman. Alderman Gately said Mr. Lynch's experience does not include a lot of water treatment experience. Mr. Lynch replied he is willing to take courses, but in order to be certified he has to have hands-on experience, and he is willing to look into it. Alderman Gately said Mr. Lynch's resume indicates he has done it all. Alderman Concannon asked Mr. Lynch how he sees the Superintendent, the Deputy Superintendent and the Highway Foreman interacting. Mr. Lynch said he sees the Superintendent's position as more visionary, while the Deputy Superintendent is a conduit between the Superintendent and the Highway Foreman. The Superintendent is the general, the Deputy is the colonel, and the Highway Foreman is a senior sergeant. If the Deputy Superintendent has an issue, he would speak to the Highway Foreman and not a laborer. If there is a criticism or question, he would direct that to the Foreman, but if it was a pat on the back, he would deliver that personally. Alderman Anderson said he is concerned about Mr. Lynch's

response to his question about the salary issue, and that he doesn't want the Council to be in a position where it offers Mr. Lynch a position he's not interested in accepting. Mr. Lynch asked if there are step raises involved. HRD Pruyne said the salary is set by ordinance, but noted there are educational incentives and longevity stipends after five years. Supt. Duran said the educational incentives are \$2,000 for a Bachelor's degree and \$3,000 for a Master's degree. Mr. Lynch asked if buying back vacation time could augment his salary. HRD Pruyne said after six months of employment, an employee receives three weeks of vacation time, and employees also earn sick time that can be bought back after 75 days are accrued, and there are also four personal days per year. Mr. Lynch said he doesn't think he's ever used a sick day. Mr. Lynch said he would probably have to read the contract before he accepts the job. Alderman Anderson said the Council is looking to make the appointment at its meeting on October 17. Chairman Campbell said the Committee's goal is to move forward with at least one name this evening. Mr. Lynch said he could give a response to HRD Pruyne on Tuesday if he is willing to accept the salary. Motion made and seconded to recess the meeting; approved, 7-0. Chairman Campbell recessed the meeting at 7:22 p.m.

Motion made and seconded to reconvene the meeting at 8:25 p.m.; approved, 7-0. Chairman Campbell said both finalists are extremely qualified in different ways. Alderman Concannon said he was not in favor of the Council selecting the Deputy Superintendent, and allowing the Mayor to appoint the Superintendent and the Council to appoint the Deputy Superintendent has the potential to create a dysfunctional department. Alderman Concannon said he has been listening to Supt. Duran and HRD Pruyne throughout the process and has taken their advice into consideration when the Committee brought forward the two finalists from an impressive group of candidates. Alderman Gately said the Council is charged with appointing the Deputy Superintendent so it can have a liaison in the DPW. Alderman Gately reiterated Mr. Burnham is a very good mechanic, but he is not qualified to assume the Deputy Superintendent's position, and said he doesn't know what Mr. Burnham has been doing between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. every day since he has been appointed the interim Deputy Superintendent. Alderman Gately said he likes Mr. Lynch's resume and thinks he will do a tremendous job. Alderman Gaffney said common sense tells him Mr. Lynch is a much better candidate than Mr. Burnham, who is a mechanic. He said he would be doing the city a disservice if he picked Mr. Burnham, because Mr. Lynch is more qualified. Alderman Anderson said he will take into consideration the recommendation of Supt. Duran, but he is not a rubber stamp. Alderman Anderson said he thinks Mr. Burnham has done a great job in an interim capacity. Alderman Anderson said he thinks Mr. Lynch has excellent credentials, but added he remains concerned about Mr. Lynch's concerns about the salary. Supt. Duran said Mr. Burnham arrives at work between 5:30-6 a.m. and sometimes stays until 6 p.m. and he works on weekends. Supt. Duran said the Deputy Superintendent's job is critical to the operations of the DPW, and that the department has evolved in the past 15 years. He said the Deputy Superintendent needs to be able to juggle different tasks and Mr. Burnham does that well. Supt Duran acknowledged Mr. Lynch's credentials and experience in the public works realm, but said Mr. Lynch's idea of the DPW hierarchy may cause problems. Supt. Duran said Mr. Lynch's reticence about the salary issue could become a problem, and that he is not 100 percent sold on Mr. Lynch as a candidate. Supt. Duran said Mr. Burnham is a team player, and even though he lacks Mr. Lynch's education, Supt. Duran is not hung up on those characteristics. Supt. Duran said he thinks Mr. Burnham is the right guy for the job, that he likes to help people, and asked if anyone on the Council has had

a bad experience dealing with Mr. Burnham. Alderman Gaffney said he did not intend to say anything derogatory about Mr. Burnham, but added he thinks Mr. Lynch's skills better match the job description. Supt. Duran said Mr. Burnham is highly-intelligent guy, and that he has proven his worth over the past year. Supt. Duran acknowledged Mr. Lynch is an excellent candidate, but said Mr. Burnham is a proven commodity. HRD Pruyne said she is concerned pay might be an issue for Mr. Lynch. She said Mr. Burnham has been very responsive to her requests, and that he is always on call. She said she also thinks Mr. Lynch has the skills and experience to do an effective job. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said Mr. Lynch is an excellent candidate, and that he might be better suited for the Superintendent's role than the Deputy Superintendent's job. She said she thinks Mr. Burnham has proved he can do the job, and that she has 100 percent confidence Mr. Burnham can do the job. Alderman Anderson said he is concerned Mr. Lynch may leave for a Superintendent's job in another community, though he does not begrudge anyone's ambition. Supt. Duran agreed that once you are a director of a department, it can be hard to step back and become a deputy director. Alderman Anderson said he has spoken to Water Treatment Supervisor Anthony Blazejowski about Mr. Burnham, and said Mr. Blazejowski holds Mr. Burnham in high regard. Supt. Duran said he sees Mr. Burnham as a guy who is seeking his dream job, and that he is a Woburn resident, while Mr. Lynch has neither of those traits. Chairman Campbell said in her experience, Mr. Burnham has been responsive. She said she was a little concerned about his qualifications, but she kept an open mind and was extremely impressed with his interviews. She said she is also impressed with the knowledge he has picked up in one year. Chairman Campbell said she also likes Mr. Lynch and feels like he could fit well within the DPW. She said he liked his ideas about cross-training employees. Chairman Campbell said both candidates are extremely qualified, but she thinks Mr. Burnham is more of the person who Supt. Duran is looking for. Motion made by Alderman Mercer-Bruen and seconded by Alderman Concannon that the City Council's Personnel Committee, as a Committee of the Whole, forward the nomination of Mr. Leonard Burnham to the City Council for confirmation at its meeting on Tuesday, October 17. Motion made by Alderman Concannon and seconded by Alderman Anderson to amend the motion to include the language "upon the recommendation of the DPW Superintendent and the Human Resources Director." Roll call vote on the amendment: Alderman Anderson – Yes; Alderman Concannon – Yes; Alderman Gaffney – No; Alderman Gately – No; Alderman Tedesco – Yes; Alderman Mercer-Bruen – Yes; Chairman Campbell – Yes; approved, 5-2. Roll call vote on the main motion to forward Mr. Burnham's nomination: Alderman Anderson – Yes; Alderman Concannon – Yes; Alderman Gaffney – No; Alderman Gately – No; Alderman Tedesco – Yes; Alderman Mercer-Bruen – Yes; Chairman Campbell – Yes; approved, 5-2.

\* \* \* \* \*

Motion made by Alderman Anderson and seconded by Alderman Mercer-Bruen to adjourn, all in favor, 7-0. Adjourned: 9:00 p.m.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gordon Vincent  
Clerk of Committees

