

Hendricks overcomes obstacles to earn positive review

Lisa Redmond Millbury-Sutton Correspondent

Published 10:12 a.m. ET May 26,2021 | Updated 10:12 a.m. ET May 26, 2021

MILLBURY — When Town Manager Sean Hendricks was hired in October 2020, he walked into a “s--t show,” Selectman Chair Mary Krumsiek said during Hendricks’ six-month performance review on May 11.

The town’s corner office had sat vacant after former Town Manager David Marciello inexplicably and suddenly cleared out his office and went on an extended leave in August 2019, never to return to work.

Not long after, the town was in the throes of a raging COVID-19 pandemic, yet town government had to continue. Hendricks was faced with preparing the fiscal 2022 budget without a finance director, a position he has since filled, preparing for the May 4 annual town meeting, and dealing with declining employee morale.

Digging into his new job, Hendricks, the former Uxbridge town manager, presented a balanced fiscal 22 budget that was passed at town meeting. He hired a finance director, and his team approach has resulted in an improvement in employee morale, Krumsiek said.



“You’ve made my job (as a selectman) much easier,” Krumsiek said.

When Hendricks was hired, he negotiated a three-year contract with a starting salary of \$147,500 annually, with a six-month informal performance review. The selectmen at their May 11 meeting unanimously approved giving Hendricks the maximum salary bump of \$2,500 per year, raising his annual salary to \$150,000.

Hendricks’ formal performance review will be his yearly review in November.

Selectman Katherine McKenna described Hendricks’ first six months as “very positive, especially with what he walked into.” She described Hendricks as easy to talk to, knowledgeable about municipal government but willing to admit when he doesn’t know something.

“You’ve been able to cultivate a team environment,” she said.

Selectman Scott Despres said, “The lack of confrontation ... is a refreshing change.”

Despres praised Hendricks’ positive attitude for making a “big difference” to Town Hall employees and townspeople.

“It’s been smooth sailing rather than rough, choppy waters and a boat out of control,” he said when comparing Hendricks’ approach to the former town manager.

Selectman David Delaney praised Hendricks for ensuring the town’s senior residents had access to the COVID-19 vaccine where it was by providing transportation or home visits.

What impressed Delaney when Hendricks was interviewed for the Millbury job was the former Millbury resident saying, “I’d like to come home to Millbury.”

After COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, several board members noted they expect Hendricks to be out of his office more, meeting with residents and business owners in town.

Selectman Christopher Naff praised Hendricks for being “thrown into a lot of fires” and putting them out.

Hendricks thanked the board for its positive comments, noting that his role for the past six months has been that of a “fire extinguisher.” He praised town employees for helping him through some of the initial obstacles he faced.

While he has faced some challenges, Hendricks said his enthusiasm for the job hasn’t waned. When he accepted the job last year, he suggested a five-year contract to show he planned to stay.

He hopes to spend the next 10 or more years in Millbury and “retire here,” he said, although “the shelf life for a town manager does not usually last that long.”

If the first six months are an indication of what the next 2½ years will be like as Millbury’s town manager, Hendricks said “sign me up.”