



Watertown City Council

Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472
Phone: 617-972-6470

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Mark S. Sideris,
Council President

Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr.,
Vice President &
District C Councilor

John M. Airasian
Councilor At Large

Caroline Bays
Councilor At Large

John G. Gannon,
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,
Councilor At Large

Nicole Gardner,
District A Councilor

Lisa J. Feltner,
District B Councilor

Emily Izzo,
District D Councilor

SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING THURSDAY, MAY 12, 2022 AT 6:00 PM RICHARD E. MASTRANGELO COUNCIL CHAMBER MINUTES

In accordance with the provisions of Rule 2.6 of the Rules of the Town Council, and pursuant to the Call of the Council President, the members of the City Council of the City of Watertown are hereby notified of a Special Meeting of the City Council to be held on Thursday, May 12, 2022 at 6:00 p.m., in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber, Administration Building. The public may also participate remotely using any of the public access methods listed below:

ACCESS INFORMATION:

- A. The meeting will be televised through WCATV (Watertown Cable Access Television): [City Manager Search](#)
- B. The Public may join the virtual meeting online:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81991123086>
- C. Public may join the virtual meeting audio only by phone: (877) 853-5257 or (888) 475-4499 (Toll Free) and enter Webinar ID: 81991123086
- D. Public may comment through email: vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov

1. CALL TO ORDER

Council President Sideris called to order a special meeting of the City Council at 6:00 p.m. in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Chamber, Administration Building. Those present were Councilors John M. Airasian, Caroline Bays, Lisa J. Feltner, John G. Gannon, Nicole Gardner, Emily Izzo, Anthony Palomba, Vice President Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., and Council President Mark S. Sideris.

2. MEETING DISCUSSION - ACTION

- A. Conduct Interviews of the Three City Manager Finalists

JOHN CURRAN

John Curran gave a brief statement stating this position would be an opportunity for him to grow with Watertown being a good fit with his experience. There are many exciting things

Watertown is embarking on, and he would like to be involved with these matters. He feels that he is good at making things happen.

Q: What are the trends that you see in Watertown and why are they important to you?

A: Mr. Curran cited the City's climate action plan that would allow the many items to be incorporated into the budget; rules and regulations could be modified to enhance needs; density bonuses for developers to require climate change actions. Because he is aware of both the legislative and planning process, he would be an asset to make these changes happen.

The equity in diversity issues is something he would like to be involved with this very important issue especially in such a diverse community. Some Departments are already working on diversity, there are community action plans, and the schools are setting up programs for this.

Q: In a recent search survey, the top three answers of the people were the desire for the City Manager to have the ability to collaborate with the community, businesses, other stakeholders, and the Council; communication; and fiscal management. How does your experience and management style work to fulfill these needs?

A: Mr. Curran said he had honed all of these skill over the years. Going from a city experience to a town government was challenging but by working with the community, he was able to further development. Communication has changed over the years; it needs to be immediate, constant, and consistent. The city needs to have a social media presence as well as the old staples of interaction and collaboration to get the community's perspective and consensus around an idea. He had created consensus with school projects and established a Parks and Recreation Department for the community. The idea of the Department had to be sold to the public: why it is good for the community. He met with interest groups to provide information and had other groups provide advocacy. Fiscal management requires telling the community what the cost of a plan is and to build trust in your ideas. He had a lot of experience with this and is comfortable with building consensus. He felt he did not always win, but he always learned something.

Q: What is your management style - top down with only department heads reporting to you or do you have the ability to align staff to collaborate? What would you do with a sexual harassment situation or other concern from the line? Watertown is experiencing a large development growth; would you defer to the planning or zoning staff or take the lead in working with developers to foster cooperation with developers?

A: Mr. Curran stated he had an open-door policy with people coming and going. He felt the best way is to communicate face to face. Many department heads bring added value to the community so as a manager, one needs to pay attention to these in-house experts who have good ideas because running a community is a team effort. He felt he did not need to be right on everything or need a yes person; he needed to be challenged by staff because they can change his mind or modify his action; nor did he micromanage. He needs to have an

organization where people collaborate in order to have success. He believes in letting people do their jobs and be the professionals they are.

As regards the sexual harassment, he felt the matter needs to be addressed immediately and be taken seriously. He would interview people affected and if necessary, bring in investigators. The second part in these cases is to address the reason why it happened and what do you do to prevent its reoccurrence.

