



**TOWN OF BILLERICA  
SELECT BOARD MINUTES  
OCTOBER 28, 2024**

**Members Present:** Chair John Burrows, Vice Chair Dina Favreau, Secretary Michael Rosa, Member Kimberly Conway, and Member Michael Riley

**Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** Recording Secretary Dawn McDowell

**Call to Order 6:00 PM**

Chair Burrows called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**1. Open Microphone**

Darlene Torre of 47R Sheldon Street – Ms. Torre stated that she was Chair of the Town Manager Subcommittee. Joining her was Larry Norman, Vice Chair. She thanked all 12 members of the committee. They reviewed multiple applications and narrowed them down to three applicants. There were technical issues with the sound.

**2. Town Manager Candidate Interviews**

**Christopher Dillon**

Mr. Dillion was the first applicant interviewed. Mr. Dillion gave a summary of resume.

Member Conway asked with the increased costs in the schools what strategies can be used to enhance revenue without reducing services. Mr. Dillion stated that we need to look at efficiencies including software enhancements for multiple departments.

Member Riley stated that Tuscan Village was a big project that showed the work with developers. What would be the feedback for that. Mr. Dillion stated that project was to give Salem the downtown it never had. The project dealt with MOUs, roads, sewer and water. Member Riley asked if residents were involved. Mr. Dillion stated that there were multiple public hearings with the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals. There were residents that were not happy with the growth but most were.

Secretary Rosa stated that Billerica has a tax rate that shifts 175% on businesses and there is \$23 million in excess levy capacity that we don't want to touch. We need to fill commercial space and what is your budget strategy. Mr. Dillion stated that New Hampshire doesn't allow that split tax rate and that can be beneficial. You can bring in business with TIFF programs and work with Chamber of Commerce. With the levy, it helps with AAA credit rating has to do with financial policy and debt value ratio and the longer not touching the levy, the better the interest rate. Secretary Rosa stated that with the large excessive levy, we can recapture but taxes go up and we don't want to do that. How would you increase it and help the residents. Mr. Dillion stated that you need to manage your expenses.

Vice Chair Favreau asked why Billerica. Mr. Dillion stated that he worked for Salem for 17 years. He wants a long-term relationship. Most residents own homes and have a vested interest in the community. There are positives for Billerica including low crime rate, new facilities including a new High School and new DPW underway. This seems like a community willing to reinvest into the community and people really care.

Chair Burrows asked how do you have success and equability on your team. Mr. Dillion stated that in Salem, he had an amazing team of direct reports. We work for the people. When he started in Salem, there were people who came in and told him of illegal activities within the town. He brought in a 3<sup>rd</sup> party to evaluate and had an audit completed. The Attorney General investigated and four people were let go. This was difficult but it was also his biggest success.

Member Conway stated that there will be conflict with the Select Board and Department Heads as well as Town Counsel, how is that handled. Mr. Dillion stated that the hardest thing is to address concerns and needs. There will always be supporters as well as detractors. You need to stay above. If there is an issue, you will discuss it. If people understand the reason behind a decision, it's easier to digest. We need to work for the best interest of the Town.



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Member Riley stated that with a \$200 million budget, what percentage of debt would you be comfortable with. Mr. Dillion stated that he doesn't like debt. He bonded a couple of bridges. New Hampshire is different than Massachusetts. The school district is its' own entity. The Town should stay under 10%. Member Riley asked what his policy is on free cash. Mr. Dillion stated that they have unsigned balance in New Hampshire. This is used for one-time purchases such as fire trucks. It can be used to minimize the tax rate.

Vice Chair Favreau asked what his vision is to attract and retain commercial growth. Mr. Dillion stated that he would look at where the growth potential is and try to facilitate redevelopment. He needs to understand what is fully here and what would draw other businesses. For example, Tuscan Village had a ripple effect for other businesses.

Secretary Rosa stated that we have the normal departments but we also have our own paramedic services, a \$200 million budget, 43,000 residents, 250 miles of roadways, our own water and sewer treatment plants. How do you come up to speed with Mass General Law and all the extra departments we have. Mr. Dillion stated that he would join the MMA and reach out to peers. There are many free webinars to watch. He enjoys learning and doesn't think that would be a problem.

Chair Burrows asked how you deal with equal access and language barriers. Mr. Dillion stated that we need to make sure our facilities are ADA compliant. We would have to do the bare minimum until major renovations could be completed. He would also hire diverse individuals.

