



# Town of Bellingham

## BOARD OF SELECTMEN

10 Mechanic Street

Bellingham, Massachusetts 02019

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April 27, 2023

All members are in attendance, meeting called to order at 6p.

Chairman Don Martinis opened the meeting and welcomed the three police chief candidates and thanked them for joining the meeting via zoom. Mr. Martinis gave an overview of the process that was set forth previously by Town Administrator, Mr. Denis Fraine. He also reminded the public that the Board is following the civil service process.

Each candidate was given 10 minutes to introduce themselves, talk about why Bellingham is their choice.

Kenneth J. Fitzgerald, Jr.: Master's in Public Administration, Bachelor in Criminal Justice. Background in training and standards. Very successful grant writing and over \$500K in money received. Manages fleet, purchasing, services, manages Gillette events which is a department within a department. He is exterior director for these events. The biggest part of the job is forming relationships. Works very collaboratively. Exposed to a lot more than the average police officer would be due to Gillette. Great with mutual aid agreements. Helped the regionalization of dispatch and he is the go between. String track record of team building, recruiting, talent acquisition. Good working relationships with other departments in Foxboro. Especially fire. Trained in crash safety and he has gone through two chief positions transitions.

Scott van Raalten, Esq.: Masters in Criminal Justice, and then went and got his law degree, which comes in handy. Hopkinton PD for 22 years. The only position he has not held is Safety Resource Officer, but he has overseen all the positions. Currently taking on more of an administrative role. Takes as many trainings as he can. Part of the team to help with recruitment and retention. Teaches at the academy. Tries to find self-sponsored candidates. Will work to stabilize leadership and grow the retention of young officers. Extensive experience with dealing with traffic and traffic studies. Built a team that works along with the business community within Hopkinton. Need department wide initiative to bring together community and police. Helps other communities with their accreditation process. Agency needs an accreditation officer. Leadership development opportunity. Build up succession planning. Brings experience of hiring lots of staff.



Jeromy T. Grniet: Oxford, 24 years with agency. Sgt on the admin schedule. Similar size and scope as Bellingham. Was a Safety Resource Officer. He runs the communication center. Sees many opportunities in Bellingham. Need to professionalize. Big on recruitment and retention and thinking of new and progressive ways. Need to create a "face of the department" and connection. Need to actively seek and engage new officers and talent. Look into using social media as a tool to make connections. Grooming and retaining the young officers. Continue to engage and encourage executive development and professional development. Good at looking at community. Scheduling weekly dept meetings to make sure everyone is on the same page. He can be a positive opportunity for the dept and community.

Mr. Martinis again thanked everyone for their time and described the role of the civil service process along with the assessment center and the role of the Selectboard considering the extended leave of the Town Administrator, Mr. Fraine.

He stated that recently there had been many inquiries about the process of hiring the Fire Chief and, soon, a Police Chief. The following will explain the process to clear up any ambiguity. He further stated that as the current Chairman and Vice Chair of the Selectboard, it is their obligation to provide an education/understanding of the process to the citizens of Bellingham.

In anticipation of the retirement of the current Police and Fire Chiefs in 2023, the Selectboard sponsored a budget line item in the May 2022 Town Meeting warrant to engage with a professional assessment center; **the budget was approved**. Under his right as Town Administrator, Mr. Fraine issued an RFQ to engage with a professional consulting organization whose sole focus is to assist communities in assessing and hiring public safety personnel. After initiating and completing a Request for Quote (RFQ) process, the organization "**Public Safety Consultants**" was selected and engaged.

#### **Public Safety Consultants Background:**

<https://www.publicsafetyllc.com/about-public-safety-llc/>

- 15 plus years of experience
- Worked with more than 150 Massachusetts communities.
- More than 400 assessments
- More than 100 upper-level assessments (Police, Fire & Deputy Chiefs)
- Since 2008, they have conducted assessments under the Civil Service Guidelines
- They have never had a recommendation appealed to Civil Service based on their assessment.



**Assessment Center process high-level explanation:**

- Regulated by Civil Service
- Public Solicitation
- Open Competition
- The candidate is ranked by score.
- Assessment Center submits scores to Civil Service
- Civil Service applies their process to the scores and then ranks the candidates. Once this process is complete, the Civil Service sends the rank to the candidate.
- The candidate has the right to appeal.
- Once the appeal timeline and process are complete, the top 3 candidates are sent to the Town (rank only)
- Town, at their discretion, will interview the top three candidates.
- Under Civil Service, the town must make a conditional offer to the number one ranked candidate unless there is cause not to make the offer.
- If the town wants to pass on candidate #1, a letter describing in detail why the town wants to move past a candidate. The #1 candidate will then be able to appeal the town's decision.

Mr. Martinis suggest the residents watch the Selectboard meeting on 11/21/22, in which **"Public Safety Consultants"** provide an overview of their service and a complete description of the process. Below is the YouTube video and in order to save time, one can fast forward to 13:13.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zSJqdv86cas&list=PL6kE1LwPLwsEDRmNnNEGOMoNuZykeuBh4&index=12>

To understand the Civil Service appointment, please select the link below:

**Hiring from a Certification List**

<https://www.mass.gov/guides/rights-under-civil-service>

Mr. Martinis pointed out a specific clause reiterating the requirement to appoint the candidate in order of rank.

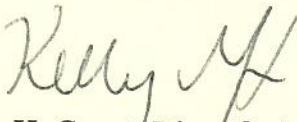
"The Hiring Department ensures that appointments are made in accordance with the PAR .09 selection ratio 2n+1, PAR .08 and Civil Service Law Chapter 31, section 27. Appointments should be made in the order for which the applicant's name appears on the certification".

He stated that Bellingham is bound to make a conditional offer to the #1 ranked candidate in compliance with Civil Services requirements. After completing the required background check, the town will enter contract negotiations. The town can only bypass candidate #1 for #2. If the background check causes concern for employment or the town cannot complete successful mutual contract negotiation with candidate #1, the town can only make a conditional offer to #2.

On a Martinis/Grant motion the Board voted 3 in favor with 2 abstentions from Mrs. McNulty and Mr. Sahin to extend a conditional offer of employment to Mr. Kenneth J. Fitzgerald, Jr. with said offer subject to the successful passage of a medical exam, psychological exam, background and CORI check and agreement on mutually acceptable terms of an employment contract to be negotiated by the Interim Assistant Town Administrator with the ratification of the Selectboard. The motion passes.

On a McNulty/Connor motion the Board unanimously voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting at 6:41PM.

Respectfully Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kelly H. Grant".

Kelly H. Grant, Vice Chairman  
Bellingham Selectboard