As relates to the planning, he liked to lead with the developers before they go into permitting processes. He wants developers to know what is coming from his office; he likes to see what is being done; and he collaborates with the department heads, especially for larger projects that will have a large impact on the community and its resources.

Q: Watertown is experiencing soaring cost of housing, and this affects affordability for all. What strategies would you use to alleviate the pressures on people

A: Some of the issue is beyond the control of the administration because costs are being driven up by market forces. It would be better to address the cost through affordable housing. ARPA funds could be used for down payments which would be repayable loans when the house is paid off. CPC funds could be used buy properties to develop affordable housing units and there could be units designated as affordable housing.

Q: What guiding principles would you bring to Watertown?

A: When entering a new community, the manager needs to know the people. Mr. Curran would rely on the Council for guidance. He would learn who are the people who can be relied upon. He would want to delegate the work to the right people. He felt that you cannot do other people's jobs because then you are not doing your own.

Q: When a long-term manager such as the one in Watertown leaves, it can be likened to a head of an organization leaving, how would you address "Founder's Syndrome"?

A: Mr. Curran stated he was impressed with the financial activism of Mr. Driscoll and added finances were one of his strong suits. He is aware of the mission statements and goals listed for the administration. He would respect what has been done but not be afraid to try something new.

Q: After the traumatic death of George Floyd, how would you ensure citizens, especially people of color, that they are not targeted by police? How would you rebuild the trust between the community and the police?

A: With the hiring of a police chief in Watertown, there is an opportunity to engage the community. When hiring, there could be a community participation forum to see what people want in a new chief and incorporate those concerns. With the new POST law, police officers will need to be certified and retain their certification which could be lost based on an officer's actions. Training is needed for officers on what is appropriate and what is not. There needs

to be engagement of the police with the community to build trust and develop plans for security in potentially targeted areas. A survey of the quality of police services could be used to get a sense of satisfaction and direction. There could be plans to have social worker follow ups and substance abuse coordinators who can assist people with their needs. The philosophy of the department needs to reflect the community's idea of policing.

Q: Watertown has had a high staff turnover due to retirements and retaining employees, many of whom leave to go to the private sector. How do you plan on engaging employees and attracting new ones to municipal government to create and maintain institutional knowledge?

A: Most communities have similar problems; it is a difficult job market and people are more selective wanting an appropriate pay. In government, this can be hard because of the limitations of collective bargaining. Sometimes people can be swapped out of units to get a person the right salary. Retaining people is important to retain service consistency. To attract young people, the salary and the benefits need to be there. Also, schools need to encourage the importance of local government which affects every aspect of daily living and protects life. This is exciting, challenging, and even frustrating, but an employee can affect people and change.

Q: How do you see social media as a way to engage with more people in the community and getting them involved in volunteering for civic opportunities such as boards and commissions?

A: In his community of Billerica, social media has been a vehicle for participation. There are 10,000 followers for a population of 43,000. Everything is included on the pages, vacancies, roads or school closings; all with reliable information. It has a fun component and a personal touch to encourage participation. If something is not working, people are requested to provide pictures so that the matters can be addressed. It is effective and allows more people to be involved and participate. The virtual meetings are methods of increasing public participation.

Q: The biggest part of the budget is the schools. In some years Watertown did not have sufficient funds to meet school needs, but now the City is able to. It now has two new schools, a third under renovation, and a new high that will soon break ground. How do you work with the School Superintendent to meet their operational needs? How do you maintain relations with the School Department?

A: It is important to have a good rapport with the superintendent and share information honestly because both parties want the same thing, a quality educational system. The Manager needs to find out what the schools need and attempt to provide it. When times are difficult, the parties need to look for work arounds or delays in providing for the need. The money for both City and Schools come from the same bucket, and there is no need to pit the parties against each other. The relationships between the parties and the communication are essential.

Q: Watertown has worked hard on the climate change issue. The City has two new net zero LEED gold schools, is planning a net zero LEED platinum school high school, enacted a solar power ordinance for commercial roofs; uses electric and hybrid vehicles; and is considering

a climate change plan. What have you done in Billerica regarding climate change and what would you do to address climate change in Watertown?

A: In Billerica, there was a superfund site where a solar farm was being built on. After a resolution with all parties involved, the Town received the benefit of having a credit for clean energy in Billerica. The new Billerica High School is silver LEED certified containing carbon neutral features. Billerica has a stretch energy code and has replaced streetlights with LED lights. Mr. Curran relished the idea of Watertown moving ahead with an action plan because once completed, it would be exciting to implement it.

