

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING  
MINUTES FEBRUARY 12, 2018  
APPROVED**

**BOS Members Present:** Joshua A. Degen, Chair; Barry A. Pease, Vice Chair (via phone); Alison S. Manugian, Clerk; Rebecca H. Pine, Member; John G. Petropoulos, Member

**Also Present:** Mark W. Haddad, Town Manager; Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Mr. Degen called the meeting to order at 6:00pm and reviewed the agenda.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Haddad said that there had been an article or editorial in the Herald stating that the Town Manager had gone rogue on the budget. He said that he had met the guidance provided to him by the Board of Select men and the Finance Committee. Mr. Haddad said he provided a budget that met the 3% growth in the municipal budget requested by the Finance Committee and met the needs of the Groton Dunstable Regional School Committee for FY 2019 as directed by the Board of Selectmen. He said he did not go "rouge" and did not disregard the guidance. Mr. Haddad said that during the development of the budget, two of his department heads, who were charged with the responsibility of managing their public safety departments, brought to his attention needs that they felt were in the best interest of the residents of the Town of Groton. He said that the paid professionals, who were sworn to protect the Town, felt additional manpower was needed. As an alternative, Mr. Haddad explained how he brought this issue to the Selectmen and Finance Committee for their review, debate and decision making. Mr. Haddad said he would be remiss as their Town Manager if he did not bring these issues to the decision makers. He said he did what he felt was in the best interest of the residents of the Town. Mr. Haddad asked if without debate and consideration, where would be they be as a Town. He said that if the Selectmen decided at the end of the day to study this further, he had accomplished what he set out to do, which was bring this to their attention for a healthy debate. Mr. Haddad said he did meet the guidance and took exception to the statement that he went rogue.

Mr. Degen said that he agreed, the Town Manager did meet the guidance provided by the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee. He said that the proposed public safety override was brought to the Board and Finance Committee for discussion and consideration. He said that they would be remised if they did not take this seriously and thought that because time until the spring town meeting was limited, he suggested that they form a task force to review the matrix this involved. Mr. Haddad said he was fine with whatever the Board decided and felt he did his job by bringing this forward for discussion. Mr. Petropoulos was not sure this was an announcement adding he thought the editorial was spot on. He said that the budget was far over what was given for guidance. He said they were mixing budget and policy issues together and was very disappointed that they had gotten to this point. He said that the Town Manager did not meet what they asked for and said he wanted to make a motion that they remove from consideration at the Spring Town Meeting the proposals to extending police and fire personnel. Mr. Pease called for a point of order adding Mr. Petropoulos had not right to make a motion on something that wasn't on the agenda. Mr. Degen asked that they hold off on this budget item until it came up later in the agenda.

Mr. Pease said he would be very disappointed in any manager to any board that did not bring forward information to the governing body. He said that if they were operating in the way that Mr. Petropoulos stated he would be reprimanding the manager. He said that the budget cycle was the right time for this to be brought up adding it was up to them to decide if they wanted to move forward with this. He said that for the Herald to go "rouge" on this based on Mr. Petropoulos's input was ridiculous. He said that for them to shove down the Police and Fire Chiefs and to put the Town Manager in bad light was ridiculous. Mr. Degen agreed that they had professionals and thought the Town Manager did his due diligence by bringing this forward as recommended by their professionals.

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

1. Mr. Mike Hartnett said they he had gone out to the market the week before on short term notes that needed to be renewed adding they had received 1.55% on the short-term bonds. Mr. Haddad said that this was part of their plan to pay down the principal every year and shorten the bonds by 10 years. He said that as long as they had free cash they would continue to do this yearly.

*Ms. Pine moved that they approve the short term borrowing for another year as presented by the Treasurer. Mr. Petropoulos seconded the motion.*

Ms. Manugian asked what the annual amount they were spending was and how much was coming out of free cash. Mr. Haddad said that the total annual amount was \$479,757 of which \$272K was coming out of free cash. He said they rest was budgeted for in the operating budget within the levy. Mr. Robertson said they had many discussions about this and to save \$1M doing this was the right way to do it as long as they had free cash. Ms. Manugian said she was not clear that this plan was clear to the voters. Mr. Degen said it was presented to the voters at the fall town meeting. Mr. Petropoulos said they didn't return money to the voters but thought they had met their obligation to be clear to the voters. Ms. Pine said that paying less in interest was important to her.

