

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MINUTES JANUARY 24, 2011  
APPROVED**

**Present:** Stuart M. Schulman, Chairman; Anna Eliot, Vice Chairman; George Dillon, Jr., Clerk; Peter Cunningham; Joshua A. Degen

**Also Present:** Mark W. Haddad, Town Manager; Patrice Garvin, Executive Assistant

*Mr. Schulman called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and reviewed the agenda for the public. Mr. Schulman also announced many local activities and local businesses in town.*

**GROTON READS**

Owen Shuman Library Director presented 2011 Groton Reads Book. Cherrie Harper a member of the Selection Committee discussed all the upcoming events and activities' surrounding this year's choice titled the *Spirit Moves You and You Fall Down*.

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

1. Mr. Haddad stated that there are currently three articles on the February 28<sup>th</sup> Town meeting Warrant. The first Article seeks authorization to purchase the former Sacred Heart Church property from the Archdiocese of Boston. The agreed to purchase price is \$475k. Mr. Haddad stated that he was working with Town Counsel to finalize the purchase and sales agreement. In addition, he has contracted with Pine and Swallow Environmental to conduct a Chapter 21E environmental assessment on the property. Mr. Schulman read a statement into the record responding to a recent editorial in the Groton Herald regarding the Sacred Heart Church. [Document #1-Statement] Mr. Dillon noted that there was a need for a fire station and that it was discussed at the November Master Plan Public Meeting. Mr. Dillon continued that the process was done well and was very transparent. Mr. Dillon suggested residents attend the Special Town Meeting. Mr. Cunningham stated that talk of a new station has been around a long time and that there was a Fire Station Study Committee. Mr. Cunningham added that the process had nothing to do with the form of government. Mr. Degen was disturbed by the editorial and that transparency has always and will always exist. Mr. Degen noted that it was an excellent deal and that the editorial was not responsible journalism.

Mr. Haddad continued to explain his financing plan to purchase the Church property. Mr. Haddad recommended that the Town transfer \$300k from the stabilization fund and \$175k from the ambulance receipts to pay for this purchase. The stabilization fund can be replenished at the Fall Town meeting from Free Cash. Mr. Dillon stated that efforts have been maintained to keep the church as a Historic Structure.

The second article is seeking authorization to expand the central sewer district to include 122 Old Ayer Road to allow an institute of higher learning to move into the Town.

The third article is from the Fire Department to authorize the purchase of a new ambulance. Mr. Haddad stated that the proposal is to construct a new Central Fire Station on the former Sacred Heart Church site. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to consider starting the process by appropriating design funds at this town meeting, or wait until spring. Mr. Haddad stated that the new fire station would cost approximately \$5 million.

2. Mr. Haddad stated that he has reached out to Town Counsel to discuss Jenkins Road. The Board asked for a legal opinion if the Town ever had a fee interest in the road and only an easement once it was discontinued does the town loses all rights for use of the road, including ownership. Mr. Haddad added that to settle the

issue it would cost the Town over 30k in legal fees. Town Counsel gave the opinion that Town personnel can have access to the property but not the public and that no fee of interest was on record. It was Mr. Haddad's opinion not to move forward because the potential on winning is also only 50%. Ms. Eliot asked to invite the others into a meeting to hear results from Counsel. Mr. Dillon was concerned because the legal opinion seems to keep changing on this issue. Ms. Eliot stated that this issue can only be solved through the courts. Mr. Degen asked how this related to the Wilkins property.

3. Mr. Haddad stated that the Town of Harvard invited the Board to a meeting on February 2, 2011 at 7pm at the Harvard Public Library for a presentation by Phoebe Walker on regionalization. Ms. Walker is from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments. Other Towns have also been invited. Mr. Degen asked if Dunstable had been invited. Mr. Haddad stated he would follow-up.
4. Mr. Haddad wanted to update the Board on the dog bite issue that happened this month on Skyfields Drive. As the Board is aware, Mr. Gus Widmayer filed a complaint with the Board of Selectmen and Dog Officer concerning the incident. The Dog Officer has been following up on this issue. The Dog Officer has informed the office that the owner of the dog have sent the dog to the trainer she recommended. The dog will be spending a month on site being reconditioned. The Dog Officer wrote that the trainer has worked with many problematic and/or aggressive dogs and has been successful with them and offers a guarantee for training. The owners are planning to either sell their home or relocate the dog as they don't feel they can bring the dog back into the neighborhood because of what happened. The owners plan to find some place to keep the dog until they are able to relocate. In the meantime the Dog Officer has requested that the trainer send her an evaluation of the dog. Mr. Haddad also requested that a Committee be appointed to review the Dog Control Bylaw. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to appoint Michael Bouchard, Town Clerk; Tom Delaney, Animal Control Officer; George Moore, Animal Inspector ; Susan Hogan, Dog Officer; and Lt. Cullen, Police.  
*Mr. Dillon moved to appoint the following to the Dog Bylaw Ad Hoc Review Committee: Michael Bouchard, Town Clerk; Tom Delaney, Animal Control Officer; George Moore, Animal Inspector; Susan Hogan, Dog Officer; and Lt. Cullen, Police. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. Motion carried.*
5. Mr. Haddad explained that there is a vacancy on the Historical Commission. Al Collins, Chairman of the Commission, has asked that Michael Danti of 105 Main Street be appointed. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to consider ratifying this appointment at Monday's meeting. The Board wanted to hold off on this appointment and requested to see Mr. Danti's Committee Interest Form.
6. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to adopt the Designer Selection Procedures distributed at the last meeting. Mr. Dillon asked why the Town needed this adopted. Mr. Haddad stated that this allows the Town to follow state law. Mr. Dillon asked various questions about the proposed procedures.  
*Mr. Cunningham moved to adopt the Designer Selection Procedures as presented. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. Motion unanimously carried.*
7. Mr. Haddad reported that he attended the MMA Annual Conference in Boston and that the Governor was proposing a 7% cut in local aid. Mr. Haddad noted other items the Governor addressed as well, such as Plan Design for Health Insurance and Chapter 70 monies. Mr. Haddad reminded the Board that in the proposed FY12 Operating budget he projected a 10% cut to local aid.

### **SELECTMAN LIAISON REPORTS**

Mr. Degen commented on the budget meeting with the Finance Committee on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Mr. Dillon reported that the Military Community Covenant Committee is meeting and moving forward. Ms. Eliot noted that the CPC was meeting this week to discuss applications and that the Community Dinner is being held at the First Parish Church.

### **MINUTES**

*Ms. Eliot moved to approve the regular meeting minutes of December 20, 2011, as amended. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. Motion carried, Mr. Degen abstaining. [Document #2-Draft Minutes 12-20-10]*

*Ms. Eliot moved to approve the Executive Session meeting minutes of December 20, 2011 and not to release. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. Motion carried, Mr. Degen abstaining. [Document #3-Draft ES Minutes 12-20-10]*

*Ms. Eliot moved to approve the regular meeting minutes of January 3, 2011, as amended. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. Motion carried, Mr. Degen abstaining. [Document #4-Draft Minutes 1-3-11]*

### **ADJOURNMENT**

*Mr. Degen moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:06pm. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned.*

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Anna Eliot, Vice Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
respectfully submitted,  
Patrice Garvin  
Executive Assistant to the Town Manager

Date Approved: 2-7-11