



**Town of West Boylston**  
140 Worcester Street, West Boylston, Massachusetts 01583

## **Board of Selectmen/Sewer Commission Meeting Minutes**

<b>Date / Time / Location of Meeting</b> <b>November 1, 2018; 6:15 p.m.;</b> <b>Selectmen's Meeting Room, 140</b> <b>Worcester Street</b>
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<b>Members Present</b> <b>Christopher A. Rucho, Chairman</b> <b>Patrick J. Crowley, Vice Chair</b> <b>Barur R. Rajeshkumar, Clerk</b> <b>Siobhan M. Bohnson, Selectman</b> <b>John W. Hadley, Selectman</b>
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<b>Members NOT Present</b>
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<b>Invited Guests:</b>
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Mr. Rucho convened the special meeting at 6:15 p.m. All members are present.

### **Interview candidate(s) for Building Commissioner position**

Joseph Atchue joined the Board. He is the Building Commissioner in Berlin, has been in construction for over 20 years and has been an inspector for six or seven years. He worked his way up, starting as alternate for Northbridge while going to college. He worked in the City of Worcester as a local inspector a huge learning curve with residential, commercial and schools and it was an invaluable lesson. He worked part-time in Northborough and when he became certified as a Commissioner they offered him a full-time position. He worked for two and a half years and a better opportunity came up in Berlin. He currently also works part-time in Acton. He is looking to replace Acton with this position and work in Berlin and West Boylston. He added that he is a father with two young sons, 15 and 16, grew up in Grafton.

Mr. Rucho asked how he felt he could do both towns working 40 hours in Berlin and 32 in West Boylston. Mr. Atchue explained that he has a flexible schedule in Berlin, any hours worked over 40 are comp time, and he adjusts his schedule as needed. He currently works in Berlin from 5:00 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. then to Acton from 8-12 and then back to Berlin from 12:30 to 7:30. He doesn't have any problems with that schedule. If he were to get this position, he would work in West Boylston two days a week from 7-9:00 when he would meet with contractors and interact with staff. He would keep in constant communication through cell phone, email and texts. He could also be here in 15 minutes for an emergency. The rest of his hours would be after his hours in Berlin from 1:30 to 7:30 or 7:00. In the afternoon and into the evening it gives him time to continue with inspections and do plan reviews. Later hours also allow for home owners to come in and see him and it works out well in Berlin. He follows up on emails and calls within 24 hours.

Mr. Rucho asked about night meetings. Mr. Atchue has looked at the ZBA's schedule and his understanding is that would be the primary one he would attend. It would not conflict with Berlin. In Berlin he goes to Planning Board, ZBA and sometimes the Board of Selectmen and Conservation Commission meetings. He is also the liaison between the boards and sometimes he helps them talk to each other. He is also the liaison to the Energy Committee. It is a schedule he is used to and he has been doing it for quite some time.

Mr. Hadley asked if he does a lot of commercial work and noted that reviewing a set of plans takes a lot longer than residential work and he asked when that time comes in. Mr. Atchue reports that they have a hotel just finishing up, he maintains a 30-day review period for larger projects. Other projects include a 21 building, 204 apartment complex with club house, seven, 3-story apartment buildings and he has been working on that for three and a half weeks and almost every building is set to go.

Mr. Rajeshkumar asked if he could tell him about his Facility Manager experience. Mr. Atchue explained that right now in Berlin it is combined with his job and the duties of the DPW. He does Facility Management and the DPW does the maintenance. They have come to notice that the facilities are starting to break down and things need to be replaced. They have a capital improvement plan for each of the buildings. When it comes to the Facilities Management you do not look at just the short term you say can we do it in house or not. You say is it critical and immediate and how do we get a game plan in place to get that done. Mr. Rajeshkumar asked how many years of experience he has as a Facilities Manager. Mr. Atchue replied three, one in Northborough and two in Berlin. The job roles were combined.

Ms. Bohnson asked tell me why you want to leave Acton. Mr. Atchue explained that it is a further ride from Berlin and he would like to cut his commute down. He is currently limited to 16 hours and on July 1 it will be turned into a full-time position. They have asked him to stay as a local inspector, he is not interested in that, and he would rather stay in the area. Ms. Bohnson asked what do you know about the Town of West Boylston. Mr. Atchue states that he knows you just finished a new police station and you started on a new senior center. You are a stretch code community and at your last meeting you approved a bylaw for recreational marijuana facilities. He states that he is making a decision on a community he thinks he will fit in and will fit him. Ms. Bohnson asked if he could give an example of how he handle conflict and bring resolution when dealing with people. Mr. Atchue tries to handle by defusing the situation. Most often the demeanor will change and get hostile and he steps back and tries to renegotiate the conversation. If they are unreasonable, he leaves it and asks to re-establish the conversation somewhere else. He had an issue with a gentleman operating a contracting business out of his house. A special permit is required and he had one, but he let it lapse rather than renewing it every five years. He went out and investigated and the individual did not want to have a conversation with him. He wrote him a letter for a zoning violation and sent it both certified mail and regular mail. The individual came in and screamed over the counter. Mr. Atchue stepped back and after five or ten minutes of talking to him and walking him through the process of getting to the ZBA it went through.