*Roll Call Vote: Petropoulos-aye; Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Pease-aye; Manugian-abstain. Motion carried 4-0-1.*

2. Mr. Petropoulos said that there had been a lot of discussion about whether or not to allow marijuana in town. He said that the goal of this agenda item was to have the Police Chief tell them what implications there would be by allowing this. He said that because the Chief could not be there, he offered the following motion:

*Mr. Petropoulos moved that the Board request and require from their Chief of Police an opinion on what, if any, illegal activity would be likely to accompany approval of marijuana sales and or cultivation in the Town of Groton. If associated activity is projected, the Chief should further provide his best assessment of the scope, volume and associated cost to the Town. Ms. Pine seconded the motion.*

Mr. Petropoulos said that the purpose of this was to give voters a professional prospective on potential risks if this was allowed. Ms. Manugian said she agreed it was important to hear what the Chief thought but added he had been involved with the subcommittee looking researching this topic. She said both Chiefs had expressed concerns with what would be legalized household cultivation. She didn't see the need for a formal motion and thought it seemed out of the usual to request such a formal request from them. Mr. Degen said he saw no harm in this motion.

*Roll Call Vote: Petropoulos-aye; Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Pease-no; Manugian-no. Motion carried 3-2.*

3. Mr. Haddad said that Tom Delaney was present to talk about the Matrix Audit recommendations concerning the DPW. Mr. Haddad said that there were a lot of the recommendations to go out and buy expensive software adding he thought they were running pretty efficiently. He said that with all the priorities they had coming up, he would not recommend purchasing expensive software.
  - Recommendation #1: Preventative Maintenance Program for Buildings - Mr. Delaney said they had one person who did this and had a program in place. Mr. Petropoulos said he would like to see them track this quarterly. Mr. Haddad said that he would like to eventually hire an additional person to take care of maintenance within the buildings.
  - Recommendation #2: Fleet Maintenance – Mr. Delaney said it was not a bad idea.
  - Recommendation #3: Outsource Repairs on Vehicles – Mr. Delaney said he disagreed with this. He said they had to send out for repair sometimes but tried to do as much in house as possible.
  - Recommendation #4: Charge Other Departments for Work Performed by DPW – Mr. Delaney said they charged back for parts but not labor adding it was not logical to charge back labor. Mr. Haddad said he thought that it complicated things and would be an accounting nightmare. He said he was comfortable with the way it was being done now. Mr. Delaney said they didn't do a lot of regular maintenance on police and fire equipment. Mr. Degen said he thought that line item transfers should be done at the end of the year adding it would allow them to account for every dollar.

## **CONSERVATION COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT**

Present: Nik Gualco, Conservation Administrator and Commission Members Peter Morrison and Olin Lathrop

Mr. Gualco provided the Board with a review of its membership. He said it had been a year of transition for the Commission. He said that the Commission issued 20 Orders of Conditions and 20 Request for Determinations with 45% of those having been issued over a 2-month period late last summer. He said that the Commission acquired a 12-acre parcel of land that abuts 22 acres of conservation land. He said that some of their land required more active management adding that a lot of their time had been spent on invasives on their land this past year adding they had continued to collaborate with the Invasive Species Committee. Mr. Gualco said that their main focus for 2018 was to update the Open Space and Recreation Plan. He said that they had an active RFP out right now and had received interest from 10 firms so far.

Mr. Petropoulos thanked Mr. Gualco for his summary adding it sounded like he had a nice handle on the department. Mr. Petropoulos said he would be interested in having them become versatile in their conservation land as a percent of total land. Mr. Lathrop said that approximately 30% of land was open to the public (land owned by Cons Com, Cons Trust, NEF, etc). He said it was a little over 10 square miles. Ms. Pine asked if Mr. Gualco was okay with the amount of money being requested from the CPA. Mr. Gualco said they requested a reasonable amount adding that the current fund balance was \$750K. Mr. Degen asked what was going on with the parcel of land off Wharton Row in the back. Mr. Morrison said that they had some problems with access over a stream. He said they were granted an easement over private property to access the parcel but didn't think it was appropriate to do that should the current land owner decide to move. He said they were looking to get it back into agriculture. Mr. Lathrop talked about the farmers wanted a ten-year lease to cultivate land but that they were only allowed three years right now. He said that they would be asking Town Meeting to change that.

### **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT – Cont. of DPW Audit Recommendations**

- Recommendation #5: Asset Inventory System – Mr. Delaney said that they had an asset inventory plan already and was not sure why this was recommended. Mr. Degen asked that even the small items be inventoried and maybe why they recommended it be done.
- Recommendation #6: Additional Staff Person for Building Maintenance – Mr. Delaney said he agreed with this. He said the cure was for more help and an increased budget.
- Recommendation #7: Outsourcing Custodial Services – Mr. Haddad said that this was a standard recommendation by consultants. Mr. Petropoulos said it was good to keep comparing yourself with outsourcing.
- Recommendation #8: Establish a Formal Scheduling System – Mr. Delaney said there were too many variables that could mess us a scheduling system adding that unanticipated work was 50% of their job. He said he did not agree with this recommendation as their days could be so fluid. Ms. Manugian asked how much they were reliant on someone with his knowledge. Mr. Delaney said that nothing was written down and few understood it.
- Recommendation #9: Utilize a Computerized Maintenance Management System – Mr. Delaney said that a work order system was something they were now doing by paper. He said they needed to find an electronic system that worked with their needs adding it was something he had been researching.