Q: How would you define a successful relationship between the City Council and the City Manager and how would you help the Watertown Council achieve its vision of the City while maintaining long-term financial stability?

A: It is important to develop a successful relationship with the Council. Mr. Curran stated he would meet with each Councilor to determine their priorities, but he would operate to complete the will of the whole Council. He would want to establish that relationship so as not to create any confusion. As a City Manager, he felt his role was to provide counsel based on his experience and his communications for the Council to make informed decisions. It would also be his goal to keep the Council on track with its stated vision and not sidestep it.

Mr. Curran gave his closing statement. He thanked the Council., Mr. Lynch, and other participants in the process. He realized that this is an important decision and thanked everyone for their effort. He felt he was someone who gets things done, and Watertown has a lot he would like to do: to be part of that exciting venture. His background and experience in schools, road work, capital projects, and financing would be a good fit for both parties.

NORMAN KHUMALO

Mr. Khumalo stated he was privileged to be at the meeting in pursuit of the position of City Manager. He wanted to celebrate the accomplishments of the City believing that Watertown has chosen to be a leader that has an amazing staff and volunteers. He would like to be part of a community that is working on issues he cares about, in a city that has plans to resolve these issues. He looks forward to being in a community that will allow him to expand his accomplishments and his curiosity. He would also like being in this part of the Commonwealth, in a community that has chosen to be uniquely itself. He would like to partner, collaborate, and be part of the team to move the community forward.

Q: Can you explain what it is like to go through a proposition 2 ½ budget override?

A: Hopkinton is one of the few communities in Massachusetts that voted three times to have an override. In the town, partisan elections for the board still remain; therefore, one has to deal with a community where party allegiances are part of the conversation, which is robust, challenging, and interesting. As professionals, one needs to find ways to explain complex financial issues in a simple straightforward manner. Many did not support an underwrite because it does not allow the community to address financial needs that may come up in the

future. The override though does allow the community the opportunity to review, evaluate, and assess any new big expenditures that may come up.

Q: How would you go from a Town Manager with a Town Meeting to a City Manager/City Council form of government?

A: Mr. Khumalo stated he worked with the City Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, a city council form of government. He would transition from the government types by familiarizing himself with the operations of the City Council, how it relates to constituencies, and how it supports its staff teams, by reaching out to civic organizations in the community and becoming aware of the City Council processes; taking time to talk to staff members; and by relying on his professional abilities.

Q: After the trauma of many police issues, how does the City not target people of color? How can Watertown rebuild trust with the many communities?

A: It is important to support the people in the police service and to foster relations with the community. The police need the resources to do the work properly, community policing. It becomes an issue of developing relationships where the police can walk the streets, talk with residents and say "I'm here at your service.". There is a need to define innovative relationships and programs to introduce the police to the community, work with all, and to educate them of the services. Above all, everyone must be accountable. Kind, caring, and compassionate relationships must be developed. All people in public service must be a part of this. It is necessary to define and clarify community expectations. Continuous improvement is always to be sought, to find the next new insight.

Q: Your resume and recommendations indicate your ability to professionalize, streamline, and setting goals. Can you provide your most challenging situation and how you addressed that?

A: He felt creating the caring community was the most challenging. It was a two-point plan; the first was to see how employees in public service pursue excellence in caring for each other. This required new relationships many employees did not have. People had to look beyond their professional work and to understand each other as individuals. The second aspect is to determine who could the group partner with. The logical partners were the civic organizations; in the US, it was a challenge associating religious groups and the government.

Q: You mentioned the formation of a climate action workforce, who was in the group and what initiatives, programs, and projects were successfully implemented?

A: This is a recently formed program, a subcommittee comprised of volunteers, made up of the Hopkinton Sustainable Committee, volunteers on the Town Board and town staff that put together a climate action plan to be presented at town meeting. Much of this was accomplished in mid COVID conditions.

Q: Watertown is in the process of determining how to use ARPA Funds. How would you use the \$10.5 million? What kind of data would you rely on in making this decision and how would you analyze when making the decision?

A: Watertown has been successful in its finances, so he would address the impact of COVID-19 on the community: How has Watertown been impacted, who has been impacted, and how so? He would rely on data from the community, the Council, elected officials, and the professional staff. He would refer to previous decisions made on how the community uses one-time resources, and lastly he would refer to other surrounding cities and towns to see what they are doing with the funds. Regional efforts are important to providing services.