Member Conway asked what was your biggest mistake. Mr. Dillion stated that it has to do with the audit. There were a lot of people making misleading statements and he didn't address those. He cannot respond to everyone's criticism but he should have updated the public more often.

Member Riley stated that communication is key with Department Heads, staff and residents. Mr. Dillion replied that he would have weekly staff meetings. He usually spends 30-45 minutes with department heads. He would keep the Select Board up to date and go over the agenda. He would make sure the department heads share the information with their employees. With the public, he would use the local cable tv to get the information out on community activities and use social media.

Secretary Rosa asked what experience with grants do you have. Mr. Dillion stated that he had a lot of people in Salem working hard to get grants. He always tries to look at other ways to get funding before going to the taxpayers.

Vice Chair Favreau asked what would you do to help with the opioid crisis. Mr. Dillion replied he would apply for grants and work with education and training.

Chair Burrows stated that if you are offered the job, when will you start learning about Billerica. Mr. Dillion replied he already has started. If he was offered the job, he would start to meet with department heads and reach out to Town Manager's in the neighboring towns. He would hold an open house for residents and business owners.

Mr. Dillion thanked the Board for the opportunity and left the meeting at 7:10 PM.

**Randy Robertson**

Mr. Robertson joined the meeting at 7:20 PM via Zoom. Mr. Robertson introduced himself and gave a summary of his resume.

Member Conway stated that these are challenging financial times and what would be your strategy to enhance revenue without cutting services. Mr. Robertson stated that this is not uncommon. We need to expand the pie and invest in people. We would need to look at outside opportunities and partnerships.

Member Riley thanked Mr. Robertson for his service. What would be your policy to get an AAA rating. Mr. Robertson stated that you would need an audit and see where we are and where we are going. In Aberdeen, MD, he was able to take an empty building that became a hospital. We need to look for opportunities.



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Vice Chair Favreau stated that there is an opioid crisis and asked why you didn't take the job in Nome, AK because of the rampant substance abuse in the city. Mr. Robertson stated that was not the only reason. You are 1,000 miles from nowhere and the sun never sets. There are 20-22 hours of light. He walked the streets and there was alcohol and drugs everywhere. There is a huge cultural problem due to the isolation. Opioid settlements should be dedicated to addressing the issue. We should look to the Police, Schools and Hospitals to guide us while there is a focus on the long-term plan. We should focus on prevention and education.

Secretary Rosa thanked Mr. Robertson for his service. We have a split tax rate; how would you handle that and how would you bring in commercial businesses. Mr. Robertson stated that you need to protect your seed corn. The shift to commercial is smart but you need to be careful not to drive commercial out.

Chair Burrows asked with your management skills, how would you deal with conflict. Mr. Robertson stated that he has led people since he was an Eagle Scout. He has experience and has worked with diversity. You use different skill sets in different situations. Bad news doesn't get better with age. There should be transparency and respect. You can agree to disagree.

Member Conway asked what would you expect in the first 90 days. Mr. Robertson stated that he would hope the Board would get to know him better. He would look at the Boards passions and goals. He would meet with department heads, schools and stakeholders and he would do a deep dive into the resources.

Vice Chair Favreau asked how do you attract and retain commercial businesses and increase our bond rating. Mr. Robertson stated that you need to incentivize businesses with TIFF and partnerships.

Secretary Rosa stated that we have the normal departments but we also have our own paramedic services, a \$200 million budget, 43,000 residents, 250 miles of roadways, our own water and sewer treatment plants. How do you come up to speed with Mass General Law and all the extra departments we have. Mr. Robertson stated that he has served in several states. Each state is different and he would use the ICMA, call the neighboring Towns.

Chair Burrows stated that the good thing to come out of COVID was public participation. What risk management would you use going forward. Mr. Robertson stated that you need to preserve the seed corn and don't take on more projects to risk the reserves.

Member Conway stated asked what professional mistake you would handle differently. Mr. Robertson stated that he was negotiating a solid waste contract and he didn't recommend it. Eventually they went with a contract but employees got hurt.

Member Riley asked how would you communicate with everyone. Mr. Robertson stated that the information needs to be given to everyone. He is metric driven. He would use blogs, newsletters, local cable.

Vice Chair Favreau stated that being civically active, sometimes that is politically polarizing and how would you navigate that. Mr. Robertson stated that he has experience. Our nation is fractured. We need to actually listen and be non-partisan and not take sides. He would keep his opinion to himself.

Secretary Rosa asked how you would bring in other money. Mr. Robertson stated that he would look at grants and get with the state representatives to see what money is available.

