

Approved 10/19/16
TOWN OF WEST TISBURY
SELECTMENS MEETING
Wednesday, October 5, 2016 4:00 p.m. – 6:35 p.m.

Present: Selectmen Richard Knabel, Skipper Manter, Cynthia Mitchell, Jennifer Rand

Also Present: Simon Bollin, Tony Cordray, Prudence Fisher, Janice Haynes, Jennifer Morgan, Heather Hamacek, Edie Prescott

Animal Control Officer (ACO) Interviews: The Board interviewed five candidates for the position of ACO. They were each asked a series of similar questions.

Simon Bollin: Simon said he had been employed by Radio Shack for 25 years, when that ended he began to look for another job that would be a long term commitment. He said he thought this job would be a good fit; he lives in town, and has experience with both large and small animals. He noted that he was a fireman and EMT. He said that he was quite comfortable working nights and weekends on a flexible schedule. He said he is comfortable mediating between people; he would be able to look at both sides to come to an outcome that everyone can live with. He noted that he had a strong connection to the town; he was the beneficiary of a homesite lot and has lived here for 38 years. He said he had done a lot of research on the position, he understood it was more than just animal control, it really is community outreach, knowing the people and their animals and keeping track of their needs. He said he had tried to enroll in the certification classes, but they are only available once you have been appointed. When asked about how he would resolve a rooster dispute he said he would work with each neighbor to try and reach a compromise, but there may be no resolution as roosters are allowed in town without regulations. When asked about a dog that has killed chickens for a second time, he said he would recommend to the Board that a bond be required, and the owners find a more reliable method of restraint. He also said he would recommend removal of the dog from town or euthanasia in certain circumstances.

Prudence Fisher: Prudence said she was born and raised on a farm, she works at the Communication Canter now, and wants a job that will help the community and involve animals. She noted her experience with animals extends to helping others with their animals, so she is comfortable handling whatever comes at her. She said she is fine with answering calls on nights and weekends and getting the certification she would need. She said her work at the Communication Center has given her the skills needed to work with people in a crisis or in dispute with a neighbor. When asked about how she would resolve a rooster dispute she said she would try and find a compromise by moving the coop further from the property line, she said it was unlikely everyone would be 100% happy. Regarding the dog that his killed chickens for the second time, she said she would consider recommending a muzzle when the dog was outside. If it continued to happen she would recommend the dog be banned from town, fines for the owner if allowed by the law. She would not recommend euthanasia for a friendly dog if it could be placed in a better situation. In a situation of a severe attack on a person she would recommend euthanasia.

Tony Cordray: Tony said he was interested in the job because he had grown up on a farm, and had a small farm now. He said he valued the tradition of openness in West Tisbury and would work to maintain that. He noted he was on the Fire Department and had no problem with calls on nights or weekends and was willing to go to training to be certified. He said he has had training through the Fire Department which gives him skills to handle disputes and crisis situations. He said it was important to him to follow in Joan's footsteps, she was an exemplary ACO.

Janice Haynes: Janice said she has had animals all her life, she knows West Tisbury, has seen how well Joanie did her job and felt it would be an honor to try and fill her shoes. She said she is comfortable with all types of animals, although she doesn't have much horse experience. She said she would call those who have more experience if she needed help, and she also would reach out to friend to start to handle horses now. She said she was comfortable with calls on nights and weekends, she has been an EMT in the past. She said as a manager she has had experience mediating disputes, she said she knows it can be difficult but necessary to work with all sides. She said she had seen Joanie in action she knows the job is about the people as much as the animals and she thought her background in various jobs would give her the needed skills. When asked the questions about the rooster feud, she said she would speak with both sides and try and find a compromise, perhaps asking the rooster owner if they absolutely had to own a rooster, and perhaps asking if they would consider rehoming him. She noted the dispute is more than likely not only about the rooster. She said it may not be solvable, she said she would ask Joanie for advice. When asked about the dog dispute, Janice said she would recommend heavy fines, she said she felt euthanasia was a last resort, she did say she would also discuss safe containment of chickens with the chickens' owner.

Jennifer Morgan: Jen said she was a lifelong islander, she said she was a certified ACO, and had been working part time in that capacity since 2004. She said she wanted to become a full-time ACO. In her experience she said the people were the more difficult aspect of the job. She said she has gone to training for grief counseling, dealing with difficult people, and all the ACO classes. She said she thought she had strong skills in the areas of enforcement and neighbor disputes. She said she grew up with horses and is comfortable handling all animals. She noted she had worked at the animal shelter also. She said she would be okay with answering calls on nights and weekends, currently she is on call for Edgartown every other weekend, she noted she lived on Chappy. She said she understood the random nature of the hours, but would be interested in exploring a way to make the hours more predictable, perhaps in the manner used by Edgartown. The Board asked how she would respond when the ferry wasn't running; Jen said it would run if requested for her as a First Responder. When asked the question about the dog killing chickens she said she would try to find a balance, she would ask for input from the owner of the chickens and see what they would like done, she would recommend fines or a bond and better fencing, she said she viewed euthanasia as a last resort.

In each interview Skipper noted he was not in favor of dogs be relocated as they then become a problem for someone else.