Q: Watertown is affected by soaring costs of housing for many groups within the community. As someone with planning experience, what strategies would you use to alleviate pressures? What key strategies should Watertown be exploring?

A: It is important to see how you name the issue because affordable housing has proponents and opponents. The community needs to come together to agree on how to name the challenge. Any strategy has to have goals with an action component. There must be grass roots organization and partnerships with the city government and the developers who may have differing goals. There needs to be advocacy of affordable housing to the state because this issue affects the entire state. Once the plans have been completed the units have to be built; the community needs to find the resources. In his experience, he has negotiated agreements to bring resources within the community.

Q: As the chief executive officer, how would you define a successful relation with the City Council and how would you help the City Council carry out its vision for the future of Watertown while maintaining its financial stability?

A: A City Manager supports a City Council's vision by building trust, ensuring alignment, building institutional processes, and always finding ways when disagreeing to intentionally disagree. Mr. Khumalo felt he builds relations based on respect, trust, and understanding of each other's roles within the context of collaboration. The governmental body is to do good work and he looks to find ways to celebrate what is being done. It is important to realize the aspirations of others, not than just the City Manager's.

Q: What is your management style, a leader who only listens to line reports or a collaborator who will entertain ideas from all levels of employees?

A: If a great idea comes from a resident or staff member, it should be implemented. He would allow the person to put it into a form that explains and demonstrates why it is a good idea. This allows for a healthy debate of the idea and then to enter into the decision-making process. Mr. Khumalo described his management style based on the idea of ubuntu, an African concept of "I am because you are". It means compassion, care, empathy, kindness, and an intentional desire to collaborate.

Q: Watertown is close to Boston, and developers are building life science buildings on properties. How would you work with developers to keep Watertown's best interests at heart and how would you get developers to set aside open space to protect this small dense community?

A: It is critical to have clear community aspirations clearly stated and reflected in the zoning bylaws that reflect community aspirations. Developers like when there is a clearly articulated framework of what can be done when they have conversations. Zoning laws work best when they are supported by clear design guidelines, a process developed by the community, and professional staff to represent the aspirations of the community to protect the needs and aspirations. As City Manager, he would always know that he represents the community. In instances with disagreements, there is a process to argue your positions in court. It is important to not be confused about what the community wants.

Q: You were involved with the hiring of three police chiefs. Watertown will need a new police and fire chief. Could you take the Council through that process and what are your thoughts on how it ended?

A: Hiring is not an exact science; one must make sure they are hiring the right people to work for the community. All parties need to realize they are working as a team. Also, for a position that touches the entire community, the key stakeholders need to be brought in. He relied on assessments, other police chiefs, and companies that specialize in that work. It is essential to understand the goal. In Hopkinton, the goal was to find a chief who had worked externally, someone who had seen a part of the world and worked elsewhere to train the next chief who would come from inside. There needs to be a focus on staff development and a succession plan to develop staff who would be able to move onto the next level. The hiring process needs to be open, transparent, and inclusive to prevent concerns about any improper intentions especially when hiring internally.

Q: How do you think your past experience has prepared you to lead a diverse, rapidly changing city like Watertown?

A: Mr. Khumalo stated his working with communities began in Zimbabwe. He went into it with a desire to contribute to a country transitioning from minority to majority rule. While working with Oxfam, he worked with countries going from war to peace: Mozambique, Somalia, Rwanda, Zaire. When he began his work in the US, he began with Wellesley then went to communities that are growing and in transition in Walpole, Westford, and Hopkinton. In each community, he learned there is a need to understand the differing needs of the community, to find ways to carefully listen to the different perspectives, and to find the means to let the dialogue proceed. Sometimes the dialogue will get messy, even painful, but out of a sense of resilience, the community will move forward. While transitioning, one must be mindful of what the impact is now and it will be in the future. Transition presents opportunities to look for new ideas so that the community is comfortable.

Q: What is it like to work with collective bargaining in a unionized environment and what is your approach to that?

A: A community's employees in public service are the service Mr. Khumalo approached negotiations from the view that these are my colleagues, the people I rely on. They are the people who touch the community. The negotiations are an engagement with the community's strategy partners. The process is challenging. He feels he needs to understand the emotional side but realizes when negotiations are going all parties are equals. In representing management, he hears directly from the Council what its expectations are. He feels he has to accept the responsibility on behalf of the community to communicate those expectations and educate or share with the Council what is being said in negotiations.

Q: The largest part of the budget is the school. There have been years of contention with things running smoothly now because money is available. How do you keep a relationship going with a school superintendent to ensure needs are met?