Chair Burrows asked how you would learn about Billerica. Mr. Robertson replied he would go online and research. He lends little credence to social media and would start with the Select Board.

Mr. Robertson thanked the Select Board for the opportunity and left the meeting at 8:25 PM.



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**Clancy Main**

Mr. Main joined the meeting at 8:30 PM and thanked the Board for this opportunity. When he started in Billerica 7 ½ years ago, his goal was to be Town Manager. He has been Acting Town Manager for 5 ½ months. During that time, he has negotiated the Police contract, he has located a parcel for the new Fire Station, he has worked through spending the ARPA funds, he has secured a PARC grant, and he has increased employee morale. He's open up a line of communication with local business owners. As the Assistant Town Manager, he was the personnel director, oversaw eleven directors, assisted in the budget process, reorganized the water department, and improved the employee health insurance. While he was Director of Administrative Services, he set up the hybrid meetings, was involved with the Howe and PHR renovations and worked on a grant from the CPC. He secured a grant for LED streetlights and provided budget analysis.

Member Conway stated that we are facing a financial challenge and what his strategy is. Mr. Main stated that we need to focus on revenue and Economic Development. He will work with the Economic Development Department to find businesses. They wanted to talk with the boss, he sent a letter to open the line of communications to the businesses. He is going to look at updating the water/sewer/building/cell towers. He is also going to look at staffing. There are some areas that are overstaffed and there are others that should be updated in efficiency.

Secretary Rosa asked if there is something that you would have done differently. Mr. Main stated that he needs to communicate better on capital and infrastructure. We need to communicate on future needs. There were issues with the COA, the Water Treatment Plants need a chiller. The water, roads and sewer need to be a priority and we need to prioritize maintenance of these systems.

Member Riley stated that Mr. Main is popular and well liked. He has done a good job at retaining employees. There were a lot of answers to his questions during his introduction. Member Riley asked what his communication style is. Mr. Main stated that he likes communication to relationships. You need to solidify a relationship to make it strong. People like to be reassured and made to feel comfortable. There are a lot of employees not being used to their potential and he wants to utilize them.

Vice Chair Favreau asked what would be your first priority. Mr. Main stated that the budget is his top priority. There will be a huge budget increase, which means there will be a tax hit and we need to work on that. He is also going to look at filing the Assistant Town Manager's position with some experience. Then there are other issues like sewer, water, Opioid, ADUs and MBTA.

Chair Burrows asked how you will use the employees. Mr. Main replied that he went out with the building inspectors so he could understand what they do. He wants to empower employees and train employees to get their max potential.

Member Conway asked how you will deal with the political landscape and when there's a conflict. Mr. Main stated that the key is conversation with Board members. He will look at the law to make sure what we are doing is legal. We may not always agree but we can be civil and keep communication open.

Member Riley asked what the two biggest things you learned under Mr. Curran. Mr. Main replied financial management and building project management. How to set up a budget, free cash, recap and debt schedule. On the building projects, how a project runs start to finish, funding to completion.

Vice Chair Favreau asked how would you increase our bond rating. Mr. Main replied that OPEB is out of control. We need to renegotiate our health insurance. We are the only town that reimburses Medicaid Part B. That has been changed for new employees. Existing employees will be grandfathered in. The pensions for past employees are not fully funded, now employees contribute 11%. As far as the AAA ratings, it's great but may not be worth the cost. We have financial policies in place.



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Secretary Rosa asked to explain the budget and what his plan is to fund the budget without touching the excess levy capacity. Mr. Main replied that for the first look at the revenue, take the levy number and times it by 2.5. Use \$500,000 for new growth, there's \$5 million budget framework to work with. He will meet with the department heads prior to the new year. He will also work closely with the school department. We need to look at staffing and look at what departments have turned back money in last year.

Chair Burrows asked which is important, town operation or public relations. Mr. Main replied he would take care of both. We need to brag about our community. Day-to-day operations are so important. We need to be open and honest with residents when things are good and more important when things aren't good.

Member Conway asked what a professional mistake is you made. Mr. Main stated that it was a personnel issue. This is one of his weaknesses in dealing with small personnel issues. Robert and Michele do a great job but he didn't listen. A department head made a choice between two employees. The choice was not the best choice and the other employee grieved it. It's a weird balancing act and you need to decide when to pick your battles and he has learned from that.

