

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES NOVEMBER 14, 2011
APPROVED**

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

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

Ms. Eliot called the meeting to order at 5:00pm and reviewed the agenda.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad stated that at last week's meeting Attorney Robert Collins was in to discuss the notice on intent under M.G.L., Chapter 61A, Section 14, of his clients intent to convert their property at 66 North Street to a non-agricultural use. The board wanted clarification on how roll back taxes are determined. Enclosed with this report is a letter from Attorney Collins explaining this in more detail. The Board needs to make a decision on whether or not to release the Town's first right of refusal. **[Document 1-Letter from B. Collins]**
Mr. Haddad explained why the taxes go back four years and that the Planning Board and Conservation Commission have submitted written recommendations for the Board to release the land.
Mr. Dillon moved to refuse the property located at 66 North Street. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. Motion unanimously carried.
2. Mr. Haddad stated that in order to accurately detail the Town of Groton's involvement in the aftermath of the fire at the Groton Inn, asked Ms. Collette to prepare a chronology of events from August 2, 2011 through November 8, 2011. **[Document 2-Chronology of Inn]** Mr. Cunningham suggested placing the chronology online. Ms. Eliot stated concern for history and that the Town should prevent what happened to the Inn from happening again in Town.
3. Mr. Haddad commented on next steps with regards to the Center Fire Station. In addition to reviewing some of the Tier 1 sites, Chairman Eliot had suggested that a good first step in moving forward would be to meet with members of the former Relocation Committee to get their input. Mr. Haddad further suggested that two members of the Board, along with the Fire Chief, sit down individually with the former Committee members to receive this input. In addition, at the last meeting Mr. Cunningham requested that various architect/engineering firms be contacted to determine the cost of having them assist the Board in reviewing various sites. Mr. Haddad stated that he has reached out to various firms and is awaiting their reply. Mr. Dillon asked for clarity on why the town should contact architects to tell us about the site. Mr. Cunningham explained the need for a needs analysis for the fire department, which would give the town an independent firm to provide a level of comfort moving forward. Mr. Degen thought it was a good idea and requested a ballpark number for the work to be done. Mr. Cunningham added that the public should be able to weigh in moving forward.
4. Mr. Haddad presented a proposed schedule for selectmen meeting through the end of the year.

ANNUAL TAX CLASSIFICATION HEARING

Jennifer Evans of the Board of Assessors recommended a single tax rate for the Town of Groton. Ms. Evans stated that the Town was awaiting word from the state if the tax rate was approved. Ms. Evans stated that the tax rate was going down but bills would stay roughly the same. Mr. Haddad stated that values have not changed since last year therefore residents will see a savings on their tax bill. Mr. Haddad stated that the Town was under the levy limit, excluded debt was down and the Town was in good financial shape.

Mr. Cunningham asked if there was any uptick in commercial properties. Ms. Evans stated that it was about the same. Mr. Degen wanted to applaud everyone town employees for their hard work with the budget. Mr. Cunningham asked about the collection rate. Mr. Haddad stated that it was about 96%.

Mr. Cunningham moved to close the public hearing. Mr. Dillon seconded the motion. Motion unanimously carried.

Mr. Degen moved to adopt a single tax rate for the Town of Groton. Mr. Schulman seconded the motion. Motion unanimously carried.

LIAISON REPORTS

Mr. Schulman stated that he along with Ms. Eliot and Mr. Cunningham attended the Veterans Day celebrations. Mr. Schulman reported on attending recent meetings regarding 134 Main Street. Mr. Dillon noted that he was met with various staff members to update the Board of Selectmen financial policies.

MINUTES

Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the Executive Session minutes of September 26, 2011. Mr. Schulman seconded the motion. Motion unanimously carried. [Document 3-Draft Minutes 9-26-11]

Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the Executive Session minutes of October 6, 2011 and to release the open session portion of the minutes. Mr. Degen seconded the motion. Motion unanimously carried. [Document 4-Draft Minutes 10-6-2011]

Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the regular session minutes of October 17, 2011. Mr. Degen seconded the motion. Motion unanimously carried. [Document 5-Draft Minutes 10-17-11]

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Schulman moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:40pm. Mr. Degen seconded the motion. Board of Health meeting adjourned at 10:10pm.

Approved: _____
Peter Cunningham, Clerk

_____ respectfully submitted,
Patrice Garvin
Executive Assistant to the Town Manager

Date Approved: 12-5-11