A: As a Town Manager, he looks at the Superintendent of Schools as his strategy partner to whom he communicates what is happening on the city side. Mr. Khumalo felt the strategy needs to be direct, communicated clearly, and disagreed about intentionally. He felt there is a need to meet on a regular basis the City Manager, the Superintendent, and financial officials. In Hopkinton, he has a staff level budget advisory team composed of the Town Manager, the School Superintendent, the CFO, and the School Financial Director. In addition, he meets with the political representatives in a budget advisory group consisting of the Chair of the Select Board, the Chair of the School Board, and the Appropriations Committee Chair who meet regularly during budget season. This helps everyone to quickly understand each other's needs to solve the matters together. He believes in the concept of one town one solution and for Watertown it would be a similar philosophy. The Watertown Budget and the school system, like Hopkinton, indicates a community where the schools are highly regarded, and people are concerned about education.

Q: What is your vision for Watertown?

A: Mr. Khumalo's vision for Watertown is to be part of the process to build or continue to build the city government that is trusted by all and is providing world class services.

Q: What do you see for a robust Human Resources Department or organization?

A: When Mr. Khumalo came to Hopkinton, there were only 1 ½ people in Human Resources, now there are 3 ½ positions. He would want to ensure employees have a positive experience in their work, and this is done through staff development best managed by Human Resources. He believes Human Resources should always have a seat at the table. Also, there will be disagreements between employees and their supervisors. Human Resources should provide a safe environment where an employee can talk about their concerns; it should be an entity in government to represent the employees. Another reason is to ensure the community is in compliance with the laws. Human Resources should act as a coach and a mentor and be an office that celebrates its employees and their special events.

In his closing statement, Mr. Khumalo stated that he was at the meeting driven by his interest in celebrating Watertown, that he believed strongly in public service something that

Watertown is a leader in, that he cares about the challenges identified in the City's plans which represent some of his professional aspirations; that he would like an opportunity to grow and this community would allow that; that he is grateful for the opportunity to speak with all and listen; and that he had a desire to be part of community where all could work together.

GEORGE PROAKIS

Mr. Proakis stated that he was not actively job searching because he has a job he likes. What he saw about Watertown was a community that was in a unique place. Former Manager Driscoll put the community in a safe financial position. Watertown is not struggling for new growth or to pay bills. It is a community figuring out where it wants to go next and how it wants to get there. This is an opportunity to focus on the values of community. He sees this as blending his experience with the desired values to take them to the next step, especially in the areas of transparency, equity, sustainability. He sees this as a great opportunity to work here.

Q: Could you share what work you did to create a diverse inclusive diverse municipal team that reflects the population and/or what work was done to ensure departmental policies and programs support equitable and positive outcomes for the city?

A: Mr. Proakis stated he currently has 68 people on his staff plus 6 temporary rental assistance coordinators, of which 25% are people of color. It has taken a long and steady amount of work to get there however, there are no division heads because there is a need to build a team from the ground up, to cultivate opportunities, and to have those opportunities allow one to progress over time. To provide a more diverse work force is not easy, and many people are not interested in working in local government. Most do not see it as a way to provide services or make a difference in the community. Work needs to be done to convince people that local service can make a difference. The community needs to define a process that makes an effort to grow the pool of people at the table and adding more people into the conversation. What also has to be considered is who is not in the room and does government ensure everyone has an equitable voice in the conversation.

Q: Watertown has not decided what to do with its ARPA funds, a one-time opportunity to make a significant investment in the community. In reviewing the proposals you will receive, what sort of data would you want to make your priority list?

A: There is a need to understand that ARPA is a one-time opportunity. It can start a project that can provide for future sustaining projects, but the community needs to be careful doing that. The community should be looking at single investments that will have the most impact. He has had experience in working in two block grant entitlement communities; every year the grants are used for department needs and the other for outside organizations. The method is to build a long-range plan and focus on certain areas that have larger needs or certain populations that are more impacted by circumstances. A committee meets to score the projects and determine the best way to spend the grants. ARPA is a larger form of this, but the same tools still apply.

Q: How would you define a successful relationship of the City Manager and the City Council, and how will you help the City Council achieve its vision of the future of Watertown while maintaining its long-term financial stability?