### **LIQUOR LICENSE PUBLIC HEARING – 94 Lovers Lane, Groton**

Present: Sherril Gould, attorney; Jeff Garibotto and Chris Frothingham, Managers

Mr. Haddad read the public hearing notice into the record.

Mr. Petropoulos moved to open the public hearing. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. *Roll Call Vote: Petropoulos-aye; Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Pease-aye; Manugian-aye. Motion carried unanimously.*

Mr. Haddad explained how the Town had entered into a three year lease of what used to be known as the Tavern at the Country Club with GPH, LLC. He said the first years rent had been negotiated at \$12 because of the extensive renovations they were doing in the building. He said the rent would gradually increase over year 2 and 3 adding he was very excited to bring the new tenants on board. Mr. Petropoulos asked about this lease in comparison to the last tenants lease. Mr. Haddad said it was substantially more.

Attorney Gould said they were looking to obtain 2 licenses, one for the Pub and one for the function hall. Attorney Gould reviewed the areas in which the licenses would cover. She said the client and the applicants for the licenses was a three-member LLC. Mr. Garibotto was currently a restaurant owner in Littleton with an established liquor license. Mr. Frothingham, who was the proposed manager, was also currently an owner at the Littleton location. Mr. Haddad asked what their expected opening date was. Mr. Garibotto said early April adding they wanted to be open year-round. Mr. Haddad informed the Board that these were two full year licenses. Mr. Haddad asked what their proposed hours of operation were. Mr. Garibotto said, after a brief discussion with the Board, they would like 7 days per week 10am-1am for both licenses.

Ms. Carolyn Baker of 52 Lovers Lane said they had always had a peaceful climate on Lovers Lane and thought that 1am seemed pretty late for people to be drinking in their area. Mr. Haddad said that the previous licenses allowed for the same hours. Mr. Degen said that they should be consistent with other establishments in Groton. Mark Sherin of 45 Lovers Lane said that Lovers Lane was a quiet road but that people sometime appeared to be speeding on that road at night. Mr. Degen said that they could ask the Police Chief to monitor the streets once the restaurant was open. Mr. Petropoulos said that they needed to be sensitive to the fact they had liquor licenses there before but also sensitive to the neighbors. He suggested they be proactive and look at traffic 6 months from now and be proactive. Ms. Gould said she was concerned about the Board making it contingent on the license. Chris Frothingham said that he and Mr. Garibotto were both residents of Groton adding that they were very sensitive to the neighborhood. He said they would talk to their staff about respect for the residents.

*Mr. Petropoulos moved to close the public hearing. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Petropoulos-aye; Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Pease-aye; Manugian-aye. Motion carried unanimously.*

*Mr. Degen made a motion to approve two all alcohol restaurant liquor licenses for GPH, LLC dba Groton Publick House Pub and Eatery located at 94 Lovers Lane with hours of operation of 10am-1am 7 days per week through December 31, 2018. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Petropoulos-aye; Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Pease-aye; Manugian-aye. Motion carried unanimously.*

*Mr. Pease made a motion to review the traffic conditions on Lover's Lane around September 12th. Mr. Petropoulos seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Petropoulos-aye; Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Pease-aye; Manugian-aye. Motion carried unanimously.*

#### **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT – Cont. of DPW Audit Recommendations**

- Recommendation #10: Utilize and Install a Formal Pavement Management System – Mr. Delaney said they didn't have someone they could designate to do this. He said an employee designated to do this would ride around town all day and input data. He said it was extremely labor intensive to constantly update this and strongly disagreed with this recommendation. Mr. Haddad said that Mr. Delaney was very methodical in the way he does things relative to paving.
- Recommendation #11: Clean Catch Basins Every Two Years – Mr. Delaney said that they do the catch basin cleaning as needed. He said that if they could be done every two years that would be great but didn't think it was possible.

Mr. Petropoulos said he agreed with the management aspect of what Mr. Delaney did but asked about the program See Click Fix adding it was a tool that could provide them with a summary of reported issues. Mr. Delaney said that if someone was going to report something, then why just not email or call the DPW. He said that See Click Fix was anonymous and people could easily create false emergencies. Mr. Petropoulos suggested Mr. Delaney reach out to Littleton to see what they thought about it as someone that used it.