Ms. Bohnson asked you have a flexible schedule, what if something comes up and a contractor can only meet you at 6:00 a.m. Mr. Atchue replied, I will adjust my hours as needed and then I will head to Berlin. He will make his hours up in Berlin at the tail end of the day. Ms. Bohnson asked what kind of work are you doing at 5:00 a.m. Mr. Atchue states that is his quiet time, 5-7 a.m., to do plan review and get emails out. At 6:30 a.m. in Berlin people start coming in. They have a lot of work going on and there are a lot of meetings on plan reviews. Ms. Bohnson asked when you went to

Acton did you know it was going to be short-term. Mr. Atchue did not and he thought it would be a longer process. Ms. Bohnson commented that it looks like you do a lot of two years. Mr. Atchue explained that he worked in Worcester and part-time in Northborough. Some people took him under their wing and he learned a lot including budgeting. Berlin offered a better opportunity.

Mr. Crowley states that so far everything he has heard he likes except you are looking to go from working 56 hours to 72 hours plus meetings. It will be like working 85 hours a week, when are you going to sleep? Mr. Atchue replied 10:00 to 3:50. He noted that he only works 4 hours in Acton but if you add driving time, he is doing those hours now. He gets paid for 40 hours in Berlin regardless of how many hours he works because he is on salary. He intends to continue working 40 hours in Berlin and states that he would not have applied for the position if he didn't think he could meet the needs of two towns.

Mr. Hadley estimates the Facility Manager duties will take 8 to 10 hours a week. Mr. Atchue states it comes down to the amount of buildings and the age of the buildings. When you start looking at buildings 25 years and older then you start looking at equipment and that is when you start doing your capital plan. Mr. Hadley asked would you find somebody to replace a door and change filters. Mr. Atchue would hire a vendor for work that would need to be done. That is what he does in Berlin now. And if multiple buildings have similar issues you go through systematically and get the work done.

Mr. Rucho is concerned about night meetings. Mr. Atchue states that twice a month in Berlin he has night meetings, the ZBA and the Energy Committee. The others are as needed, the Planning Board, Board of Health and Conservation Commission he attends as needed. Regarding zoning enforcement Mr. Rucho asked in Berlin do you do zoning enforcement and if so do you wait for a complaint. Mr. Atchue has found it depends on the policy of the community. In Northborough he drives around and sometimes stops and tries to talk to somebody and leaves his card. In Berlin they like a written complaint to act upon. It is whatever the town policy is. In Northborough he removed illegal signs.

Mr. Rajeshkumar asked what is going on in Berlin that he needs to attend the ZBA meetings. Mr. Atchue created a zoning interpretation form. Instead of reading plans and saying you cannot do this, I try to help the individual. Current use of the property and proposed use of the property. He goes through the zoning bylaws and if it is allowed by right or with ZBA or Planning Board approval. He signs and date it and they use it as part of their submittal to the ZBA and Planning Board. It makes life easier for the ZBA. Then the ZBA can see if it is a hardship. He is there if they have a question about the zoning determination and he will meet people several times before they go to the ZBA or Planning Board. He emphasizes customer services, his job is public education on building code and bylaws. Mr. Rajeshkumar states only when you deny them they go to the ZBA. Mr. Atchue noted that he goes to the ZBA meeting because it has worked out well that way it is constant communication. He is given comp time for attending meetings. Mr. Rajeshkumar asked if he had experience with 40B projects. Mr. Atchue has had several include 36 single-family homes, another is going to be 12 and another is 34 homes.

Mr. Crowley explained the way our building commissioner works is they have set hours and they are required to come to evening meetings. The 32 hours could be 37 hours. Ms. Scheipers states it depends on how we negotiate the contract. Traditionally any meetings are part of the job and it is 32 hours plus the other meetings. Mr. Atchue reports that when he worked in Northborough it was 40 hours and meetings and they didn't offer comp time. Berlin gives comp time and he has 389 hours of time so far.

Mr. Rucho asked if he planned on staying on as an alternate in Northbridge. Mr. Atchue states that he plans to as he covers for inspectors who go on vacation. Ms. Bohannon asked what his role is when he attends Planning Board meetings. Mr. Atchue states that he helps with his expertise with zoning when they are looking to form new bylaws or change zoning districts as sometimes what they want to prevent would be in conflict with another bylaw. He answers questions when asked. They have some 55 and over projects coming in. Planning Board meetings for him are as needed.