A: It is essential that the Council Manager and the City Council are pulling in the same direction to achieve its goals. Mr. Proakis stated he would want to get to know each councilor and what their issues, thoughts, concerns, and priorities are. Once he saw how things works, he would like to know what the City Council needs to implement in order to make them successful. He would continue with balanced budgets and balance new growth with new programs. Watertown has many creative and interesting strategies it wants to start, but it cannot do everything immediately. Implementation has to be done in connection with resources; therefore, priorities need to be determined to accomplish them.

Q: Using comments from the search survey, two comments representing divergent opinions were presented: One person felt the City Manager position was strictly professional appointment and the person should be a low visible technocrat skilled in doing the job and communicating directly to and with the public should not be a significant part of the job. The other opinion felt the City Manager should be a visible public figure and everyone should know who the City Manager is because that person has a tremendous responsibility in shaping the government, culture, and economy of Watertown; therefore the City Manager needs to be good communicator. Could you respond to these comments?

A: Mr. Proakis stated he read the survey responses and found many statements presenting opposing views. He is not an elected official of the community, that is the Council's job. He felt, however, that it is not healthy for a City Manager to "disappear". He would want people to know that the City Manager's office and all other offices at City Hall are places that are approachable for those who have questions and comments. Maybe the answer is one for the Council or a Department. He did feel comfortable in that and felt his role of being out in the community should be work done in conjunction with the roles of the elected officials.

Q: Taking the reins of Watertown will be difficult. There are four major development projects occurring with more in various stages of development; there are new hires needed with the fire chief, the police chief, senior services director, assistant City Manager with an expertise communication, a new community engagement officer; there is the review of the comprehensive plan underway, the establishment of the affordable housing trust, an MCAD case in progress; there is the review of the climate action plan. You will need to make decisions quickly for these and other issues. How do you propose to handle the pressure and responsibility of this work?

A: Mr. Proakis stated a lot of what was described had already come across his desk. He felt it is important that the master plan captures the view of the community, describes where the City wants to go, allows the government to run on a daily basis of goal setting, and has community consensus. The climate plan is ambitious and is a guide for a manager on how to bring priorities to the Council for many years. He has done hiring and is constantly doing this. One of the reasons he would like this position is that he does not like being bored and has never been bored in his job. And he expects that he would not be bored in this position.

Q: Watertown has not taken advantage set asides from developers as some communities have. How do you envision doing that in Watertown and how would you inculcate those values in the Master plan?

A: The biggest challenges is how to do this while writing the plan and while changing the regulations. Mr Proakis worked with the Planning and Development team to settle the expectations, which are high and significant but not so large that the development community cannot achieve their goal. It is important to set expectations that are predictable and consistent, and not be a surprise to people. He has used inclusionary housing, linkage fees for affordable housing, receiving publicly accessible open space or funds for such space. In larger developments requiring infrastructure improvements, the set relates to the needs of the district. For example, the Boynton Yards infrastructure changes were made by creating a Development Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) District to create high density structures. The City provided 35% of the costs through city bonding and 65% was split among the developers based on square footage formula. The City expected the developers to contribute to the infrastructure to make the project work. He has used linkage fees for affordable housing and some set aside money for a job training program. The expectations are predictable, understandable, and significant to help the City maintain its values while the developers are reaching their goals as well.

Q: How do you think having a larger management jump from planning to being in charge of various departments will be for you?

A: Mr. Proakis stated there would be a transition period, but there are some basic principles of being a manager that he has developed over his eighteen years of management that would still hold true. He would want department heads who have new ideas and who know when to solve their own problems and when to seek help with one. He believed there needs to be open door time for staff to be able to raise their concerns. He felt a manager has to be visible to staff.

Q: You addressed affordable housing but how do you address the affordability of housing?

A: Mr. Proakis stated affordability is a difficult regional problem. MAPC has found that Eastern Massachusetts needs 400,000 units and the inner core area near Boston needs about 180,000. There is a balance needed between local government challenges and the need for new housing growth; the City at the same time also wants more commercial properties. For each new job created, the housing unit is not being created. Housing growth will not solve affordability. At the same time the community does not want to take on the total burden of housing and it should look to regional solutions. The biggest challenge is between providing inclusionary units, which are never enough, and providing for the tier stuck between who cannot take advantage of the housing programs.

Q: How do you ensure that the policing problems we see do not happen here? How do we make people of color feel that they are not targeted by police? How would you go about rebuilding trust with the police?