- Recommendation #12: Fixing and Maintaining Potholes – Mr. Delaney said their approach was agreed with.
- Recommendation #13: Road Repair Protocol - Mr. Delaney said their approach was agreed with.
- Recommendation #14: Check Sign Reflectivity – Mr. Delaney said that this was a good idea but cost money. He said that this job was done at night adding it was low on his priority list. He said that the Police notify them of stop sign issues and sign with fading reflectivity.
- Recommendation #15: Manner in Which the DPW Paints Crosswalks - Mr. Delaney said their approach was agreed with.

- Recommendation #16: Annual Street Sweeping of all Town Roads – Mr. Delaney said that they currently swept all roads with curbs and sidewalks. He said that their street sweeper was older adding it already took them on average of 2 months to sweep those roads. He said that it would be a huge stretch to do 100% of roads.
- Recommendation #17: Transfer Station Fees – Mr. Delaney said that they did track revenue and was not sure what they recommended this. He added that they had also just adjusted their fees last year.
- Recommendation #18: Utilize Web Site to Provide Recycling Information – Mr. Delaney said that all information relative to recycling was on the website. Mr. Haddad said they were working more on the website and accessibility but thought they were already good with information on this recommendation.

Mr. Delaney said that the topic of the DPW building facility came about in Matrix Audit adding he couldn't agree with their recommendation more. He said that over the years, his main focus had always been their equipment which was in good shape. When the building was constructed, the building was downsized from original plans for budgetary purposes. He said they outgrew the building the day they moved in. Mr. Delaney reviewed some pictures of the building and explained they were not looking for anything fancy. He said that the feasibility study was the first step in this process. Mr. Haddad said they were asking for \$50K to conduct a study of the building. He said that this was the last of the Town buildings they had to look at. He explained that they were not looking for a new building but more bay spaces and better/larger quarters for the workers. Mr. Haddad said that he had included this as part of this year's capital budget. Mr. Degen said he had spent some time down there and explained how he thought the facility was pretty beat up. He said they did a great job keeping it clean and as good as they could but they needed more space. Mr. Petropoulos asked if they had the original plans and if there would be value in using them. Mr. Delaney said he thought he might. Mr. Pease said that if they could get the original specs and if they would suffice today, could they just go right out to design. Mr. Haddad said they would also have to look at the repairs that needed to be done also.

4. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to consider ratifying his appointment of John Barnard as a Van Driver for the Council on Aging.

*Mr. Petropoulos made a motion to affirm the Town Manager's appointment of John Barnard as a Van Driver for the COA. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Petropoulos-aye; Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Pease-aye; Manugian-aye. Motion carried unanimously.*

5. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to consider ratifying his appointment of Elena Carney as a member of the Historic Districts Commission term to end June 30, 2020.

*Mr. Petropoulos made a motion to affirm the Town Manager's appointment of John Barnard as a Van Driver for the COA. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Petropoulos-aye; Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Pease-aye; Manugian-aye. Motion carried unanimously.*

6. Quarterly Budget Update: Mr. Haddad said that they were currently at 51% of anticipated revenues and was comfortable with where they were at. Ms. Dufresne said that they had received \$1M of property tax revenue already of which \$500K was because of prepayment on taxes. Mr. Haddad said that the major excise commitment was scheduled to go out next week. Mr. Haddad said that expenditures were a little high. He said they were running just under 50% in police, fire and citizen services adding that DPW was a little high because of snow and ice which they were currently in deficit spending on. Mr. Haddad said he thought they were tracking where they needed to be and was pleased with the way the budgets were tracking.
7. Mr. Haddad said that the Board had discussed at their last meeting whether to petition the Town Meeting to change the name of the Groton Board of Selectmen to Groton Select Board. He said the question arose as to whether or not they should ask the Legislature to hold off on approving the Charter until after the Town Meeting, in the event this change was made. He said that the Legislature was willing to hold off on the approval of the Charter until after the Town Meeting if the Board chose this course of action. Ms. Pine reviewed the process in which she thought this should go. The Board agreed with her orderly process. The Board was unanimous in its decision to proceed with a

name change. Mr. Degen said he thought Select Board should be two words. Mr. Petropoulos suggested they do this in a methodical way adding it was not time sensitive. Ms. Manugian said it was time sensitive if they wanted to tie it in with the Charter changes. Mr. Pease suggested placing this on the warrant. Mr. Degen agreed adding they should convene a meeting of the Charter Review Committee. He said he would also like to see the Charter continue through with its changes as it was now. Ms. Pine disagreed adding it was not a substantive change. She said it had nothing to do with the operation of government but simply changed the name of the Board. Mr. Pease said it may be a simple change but not a simple message. He said that men and women were equally suited for the tasks at hand.