Ms. Bohannon asked about the zoning interpretation form. If I am planning on bringing a new business into town my first step is to go to you and you help me get prepared to go to the Planning Board and the ZBA. Mr. Atchue noted that to help the process go efficiently he would give you the right direction to go in. If it cannot work you will know that ahead of time. Ms. Bohannon asked if something happens and all of a sudden there is no heat in the building, what do you do? Mr. Atchue would look at the systems first to see if it was a building issue or a thermostat issue. He would have set up the right vendors who could be called. In Berlin they have implemented an analytic system and they work with their vendors. They have been able to save money by making systems function as efficiently as possible. Ms. Bohannon asked if he would try to fix something on site. Mr. Atchue would do an evaluation not a mechanical fix. Ms. Bohannon asked about his work with the DPW. Mr. Atchue noted that something small like door handles, filter replacement or minor maintenance. Mr. Rucho added that our only connection with the building and the DPW is they take care of the lawn.

Mr. Rajeshkumar asked if Berlin had approved recreational marijuana. Mr. Atchue reports that they did and he had an opportunity to tour a growing facility in Worcester. Ms. Scheipers asked when it comes to the Energy Committee if he had been working with Berlin on what projects might be eligible for completion with grant funds. Mr. Atchue indicated that he had. They work very close. He also implemented a new permitting software made by Viewpoint. He is trying to look at modernizing and streamlining for customer services.

Mr. Rucho recognized Library Director Anna Shaw in the audience this evening with members of her Board of Library Trustees. Ms. Shaw indicated that she is here to listen to the Facility Manager discussion as her library is over 100 years old and she has a 20 year old addition. She has a lot of maintenance issues coming to a head. Mr. Atchue reports that he is working with a 90 year old library in Berlin. The septic just failed, it needs a new roof and it has an accessibility issue. First is the septic system and they are working on grants for an addition and building upgrades. He finds it easy when you can have the department heads involved with the building. Ms. Shaw states that they have a long list of things and trying to figure what comes first. Mr. Atchue indicated that he could help with that.

If offered the position Mr. Atchue could begin work on November 13.

Board discussion ensued with Mr. Rucho asking if any of the Board members had any thoughts. Mr. Hadley states that he is very impressed, very well spoken and knowledgeable, answered every question. Mr. Crowley likes the answers he heard and his only concern is how long can somebody work 72 hours a week plus night meetings. Mr. Rajeshkumar is also impressed by qualifications and experience and shares the same concerns as Mr. Crowley. He thinks its too much and he would get burnt out. He is also concerned with his 7-9 in the morning hours. Our taxpayers deserve more time with the building inspector in the town. He is also concerned that contractors are gone at 3:00 p.m. Mr. Hadley thinks it is plenty of time for inspections and once you get to know what day he is here. He doesn't see what we have to lose. In regards to hours, Mr. Rucho is sure he could be flexible. Ms. Bohannon really liked the details of the answers to the questions and it sounds like he has a good handle on his hours. She is highly impressed and liked the sound of the form he

was talking about. She thinks it could help everybody including the boards. She hopes we will be able to work something out. Mr. Rucho agrees but has concerns about working over 14 hours a day, night meetings and being on call. Ms. Scheipers noted that we could give him a contract with a 6-month probation. If everything is good you continue on and if you have concerns you can terminate and say it is no working we will try something else. There is no concern about our ability to terminate an employee whether they are hourly or under contract. Mr. Crowley doesn't think we have anything to lose by moving forward. Mr. Rajeshkumar asked about the length of the contract. Ms. Scheipers reports that with past inspectors we did one year. We could do one year or three years with a 6-month probation. Mr. Atchue states that he is looking at this as long term for the next five to ten years. Ms. Scheipers noted that our interim Building Commissioner is also interested in the position, however, he is limited with the hours he can provide and he doesn't have the ability to do the Facility Manager part of the job. Mr. Hadley thinks we need both jobs.

Motion Mr. Hadley to request the Town Administrator negotiate a contract with Joe Atchue, second by Ms. Bohnson.

Mr. Rucho asked if we had asked the DPW Director about helping out. Ms. Scheipers reports that she has spoken with the Director and he didn't have a strong interest in making that type of change. Mr. Rajeshkumar states that he heard it differently and if he were compensated he might have interest. He has experience as a Facility Manager with Mass DOT. Mr. Crowley states whether or not the DPW Director has the ability or wants to be the Facilities Manager and the DPW Director, the jobs do not marry together, the Building Commissioner and Facilities Manager deal with buildings. The DPW Director is outside parks and streets. Mr. Hadley thinks it is a good opportunity for the town. Mr. Rucho pointed out that we still have to negotiate a contract and he would like the Town Administrator to speak with the DPW Director so we could have something to fall back on.

Vote on the motion – Messrs. Rucho, Crowley, Hadley and Ms. Bohnson yes, Mr. Rajeshkumar no. Ms. Scheipers will include an executive session discussion on the November 7<sup>th</sup> meeting for contract negotiations. We have a FISP meeting at 6:00 followed by Board of Selectmen at 6:30.

Motion Mr. Rajeshkumar at 7:18 p.m. to adjourn, second by Mr. Hadley, all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved: November 28, 2018

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Nancy E. Lucier, Municipal Assistant

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Christopher A. Rucho, Chairman

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Patrick J. Crowley, Vice Chairman

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Barur R. Rajeshkumar, Clerk

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Siobhan M. Bohnson, Selectman

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John W. Hadley, Selectman