A: There are current strategies that are still good bedrock strategies for policing. Community policing that interacts with people is desired, and it seems Watertown is already in a good place. Training that addresses and considers the policing role and provides understanding of laws and under what circumstances an officer should go further are needed. Officer training in de-escalation is essential because this provides an understanding on how to prevent the many frustrating incidents that have occurred. There is a need to pick the right Police Chief. He would look to the community and the Council as to what skill and knowledge base are desired and expected for a Chief. He favors programs that do things to connect the police to the community and build community connections.

Q: In relation to the hiring of the Fire and Police Chiefs, would you also look to the departments themselves to see what they value in their leaders?

A: As part of the conversation, Mr. Proakis would want to get to know the staff and what their concerns and needs are; what is going well; what needs to improve; and what they would like to see in a leader. He would not want to have the departments have a leader that it not a good fit for them.

Q: In the community forum, you mentioned there were some issues you felt needed attention including economic development improvements. Would you feel any of the programs you supervise would work in Watertown, especially creative industry zoning, transportation demand management, and small business assistance programs?

A: Mr. Proakis stated if hired, he would bring understanding of how many of those programs work and how they might work here. Transportation Demand Management programs are being planned in Watertown helping to reduce car traffic. This concept needs to grow to allow for new growth in a community that does not have a lot of roadway capacity left. Other things to consider are small business strategies and creating walkable shopping districts especially in the squares such as Watertown Square. The neighborhood businesses work together to decorate, to improve looks, and to guide new business about such matters as signage and store fronts. It is a group working to bring more residents to the districts and to increase street life. Fabrication zoning is something that would need to be considered to see if it makes sense for Watertown. It is designed to set aside creative industry incubator space and try to keep the industry in the city as it expands.

Q: How will your experience working in Lowell, a gateway city, translate to working in Watertown?

A: Mr. Proakis enjoyed working with Lowell because he had a diverse immigrant community that was interested in trying new things. Lowell has track record of being a gateway city leader; it already had downtown store districts and was renovating the mills. They looked at the business districts outside of downtown and how they supported the community around them. With a small budget and student planners, 3-4 projects were worked on. There was change in zoning that allowed for new commercial property in the area. Another project was creating Cambodia town (Lowell has the second largest Cambodian community in America).

This district is still in existence, and it provides a way to help people move forward. There was also an artist community there. These concepts might work in Watertown.

Q: How would you handle being in charge of the budget, the community, and the chief executive officer?

A: To do the job requires the right team, a lot listening and delegating, and a team that is pulling in the vision of the community and where the council wants them to be. Mr. Proakis felt he could pull those pieces together. He had a substantial role in the budget in Somerville. Revenues are pretty set. Projecting new growth is something he is doing right now and is familiar with the components. When estimating revenue, it is done conservatively, which often helps with creating added free cash for the community. He has worked on grants, and proposed strategies. While he does not manage the expenses of the City, he does manage his own budget of \$10,000,000 plus any grant money. His office has generated a significant amount of the Capital Improvement Program and he does advise the mayor. He has worked with stabilization funds to benefit the community. He felt he could convert his budgeting experience to city scale, and he looked forward to doing that.

Q: Watertown has a unique form of government, a City Council President with a City Council. How might you communicate with the Council and how do you envision working with Council President and the Council as a whole?

A: Mr. Proakis stated he wanted to meet with each Councilor to hear their thoughts and concerns. For those in the districts, he would like to know how each district is succeeding and what are the challenges of those districts. He believed it was important to have a good relationship with the Council President and needs to provide a significant amount of regular communication. He understood he is an employee of the Council and that he respects the Council members are elected.

Q: What role do you see Human Resources in a municipal government?

A: Mr. Proakis has relied on Human Resources for help in recruiting and finding candidates for positions. He sees this as more than just posting the position, but also digging for people and giving people opportunities to participate in local government. His goal is to retain a committed and diverse work force that wants to stay and contribute something significant. He wants Human Resources to manage the best benefits program for employees that the City can provide and to explain those benefits. He also sees Human Resources as being a group that can help with the management of conflicts and challenges and wants to ensure that employees have sufficient training and professional development to be an asset to the departments they are working in.

Q: The biggest budget is the school budget. In the past, there have been contentious years; recently, they have been better. The City has two new schools and is in the process of working on the last elementary school and a new High School. The Schools will need additional support. Describe how you would work with the Superintendent so that there is agreement.