Mr. Mike Manugian said the Charter Review Committee had been dissolved. He said he had two concerns about this adding it would further delays acceptance of charter. He said that the warrant article gave the Board permission to make wording changes adding he didn't give the Board permission to change something that had not been brought up before. He said there was a charter process, including organization of a committee, to give all citizens rights to suggest changes and strongly disagreed that this was a minor change. Mr. Haddad said that the Board had the right to put an article before the Town Meeting to suggest this change. He said that the duly elected Board would be making a suggested change to what the board called itself. Ms. Pine said she was comfortable with delaying approval of the Charter for a couple of months to vote on this at Town Meeting. Mr. Petropoulos said he didn't think they should change their name without a Town Meeting vote. Ms. Manugian said she came into the meeting with a neutral position on this but that the more she listened the more she knew this was a priority. She said it was not a big issue but a big statement and thought that doing this in a piecemeal fashion was worse than doing nothing. She said they were leaders and should be making this change as soon as they could. Mr. Degen said he was okay with holding up the approval of the Charter to add this should Town Meeting vote to allow it.

*Ms. Pine moved that an article be placed on the warrant for the 2018 Annual Town Meeting to change the words 'Board of Selectmen' in the Groton Town Charter to the words, 'Select Board', and to change all references to the board and its members to 'Select Board' and 'Select Board Member.' Ms. Manugian seconded the motion and asked if it was restrictive to the Charter. Mr. Haddad said he would like to see two warrant articles; one to change the charter and one to change the bylaws, policies, etc. Roll Call Vote: Petropoulos-aye; Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Pease-aye; Manugian-aye. Motion carried unanimously.*

8. Mr. Haddad said that the Board commenced negotiations with the Friends of Prescott last fall with the intent of having the Friends cover the costs of maintaining and operating the Building. The Friends understood this and actively marketed tenants and classes to cover this obligation. Since that time, the Building Commissioner ruled that the Building could only be leased for educational purposes unless the Building undertook a major renovation to make it code compliant. He said that this had hampered the ability of the Friends to lease the building and thus meet their obligation. Mr. Haddad said that they were also informed that the School District would be moving out of the building over the summer and would therefore not be covering their share of the maintenance and operating costs of the building. Mr. Haddad said he was requested that the Board consider adding funding to the FY19 operating budget that would cover the costs necessary to maintain the Prescott School in FY19. He said that this was a separate issue from the Friends request for CPA funding.

Ms. Pine asked how much the District had been spending on maintenance and operation. Mr. Haddad said it was somewhere between \$35K-55K yearly. Mr. Degen said the Board didn't want this to be a taxpayer subsidy not including any CPA grants. He said that if they were only going to be using 1/3rd of the facility (the first floor) for this current year, if the Friends were to contribute \$20K, the Town would be obliged to pay the rest for this current year. Ms. Pine argued that this was not a Friends issue adding they had put constraints on the building. Mr. Degen recounted how the Town almost sold the building by 2 votes adding there was a mandate that it not be sold to an individual. He said that the Friends came forward with a vision and there were limitations with the building code. He said he would be willing to consider a number due to these circumstances. Ms. Pine said that the Friends had a plan and then limitations came about due to unknown issues. Mr. Petropoulos said that one could argue that CPA money was town money. He said it was stated two weeks ago that the Board had voted to not spend money on the building but after some research, no formal vote was taken. He thought that if they set limits, they would be doing it based on ignorance. Ms. Manugian said she had no issue with allocating some finite number in FY19 but objected

to Ms. Pine's point that the issue of use was unknown. Ms. Manugian said that changes in use were discussed years ago for hours upon hours. She said it was a logistical difficulty but was not unbeknownst to folks. Mr. Petropoulos said that he had been paying attention and never saw that train coming. Mr. Pease said that the School's decision to vacate the building was up before the Friends entered into a lease with the Board. He said that the RFP was cancelled because of that. Mr. Pease said he needed to ask if it made sense, given changes for the Friends, to continue in this building with these obstacles. He said it was not the Town placing these obstacles but the law and thought that to blame the Town and its officials was ridiculous.

Ms. Jennings said they would have welcomed warnings as Ms. Manugian spoke of. She said they were writing a business plan given certain assumptions. Ms. Jennings said that this obstacle changed their business plan but she thought they could get through negotiations and come to a positive use of the building. Ms. Jennings said they had been covering their share and were committed to doing that. Mr. Pease said that the vision presented by the Municipal Building Committee for Prescott School and ultimately adopted by the Board was for mixed use. He said that a community center was not the only or main component of use of that building. He said he agreed with and supported that vision adding that unfortunately through research and time that vision was no longer applicable. He said that the Board had never authorized any vision that had a sole community use associated with it. He said he was very reluctant to consider that without the town weighing in on it. Ms. Jennings said that the definition of community center might be the concern. She said that the Friends was looking to other non-profits to come in and pay rent adding they were allowed to rent the building out for non-profit use. Mr. Greg Sheldon said it was important to remember that the vision in the report called for a prudent patient partnership. He said that they could not predict the future. He said they had a 5-year and 10-year plan and had always been open and transparent with the vision. He said that the vision changed because they could not use the building for commercial use.

