

From: Nancy Tavernier
Sent: Wednesday, December 05, 2007 7:10 AM
To: Dore' Hunter; Lauren Rosenzweig; Andrew Magee; Peter Berry (home); Paulina Knibbe (comcast)
Subject: Letter of support

EXTRA INFO
12/5/07

**Nancy Tavernier
35 Mohawk Drive
Acton, MA 01720**

December 5, 2007

Dear Dore', Lauren, Andy, Peter, and Paulina,

After a great deal of thought, I have decided to write to you with my personal recommendation for your selection of the next Town Manager. I have been hesitant because I did not think it was appropriate for Search Committee members to make comments before you interviewed each of the finalists. I felt you should conduct those interviews without any external influence from us. Understanding the magnitude of the decision before you now though, I believe it is appropriate for me to share my thoughts. I maintained an open mind throughout the search process and I am confident you are doing that too.

I agreed with the selection of the four finalists that were sent to the Board although I was opposed to the ranking of them, both the process and the final rank order. I think that was an unnecessary exercise and, as I feared, it has caused some embarrassment. For your information, my rankings were: Murray, Maylor, Delaney, and Ledoux.

I firmly believe that all four candidates are qualified for the position of Town Manager and in fact all are currently performing in that role or close enough to it. Whether they are qualified for the position in Acton is another question. Throughout the interview process, I measured each candidate against my simple standard: would their selection be in the best interest of the Town (the organization) and the town (the community). The two most important skills that I believe are needed in a Town Manager are knowledge of municipal finances and budgeting and the ability to manage people. I believe all four candidates have both skills but we really only know for sure in the case of John Murray.

Consistent with my rank order of the finalists, my top two choices continue to be John Murray and Andrew Maylor. I did not find any compelling reason to recommend Delaney and Ledoux, over the other two, so I focused only on Murray and Maylor. I believe each could do a wonderful job for the Town but because of the relocation issue, I am recommending John Murray be selected as the new Town Manager. Andrew is a wise man and gave an honest answer to both committees when asked about relocation. I do not believe he is in a hurry to move here, and I respect that, but being an hour away from the town is a significant problem for me. In a perfect world, I think John and Andrew would be a great team but the reality is I do not think John will stay on if he is not selected and Andrew would be left with very little institutional knowledge of the organization and the community. That would not be in the best interest of the Town/town.

I have known John ever since he joined the organization and have worked closely with him throughout that time period both as a Selectman and a town volunteer. John brought change to the organization using his financial analytical skills learned in the private sector. Don depended on him for that knowledge and gave him wide-ranging responsibilities to bring about change. Change is never easy and he made enemies along the way, particularly among the collective bargaining units. He also triggered some discomfort on the school side since

he questioned the very core issue of fairness in sharing the revenues. John was willing to deflect the heat from Don which allowed Don to function in a positive light most of the time. That was a role that was deliberately crafted by Don and John and it has now come to haunt him.

I too have had disagreements with John especially in my role as Chairman of ACHC. We have had many complicated situations to puzzle out and never once has it been easy to retrieve ACHC funds from the Town. But should it be easy? I don't think so. John takes very seriously the responsibility for being the gate-keeper of the public funds and he was right more times than I care to admit in regard to ACHC activities.

John has many creative ideas that have been floating in his head for a long time, he truly wants to be that agent of change that we should be looking for. He has given us a preview of his plans for change in the management of the employees since he took over this summer. One of his most ardent internal detractors has admitted to me that the team concept is a great one and is working well already. The cross training of personnel is essential to maintaining continuity in the face of some major personnel losses to date and more to come. It has also been acknowledged to me that the atmosphere in the building is calmer and people are working more normal hours with less stress. That is a remarkable turn around in just 5 months especially at a time when he is perceived to be a lame duck.

I have been torn for the past month about who to choose, John or Andrew. I truly like them both. I do not envy you the decision you have to make. We badly need the continuity and the creativity that John can provide. Andrew can provide creativity but if there is no one left to provide continuity, what good does it do? Watching the organization in a slow melt-down is very painful for me. I was very proud of you all last night at the FinCom meeting. Thank you for doing that. I strongly support the salary parity proposal you have developed with John's guidance, I hope it will not be too late by the time July 2008 comes around.

I wish you well in your deliberations. I will support whoever is the next Town Manager and I will stand behind the honesty and integrity of the process that brought us to this point.

Thanks for listening.

Nancy