A: It is important to have a good relationship between the City Manager and the Superintendent; that is the role of a successful manager. Watertown's physical plants will be the envy of the state. Now there is a need for the programs to grow into those buildings so that the schools are successful. There is a need to have good day to day relations with the Schools. One large advantage to Watertown's form of government is having the Council President on the School Committee; it helps foster a realistic understanding of what can be accomplished. The City Manager also aids with that relationship creating a realistic path to what can be done in a particular budget year and, where necessary, provide alternative paths to achieving the goal. Schools should be able to realize ambitious but realistic goals.

Q: When the current Superintendent came in, she had a plan for her first hundred days. What do you feel you could report back to the Council in your first hundred days?

A: Mr. Proakis stated he would work with finding the right skills to help fill the positions for those working for the manager. He would want to work with the Council to fill the analyst position which he felt was key to helping the City Manager and the Council with the day-to-day operations. He would want to build a strategy for communication with the City Manager and a strategy for meeting the community's expectations around transparency; to be in the community out with the council to address concerns; and to build implementation steps for the climate action plan when that is implemented. He would want these goals to be things that can be reached in the near future. He would also like to look into the community's economic development in the community as a whole. Real estate development is going great; work force development, he felt he needed to learn more about; and small business development, an area where he had some ideas to take to the next level of energy so that they can succeed. He would like to hire both the Fire and Police Chiefs soon because this would then allow the community to have conversations to making things happen relating to current concerns.

Mr. Proakis gave a closing statement saying he felt this was a unique and interesting time to be in this community. After learning more about Watertown, he had come to appreciate what the Council and Mr. Driscoll did to be in this place. If he was the right fit for the City, he would like the opportunity to be part of Watertown's future. He had ideas for the community, but he recognized that he had so much to learn. He felt lucky to have worked with two cities who were involved in interesting ideas that pushed those cities forward in the Commonwealth; those things that involved best practices in municipal management. He felt this was the time to be to make Watertown a better place and he would appreciate the opportunity.

Council President Sideris opened the session for comment from Council members. The comments made by the members included:

- If all candidates could be combined that would be a miracle manager, but where the city is going currently, it seems that Mr. Proakis understands the values of the community and has a vision of where we should go and how to get there
- It was great to have an opportunity to talk with each candidate, but now there should be a discussion of the matter. It was noted that the vote was purposely not added to the meeting to provide councilors an opportunity to consider the candidates

- Watertown is fortunate to have three great finalists for this position, but the sense was that Mr. Porakis understood the community’s vision for the future and how to work with the Council to achieve those goals. He can effectively communicate with the public and help develop long term complicated urban planning goals. He is well respected by the large staff he manages, and he has the skills to produce positive and productive results for Watertown.
- Thanks were given to Mr. Lynch and his consulting team for helping to find such impressive candidates.
- There was a feeling that Mr. Proakis was more prepared, had a vision for Watertown, researched the City, provided thoughtful answers. He was impressive with his ability to harness resources with the cities he has worked with and produce results. Somerville is dynamic and Watertown would be served well by someone who can demonstrate what government can do.
- All three candidates were impressive, but Mr. Proakis stood out. He was calm and even tempered and could appeal to all groups in the City.
- There was a feeling that while all candidates were very good, one stood out by using data, being engaging, being innovative, and being able to communicate.
- None of the candidates would fail the City and each had their specific strengths. It seemed that Mr. Proakis was the most impressive; his answers were the most substantive and specific; he understood the interconnectivity of the issues thinking in a systemic way. His references were exemplary. He seems to enjoy learning, has a curious mind, and was comfortable.

Council President Sideris thanked Mr. Lynch and his group for their assistance with providing great candidates, each of whom is very qualified, for the Council to consider. Each candidate came from very stable positions with individually strong traits.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Piccirilli moved to adjourn the meeting; Councilor Feltner seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the City Council for which a quorum was present, the above minutes were adopted by a vote of 9 for, 0 against, 0 present on June 14, 2022.

Mark S. Sideris, Council President
s:/MWP

**CITY COUNCIL ATTENDANCE
MEETING DATE: MAY 12, 2022**

	YES	NO	PRESENT
JOHN M. AIRASIAN	__X__	_____	_____
CAROLINE BAYS	__X__	_____	_____
LISA J. FELTNER	__X__	_____	_____
JOHN G. GANNON	__X__	_____	_____
NICOLE GARDNER	__X__	_____	_____
EMILY IZZO	__X__	_____	_____
ANTHONY PALOMBA	__X__	_____	_____
VINCENT J. PICCIRILLI, JR.	__X__	_____	_____
MARK S. SIDERIS, COUNCIL PRESIDENT	__X__	_____	_____