Mr. Degen asked Mr. Sheldon if he understood when serving on the Committee, that the building would require upgrades to support commercial and retail space. Mr. Sheldon said that it was a complicated answer. He said that the subcontracted engineer came back and said there were serious issues. He said the process they presented strongly advocated for a development committee. Ms. Pine said the use changed when it was no longer used as a school and should have changed then. Mr. Degen said that change in use was not established by the BOS adding it was within the building code. Mr. Petropoulos said that a lot of things were under the purview of the Building Commissioner that the Board had stepped in on. He said he wanted to ask Town Counsel whether they had the authority to change the use of a building. After a brief discussion and clarification on what was being asked, the Chair provided Mr. Petropoulos permission to access Town Counsel.

*Mr. Petropoulos moved that they allow the negotiating team to come up with potential funds needed and have the Town Manager come back with a fund request to the Finance Committee. Ms. Pine seconded the motion.*

Mr. Pease said they asked the Town Manager to keep level services and thought that this motion flew in the face of the guidance Mr. Petropoulos chastised earlier. He said he thought it was hypocritical and biased and the funding did not belong in the budget that was now the Finance Committee's budget. He told Mr. Petropoulos that he didn't get the play the rules to his bias.

Ms. Manugian questioned the viability of getting to phase 2 of the vision/plan adding she was concerned that the Town was being asked to put up an undetermined amount of money for at least the next year. Ms. Pine said there was no business plan because they had not completed negotiations. Mr. Robertson said that funding this for one year was a good idea adding they needed a one-year plan to see what the number was. He thought they needed to provide a longer-term plan at Town Meeting. Mr. Degen said it should be figured out in the negotiations and reported back to the Board as a whole. He said that the Finance Committee would have to figure out how to fund this. Ms. Manugian said that they needed to understand if there was an appetite for a multi-million-dollar renovation of this building or not. Mr. Haddad said that they should just have a separate warrant article and not put it in the operating budget.

Mr. Petropoulos move we allow leasing team to negotiate a lease with the Friends of Prescott that defines the needed town funds and continue retention of Prescott as a town asset and that the Town Manager be authorized to place that amount of funds in the operating budget for FY19. Ms. Pine seconded the motion.

Mr. Pease said that based on that they were changing their guidance for level serviced. Mr. Degen said it was what the motion seemed to dictate. Ms. Pine did not agree adding level services meant something different to her. Mr. Pease asked if there was currently a line item in the budget for supporting Prescott School. Mr. Degen said that because they would not be leasing to the School District after this summer because of their plans to move their offices, they had to assume some costs of that building. He said that had an obligation to include this in their budget. Mr. Petropoulos said they were not increasing services.

*Roll Call Vote: Petropoulos-aye; Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Pease-no; Manugian-no. Motion carried 3-2 in favor.*

Mr. Pease said he was going to file an OML complaint adding they didn't issue an RFP stating they would subsidize parties. He thought they were playing favorites and could not do that. Mr. Degen said that Town Meeting would have to approve what they just voted on adding a line item in the budget had to be voted on.

9. Mr. Haddad said that there was an application before the CPC by abutters of Duck Pond seeking funding to install an aerator in the pond to help address the eutrophication of the pond. He said there was a fundraising effort underway to help pay for the permitting and asked the Board to consider voting to establish a gift fund for this purpose.

Mr. Degen recused himself from the discussion.

Mr. Haddad said the abutters had collected \$4,750 to date and needed \$12K. Mr. Haddad said that any money not spent would be returned if project didn't go forward.

*Mr. Petropoulos moved that they establish a gift fund for the Duck Pond Restoration project. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Petropoulos-aye; Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Pease-aye; Manugian-aye. Motion carried unanimously.*

Mr. Degen returned to the meeting as Chair.

10. Mr. Haddad, in picking up from an earlier discussion, said that he had met the guidance provided on his proposed budget and thought that bringing forward for consideration an alternate budget in the form of a public safety override was him doing his job.

*Mr. Petropoulos moved that they at the Spring Town Meeting remove from consideration the proposals for expanding Police, Fire and EMS services, as well as the proposal to regionalize EMS services, and to focus entirely in the budget resulting from the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee's guidance of level services and 3% growth. Ms. Pine seconded the motion.*

Mr. Degen said he wanted it to be clear that he fully supported the professionalism of the Police Chief, Fire Chief and Town Manager. He said that they felt the increased manpower was in the best interest of the Town.