Member Riley stated that you have applied for other Town Manager's position and how do you make the best choices. Mr. Main stated that he would look to surround himself with good people that have different skill sets. He also has a network to lean on and has senior staff and he would look for a good mentor. He recently hired a management growth advisor and public speaking coach. He realizes he has weaknesses but is working on that and he receives criticism really well.

Vice Chair Favreau appreciates the honesty. We need to grow our commercial business; how would you do that. Mr. Main stated that we need to build our community. We can have events for our business, like Pizza Wars, Iron Chef competition, etc. We need to bring in small businesses to attract larger businesses.

Secretary Rosa stated that you have excelled in every task you have been given. He didn't realize that you had hired a speech and management coach but that is the type of person you are. How do you see the future and what do you want to expand. Mr. Main stated that he would like to revamp community services into a Center for Healthy Living. We could incorporate the Senior Center and other services. We need to go back to basics and take care of Economic Development, roads, water and sewer. He wants to bring back a high moral. He can't predict the future but he will work on goals.

Chair Burrows asked what the biggest challenge is. Mr. Main stated that Economic Development, building community, budget and getting more people involved with government including working moms, younger families and bring in people with different views.

Mr. Main thanked the Board for this opportunity and left the meeting at 9:20 PM.

**3. Discussion and Possible Vote on Town Manager Appointee**

Member Conway thanked Ms. Torre and Mr. Norman and all the committee members of the Search Committee. We had three great candidates. Mr. Main is the most familiar but the least experienced. He excels in customer relations but again has less experience.

Member Riley agreed that the candidates were better than expected. Nothing can make up for the Billerica experience that Mr. Main has. He does somethings great but has things to learn but he believes Billerica will be best served by Mr. Main.

Vice Chair Favreau stated that she learned a lot from this process. There were a number of strong candidates and I was impressed. She liked the experience in Economic Development that both Mr. Dillion and Mr. Robertson had but she would lean to Mr. Main with his knowledge of Billerica and it has been no small feat to elevate employee morale.





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Secretary Rosa stated that we were lucky to have three great finalists. Mr. Robertson has the military and experience from across the country. Mr. Dillion has a lot of experience and has shown he is willing to take on a fight. Mr. Main has worked for Billerica for 7 ½ years and every job he has been given, he has exceeded expectations. He has worked with employees; he has gone to roll call at the Police Department. He has worked well with department heads. His lack of experience makes him work that much harder. He would support Mr. Main as the next Town Manager.

Chair Burrows stated that he would agree with Mr. Main. He compares it to Bledsoe and Brady. You have to be given the opportunity to gain experience. He will make mistakes but will learn. He adapted during COVID and we now have great staff and Mr. Main will utilize them.

**MOTION** - Secretary Rosa made a motion to appoint Clancy Main as the Town Manager for the Town of Billerica. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Favreau and unanimously voted 5-0-0.

**4. Creation of a Town Manager's Contract Negotiation Subcommittee**

**MOTION** - Secretary Rosa made a motion to create a Town Manager's Contract Negotiation Subcommittee appointed by the Chair. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Favreau and unanimously voted 5-0-0.

Chair Burrows appointed himself and Vice Chair Favreau to the subcommittee.

**5. Approval of (4) 18" x 24" Signs on the Common for Billerica Youth Lacrosse for their Annual Registration from October 29, 2024 to December 31, 2024 – Requested by Chair Burrows**

**MOTION** - Secretary Rosa made a motion to approve the request to install (4) 18" x 24" Signs on the Common for Billerica Youth Lacrosse for their Annual Registration from October 29, 2024 to December 31, 2024. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Favreau and unanimously voted 5-0-0.

**Meeting Scheduled**

The next meetings will be November 4, 2024 and November 18, 2024.

**MOTION** - Secretary Rosa made a motion to adjourn the Select Board meeting of October 28, 2024 at 9:31 PM. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Favreau and unanimously voted 5-0-0.

*Respectfully Submitted by Dawn McDowell,  
Recording Secretary*

**Exhibits for the Select Board Special Meeting – October 28, 2024**

**Call to order 6:00 PM**

1. **Open Microphone – No Exhibits**
2. **Town Manager Candidate Interviews – Resumes and References for C. Dillion, R. Robertson and C. Main**
3. **Discussion and Possible Vote on Town Manager Appointee– No Exhibits**
4. **Creation of a Town Manager's Contract Negotiation Subcommittee– No Exhibits**
5. **Approval of (4) 18" x 24" Signs on the Common for Billerica Youth Lacrosse for their Annual Registration from October 29, 2024 to December 31, 2024 – No Exhibits**

**Approved On: February 24, 2025**