



TOWN AND COUNTY OF NANTUCKET

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Statement from Libby Gibson, Nantucket Town Manager: Fire Chief Appointment

August 17, 2022 Select Board Meeting

The appointment process for department heads within Town Administration is outlined in the Town Charter. A solid hiring process was followed for the Fire Chief position earlier this year. The town engaged a highly regarded professional search firm to lead the search effort, which yielded several impressive candidates. To be considered finalists for the position, candidates had to meet or exceed many stringent prerequisites such as a minimum of 15 years of professional experience in an organized fire department with at least five years of experience in a command capacity, along with extensive fire service administration and leadership experience.

A fundamental responsibility of municipal government leaders is to make informed, thorough decisions to ensure public safety for the community and its citizens. We do not take this responsibility lightly on Nantucket. Again, as town leaders we have an obligation to provide efficient and effective public safety. The hiring process was impartial and rigorous and designed to attract the best and most qualified fire service professionals.

I'm pleased that Michael Cranson, former Chief of the Portsmouth, R.I. Fire Department, was offered and has accepted the position and has signed a contract to lead the Nantucket Fire Department. Chief Cranson will be joining a team of fire service professionals, who so courageously fought last month's Veranda House blaze --the largest fire on the island in decades. We are grateful to each member of the department for their service to the community. I am also confident that under the leadership and guidance of Chief Cranson, a comprehensive succession plan will be developed, positioning our firefighters to assume future leadership roles within the department.

Unfortunately, the divisive and mean-spirited tone that has dominated national political conversation in recent years has finally made it to the shores of Nantucket. It has overshadowed the value and importance of the hiring process and promoted a non-productive and misleading narrative.

I'd like to believe Nantucket is better than this. It is imperative that we all work together amicably and cooperatively for the common good of our community. I am confident that we can move beyond the misinformation and once again engage in productive dialogue. We are grateful that the Local Fire Union 2509 embraces language in its contract that states as its purpose "to promote harmonious relations between the Town and the Union."

I know many islanders will join us in moving our community forward, and welcome Chief Cranson to Nantucket this fall.