*Mr. Degen said he could support Mr. Petropoulos's motion but with the following amendment: that at the immediate conclusion of the Spring Town Meeting a task force made up of the Police Chief, Fire Chief, Town Manager, two members of the Finance Committee, two members of the Board of Selectmen, and two members of the public to evaluate and bring forward the recommendations for a warrant article to occur at the Fall Town Meeting of 2018.*

Ms. Pine said she suggested that based on recent OML training that they only have one member from each the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee. Mr. Degen said he wanted it to be an open meeting therefore the membership was fine as stated. He said that this was not ready for prime time and needed to be vetted out with the professionals. He asked if someone wanted to second his amendment. Mr. Petropoulos said he didn't think they should define the task force in the amendment. Mr. Degen said he would like to see them consider the merits of this adding the professionals they paid didn't deserve a kick in the face. He said that the Police Chief had brought this proposal forward for many years now. Mr. Petropoulos said he would second it but only if the task force was not defined adding it was ill-advised to do that.

*Mr. Degen changed his amendment bring forward to the Fall Town Meeting a recommendation by a task force created at the conclusion of the Spring Town Meeting. Mr. Petropoulos seconded the motion.*

Mr. Pease did not believe they should bring funding items to the Fall Town Meeting. Ms. Pine agreed adding this had come as a surprise to many. Mr. Haddad said that an idea had to come forward at some time and was not sure how anyone could say this was a surprise. He said that this was something the Police Chief had been talking about doing for years.

Mr. Petropoulos read the following letter sent by Finance Committee member Jon Sjoberg into the record.

*All,*

*Will be out of town this week so can't attend the meeting on Monday so wanted to share my opinion wrt the proposed "public safety override".*

*In short, I think nothing immediate or new has happened that requires us to jump to a full-time fire department and increasing our police department before doing a full process of deciding what kind of fire department and police force we want.*

*For the fire department, I think we need to first spend time and let the BoS make a statement on what the triggers are for Groton to require a full time fire department. I think this process should include public hearings/input/education.*

*For the police department, I think the Chief has provided information last year and this year justifying his plan, but I think we all need to spend some time sharing the rationale and plan with the public. I think to most of them this request is coming out of the blue.*

*Based on policy decisions, we can then evaluate the need for an full time fire department. We can also use the time to educate the public on the police force needs. Then we can publicize it at Fall town meeting and look for was to fund in FY2020. If we go for an override in FY2020 the public will know the reasons and we will all know that we have done our due diligence trying to fund without an override.*

*Understand there are many viewpoints to consider, but wanted to share mine.*

*Thanks,*

*Jon*

Mr. Haddad said that they could not bring a concept to a town meeting adding it had to be a yes or no question.

*Roll Call on the amendment: Manugian-no; Petropoulos-aye; Pine-aye;*

Mr. Pease clarified that the process would be to bring a recommendation to the Fall Town Meeting. Mr. Degen agreed adding that if the Town Meeting were to agree with the need, they could bring funding to the following Spring Town Meeting. Mr. Pease asked if the Fall Town Meeting was the deadline for the recommendation. Mr. Degen said it was.

*Pease-aye; Degen-aye. The motion carried 4-1 in favor.*

*Mr. Petropoulos moved that they at the Spring Town Meeting remove from consideration the proposals for expanding Police, Fire and EMS services, as well as the proposal to regionalize EMS services, and to focus entirely in the budget resulting from the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee's guidance of level services and 3% growth and bring forward to the Fall Town Meeting a recommendation by a task force created at the conclusion of the Spring Town Meeting. Ms. Pine seconded the motion.*

Mr. Haddad asked if they could please agree that he met the budget guidance. Mr. Degen said he agreed.

*Roll Call: Petropoulos-aye; Pine-aye; Manugian-no; Degen-aye; Pease-aye. The motion carried 4-1.*

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms. Pine asked about placing the room tax on the warrant. Mr. Haddad said he thought they wanted to wait until the Fall Town Meeting.

Mr. Degen asked the Board to provide him permission, as Chair, to send a letter to the Chair of the School Committee that he drafted. Mr. Degen read the following letter into the record:

*Marlena Gilbert  
Chair GRRSC*

*Marlena;*

*We are being asked to become well versed in the MSBA process as well as any number of other aspects of school operations in order to make informed decisions on your requests. We have not yet seen the district's operational audit. We find it quite impossible to absorb the sheer volume of information required to make an informed recommendation. In fact other towns have set up task forces made up of local individuals with the expertise to evaluate this type of information over time and present findings. It seems to us that this is being done by the GDRSC as a part of their overall responsibilities. We do not believe that any member of your committee has the requisite background in construction, finance or governmental contracting needed to properly evaluate the fundamental requirements of the proposed feasibility study. It is wrong to hand off all of this raw reference data and then ask us to understand it. This job is for a group of qualified experts. If our Department Heads came to us and said: "Read all of this then ask me questions" we would likely terminate them.*

