

**TOWN BOARD LA POINTE
SPECIAL TOWN BOARD MEETING
FRIDAY, JULY 13, 2012
AT 11:00 AM AT TOWN HALL**

I. Called to order at 11:10 AM

Present: Jim Patterson, Ham Ross, Larry Whalen, Greg Nelson, Nick Nelson

II. The purpose of this meeting is to interview Jim Stauber, who is a candidate for the position of Town Administrator. His answers to the following questions appear in bold face.

Why us? Where did you hear about this position? **Stauber says that his wife found the Town's ad in the Duluth Tribune, and that the two of them have always liked Madeline Island.** What have you done since to learn more about the challenges you will face if you get this job? **Stauber says that he has read the Town website and spoken to the Chamber of Commerce and spoken to a few folks. He is excited at the opportunity and feels that Madeline Island faces many of the same issues as the city of Duluth.**

What are some things your current (or previous) employer could do differently to be more successful? **Stauber states that he currently teaches math & science; he also serves on the Duluth City Council, in the area of planning & economic development. He feels that business/jobs are important, yet Duluth actually discourages them. "Fees & zoning have to facilitate growth." He would be sensitive to the people trying to make a living while maintaining the beauty of the area.**

Why have you decided to leave your current job? **Stauber states that while he likes both jobs because they are public service jobs, he is looking at the future and this job is a better fit than what he is doing now.**

If not your current job, what job in your past do you think most resembles the requirements of this position? **Stauber feels that his military background would help with budget preparation. His work supervising EMT's and paramedics give him experience in operations management; and his re-election to the City Council shows his ability to work with people**

What adjectives would your current (previous) employer use to describe you? **Stauber replies: "passionate, experienced, patriotic, conservative fiscally, and a bit of a bulldog over expenses."**

Think of someone you have had problems with in your career, as we all do, who you would NEVER use a reference. What adjectives might they use to describe you? **Stauber responds: "a maverick." He feels that a fresh approach is always available.**

Describe a time when you hired (or fired) the wrong person. **Stauber says that he has never fired the wrong person. In one instance he relied on associates who had done a phone interview. The associates recommended to hire the person, knowing that it might be a bad fit, and it was.**

How do you alleviate stress? **Stauber says that he does not get stressed very often. He gets plenty of sleep and watches what he consumes. He also feels that there is such a thing as a good stress. It's healthy. He is, however, sensitive to pushing other people too hard, and he knows when to back down and show appreciation.**

What tools or habits do you use to keep organized? **Stauber says that he is a very organized person. He keeps orderly files and a 3-ring binder for his classes. He is computer literate and uses the computer for keeping things available.**

What are the first 5 things you would do if you got this position? **Stauber replies:**

- a.) **talk to people and find out what they do; let them get to know him**
- b.) **go through the Ordinances & Comprehensive Plan. He likes to understand what the rules say**
- c.) **regarding money, he wants to know where it is coming from. Grants? The State? The county? Then he looks at the expense side: why is it being spent this way?**
- d.) **get a vision from the Town Board regarding his direction**
- e.) **meet with significant community leaders and businesspeople and listen to them.**

Greg Nelson warns Stauber that the budget cycle begins right after the Town Administrator starts the job.

Stauber responds that he has had experience with budgets in the military and working at Gold Cross Ambulance. He would ask the department heads for their thoughts during the summer. He suggests that a bi-annual budget might be a better way to go. He would rely on the department heads for the 2013 budget, but ask them to justify expenses.

Greg Nelson explains the Town's budget process.

Stauber replies that it is important that department heads be open regarding their budget needs.

Jim Patterson points out that the department heads are not financial experts.

Stauber agrees and adds that sometimes things change in a year.

Ham Ross explains the Town's tax situation vis-à-vis Ashland County and says that the Town Administrator will have to be a "point man" with Ashland County.

Stauber agrees that the money is clearly not remaining in the community.

Greg Nelson gives the tax dollar figures: the Town pays 26% of the Ashland County budget and still has to replicate services that other towns in the County get.

Stauber asks about demographics.

Greg Nelson explains the tax situation for summer residents.

Ham Ross mentions the current good infrastructure.

Stauber says that he would befriend those who can help the Town.

What are the things you do NOT like to do, and not want to work on? **Stauber says that he likes to delegate. He will motivate, follow up and show appreciation.**

Patty Hobin asks Stauber about his grant-writing experience.

Stauber replies that a good grant writer can earn his/her own salary.

Greg Nelson asks if he would be able to write grants.

Stauber replies that the Town Administrator should be responsible for applying for, recommending, accepting and managing grants.

Ham Ross asks Stauber if he would be willing to involve himself in "internecine conflict."

Stauber replies that the trick is to find a win-win solution, this is something a manager has to do.

How you would go about revising our (personnel policy handbook, comprehensive plan, zoning ordinances). **Stauber says that a review of the Comprehensive Plan is a good idea; he would hold public meetings. He continued by saying that Zoning should follow the Comprehensive Plan and should be as public and honest as possible. He has perused the Personal Policy: annual reviews are critical as people are the Town's most expensive resource.**

Are you more of a hands-on manager or a delegator? **Staubert says that he is a delegator: “they are better at it.” He would coach, advocate and have an open door policy.**

This position has been vacant for more than ten years, and we seem to have survived without it. Why do you think we should fill this position now? **Staubert feels that there is a need for “someone at the helm.” He feels that something must have changed [in the Town’s circumstance] that caused the Board to decide to hire someone now.**

Greg Nelson explains the background of the Town Administrator position and adds that there are now more mandates from the state as well as legal matters and zoning matters. Also, every Town Board member has another job, so they need help with getting information in order to make informed decisions.

**Staubert asks if legal work will be involved.
Greg Nelson answers that the Town has two attorneys.**

Jim Patterson explains the Town’s diverse population and the need for someone who can communicate with the people about what the Town does and when and why.

How will you decide what matters need review by the Town Board, versus those matters you can resolve on your own? **Staubert says he will take his direction from the Town Board. Over time as he and the Board feel each other out, he will come to recognize what to deal with and what to take to the Board.**

What is your comfort level of daily operation – dress for success, casual attire, informal, casual Fridays, etc. **Staubert feels that casual is comfortable and therefore product**

Can you handle an “open door” type of atmosphere? **Staubert says that he loves it—“that’s the way it’s got to be.” Some of the work may need privacy, but Staubert feels he is very flexible.**

What do you see happening with the Town of La Pointe and an administrator position five years down the road? **Staubert feels that the Town is likely to need a Town Administrator in the future. The job description may change, but somebody needs to “run the ship.”**

Jim Patterson asks about the situation that the City of Duluth is in with the tribal casino in Duluth because all of Madeline Island is sacred ground to the Ojibwe. Staubert replies that the city has made serious mistakes in dealing with the tribes: for years the city did not meet with the tribes, and the city should have been talking to and listening to the tribes for years.

Larry Whalen asks Staubert if he considers himself a content or a process person. Staubert says that he is a “process guy;” otherwise someone can challenge what has been done.

III. Request from the Emergency Medical Service to post for EMT trainees. Motion to authorize the posting of openings for EMT trainees. HR/LW 5A MC

IV. Adjournment at 12:46 PM

**Submitted by Patty Hobin, Town Clerk
Approved as submitted on July 31, 2012
Patty Hobin, Town Clerk**