*We would respectfully ask that you, the School Committee, become the experts. Then you should provide the required information in an efficient and appropriately detailed manner. A simple high level Executive Summary should be included. Please then distribute this to the BOS, FinCom and to the community well before we get to the Spring Town Meeting. We are sure that you have much on your plates right now with your budget meetings on the horizon. Should the GDRSC fail to provide the required documentation then you may not achieve political support from either the majority of the BoS nor the FinCom.*

*In absence of such support the likelihood of financial support at Town Meeting will be diminished thus potentially leading to a failed vote. Please let me know your thoughts. Finally we ask that you share this with the entire School Committee.*

*Sincerely*

*Groton Board of Selectmen  
Josh Degen  
Chairman*

Ms. Pine said she had no intention of authoring that letter be sent. She said that the School Committee was working hard just as they were and saw no purpose in antagonizing. Ms. Manugian read a letter from Ms. Gilbert into the record:

*Josh,*

*I personally have spent hundreds of hours over the last two years working towards bridging the gap between the schools and municipality, creating a working relationship built on what I would hope to be mutual respect. I have gone out of my way to provide information, meeting dates and agenda items by email. I have personally taken the time to speak with members of your board in collaborative efforts to find solutions and provide updates for various challenges that impact both our schools and our municipal. I have also attended many BoS meeting over the course of my 2-year term on the School Committee in an effort to be available for your board.*

*Imagine my surprise when I retrieve my email to find false claims and insinuations of our school committee not sharing the DMG Audit with your board or the Groton Fin Com.*

*Imagine my surprise when I read further into your letter whereas you advise me or some would say threaten that "Should the GDRSC fail to provide the required documentation then you may not achieve political support from either the majority of the BoS nor the FinCom. In absence of such support the likelihood of financial support at Town Meeting will be diminished thus potential leading to a failed vote."*

*You wanted to know my thoughts, here you go.*

*The school committee is doing their job and we are doing it well.*

Every "T" is crossed and every "I" has been dotted, extensive research is done, every stone overturned in addition to research and recommendations from our administration. Your accusations are unfounded I am beyond disgusted with the actions you have chosen to take in writing this letter and to post it on social media, whereas your claims were inaccurate and unfounded. We are not a department of yours nor will be treated as such.

Adequate information will be provided to all voters pertaining to our budget and the warrant article for the Flo Ro MSBA feasibility study prior to and at town meeting by way of presentations.

You owe me and my board an apology. Be sure to include that in your rewrite.

Respectfully  
Marlena Gilbert  
Chair of the School Committee

Ms. Manugian said she echoed what Ms. Pine said adding she found it frustrating that he posted this on the local list serve. She questioned the possibility of a violation of the OML through intent. She said there was a lack of consideration of the Board and that it was not a collaborative way to go. Mr. Degen said he had listened and watched Ms. Gilbert defend the School's on social media adding he was fully entitled as a member of the community to ask questions. He said that he did not state this was the position of the Board. He thought that while they were setting a standard for him, Ms. Gilbert had set a standard aspiring as a member of the School Committee. Mr. Petropoulos said that the delivery could have been better adding that everyone was entitled to their own opinion. He said that he was quite sympathetic to standards and didn't like having to look up links to various things. He said they were talking about a very large project adding they didn't build a new school everyday. He thought that some of Mr. Degen's points were valid adding they should be provided with a high level summary and not links to find the information themselves. Mr. Pease asked if more than one person saw this post. Ms. Manugian said that according to the Town Manager and Town Counsel, this was not technically an OML violation but should lead to some sort of policy. Mr. Pease said he wished they would discuss these types of inter-board parleys with each other from a strategic point of view. Mr. Degen said that they should maybe establish a social media policy. Mr. Degen said that he was hearing that four selectmen were against sending this letter. Mr. Pease said that Ms. Gilbert was trying to find ways to get the best deal for Groton and didn't want to lose sight of that.

**MINUTES**

*Ms. Pine moved that they approve the meeting minutes of January 16, 2018 with a minor edit. Mr. Petropoulos seconded the motion. Roll Call: Petropoulos-aye; Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Manugian-aye; Pease-abstain. The motion carried 4-0-1 in favor.*

*Ms. Pine moved that they approve the meeting minutes of January 22, 2018. Mr. Pease seconded the motion. Roll Call: Petropoulos-abstain; Pine-aye; Degen-abstain; Manugian-aye; Pease-aye. The motion carried 3-0-2 in favor.*

*Mr. Degen adjourned Regular Session at 10:38 and moved to enter into Executive Session Pursuant to MGL, c.30A, §21(a)(7) for the purpose of approving Executive Session minutes and to not re-enter Regular Session. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call: Petropoulos-aye; Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Manugian-aye; Pease-aye. The motion carried unanimously.*

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Alison Manugian, Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_ respectfully submitted,  
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 3/5/18