

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES SEPTEMBER, 9 2013
APPROVED**

Present: Peter S. Cunningham, Chairman; Joshua A. Degen, Vice Chairman; Anna Eliot, Clerk; Stuart M. Schulman; John G. Petropoulos

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

Mr. Cunningham called the meeting to order at 7:00p.m.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad explained that the Town Treasurer/Collector Michael Harnett was requesting that the Board of Selectmen adopt MGL Chapter 60, sec 3A which allows for voluntary E-billing of tax bills. This is a rapidly growing concept which was approved by the State Legislature in the Acts of 2012. Specifically, Chapter 60, Sec 3A, Paragraph (b) states that "the collector may issue the bill or notice required in Section 3 in electronic form, provided that the electronic bill or notice meets the standards set forth in subsection (a). An electronic bill or notice shall be under voluntary programs established by the Collector with the approval of the Board of Selectmen or Mayor, as the case may be. No political subdivision shall require a taxpayer to take part in an electronic billing system or program." This is a completely voluntary program and Mr. Harnett believes is a very natural progression from the existing and growing taxpayer on-line payer base. Mr. Degen asked if there was any other language. Mr. Haddad replied that they were voting on this particular wording. Mr. Schulman asked if this effected people that ESCROW their taxes. Mr. Haddad stated that it had no impact on residents who put taxes into ESCROW.

Mr. Degen moved that the Board adopt MGL Chapter 60, Section 3A. Mr. Schulman seconded the motion. Motion unanimously carried.

2. Mr. Haddad stated that he has appointed Stephanie St. Germain to the position of Activities Coordinator for the Council on Aging. [Document 1-Resume St. Germain] She will be replacing Bethany Lovelace who recently accepted the position of Council on Aging Director for the Town of Templeton. This is a union position classified as Grade 4 in the SEIU, Local 888 Union Agreement. Ms. St. Germain will work 26 hours per week and be paid \$17.25 an hour.

Mr. Schulman moved to ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Stephanie St. Germain as the Activities Coordinator for the Council of Aging. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. Motion unanimously carried.

3. Mr. Haddad stated that the ByLaw Committee has been working with the newly appointed Personnel Board to review the Personnel Bylaw and recommend any necessary changes to address and changes. Mr. Haddad stated that the committee has completed its work and are proposing an amended Personnel Bylaw for inclusion on the 2013 Fall Town Meeting Warrant. [Document 2-Red Lined bylaw & Summary] Mr. Bouchard reviewed the Summary with the Board. Mr. Bouchard recognized the members of the ByLaw Review Committee and discussed the process of the review. Multiple meetings were held, some with the Personnel Board. The following are sections that are being amended; 48-1, 48-2, 48-9 and a new Administrative Orders section which addresses employee leave. The Personnel Board was in unanimous support of the changes to the Personnel Bylaw. Mr. Petropoulos stated that his understanding was that the Personnel Board was advisory, which he was not in support of. Mr. Haddad also explained why 48-1 was originally put in place. It was put into place at a time when the personnel Board was overseeing employees prior to the Charter change. The Personnel Board would be advisory assisting the HR Director in setting the Wage and Classification Schedule. The HR Director will receive input from the Personnel Board with the change in the bylaw. Mr. Haddad stated that the Administrative Orders makes it less cumbersome for the bylaw employees to have changes bringing them in parity with all the other employees in Town. Mr. Cunningham thanked the Bylaw Committee for their work.

TOWN MEETING STUDY COMMITTEE-UPDATE ON WORK

Bob Collins, Chairman of the Committee discussed a recent survey that had gone out in the Groton Electric Light bills. The survey is being tabulated by three Groton Dunstable students. Mr. Collins stated that there was a Public Hearing scheduled for 9/17/13 and urged residents to attend. A final report will be compiled and presented to the Board of Selectmen once completed.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

4. Mr. Haddad noted that a memorandum from the Chief of Police requesting a Warrant Article to purchase cruisers this year. [Document 3-Memo from Chief Re Cruisers] Mr. Haddad stated that with the recent accident the request has been to purchase one vehicle and not two. Ms. Eliot requested more information on this article.
5. Mr. Haddad presented the Board with a draft of the Fall Town Meeting Warrant. Mr. Haddad explained that there are 23 articles. Mr. Haddad requested that the Board open the Town Meeting Warrant and add an article relating to the septic system at Squannacook Hall, and to then immediately close.

Ms. Eliot moved to open the Town Meeting Warrant. Mr. Schulman seconded the motion. Warrant Open.

Ms. Eliot moved to add a Town meeting Article to the Warrant regarding the Septic System at Squannacook Hall. Mr. Petropoulos seconded the motion. Article added.

Ms. Eliot moved to close the Town Meeting Warrant. Mr. Schulman seconded the motion. Warrant Closed.

Mr. Haddad noted Zoning changes would be on the warrant. Ms. Collette stated that the Planning Board is meeting and holding public hearings on their articles. Ms. Eliot was concerned with Article 14 and the amount of work it places on business if they want to enlarge. Mr. Cunningham stated that this type of issue can be taken up at the Public Hearing. Mr. Haddad discussed placeholders and the upcoming schedule for Public Hearings. A draft of the warrant will be placed online. Mr. Petropoulos updated the Board on the Lost Lake Sewer and that it was not ready for this Town Meeting.

6. Mr. Haddad stated that the Sargisson Beach Working Group and Conservation Commissions have finalized the proposed Charge of the Sargisson Beach Committee. [Document 4-Charge SBC] The membership will be 5-7 members. Mr. Davis did not want to set a number until he saw the interest generated. Ms. Eliot was concerned that the charge was not consistent with the Conservation Commission. Mr. Davis stated that he had discussed the charge with the Conservation Commission and that there are funds that exist to be utilized. Also a specific gift fund is in place for the beach. Ms. Eliot asked why the Conservation Commission did not appoint this Committee instead of the Selectmen. Mr. Davis stated that any application to the CPC would be applied to by the SBC. Mr. Petropoulos was very complimentary of the Charge.

Mr. Degen moved to adopt the charge for the Sargisson Beach Committee, with 7 members. Mr. Schulman seconded the motion. Motion unanimously carried.

7. Mr. Haddad stated that it was with some sadness and much excitement that he announced Patrice Garvin has been offered the job as Shirley Town Administrator pending successful negotiations. Mr. Haddad stated that it was important to fill the vacancy. Mr. Haddad stated it was his intention to promote from within (as he has for several other key positions in Town Hall). Mr. Haddad wanted to discuss with the Board promoting Dawn Dunbar to the position of Executive Assistant to the Town Manager. Bud Robertson, Chairman of the Personnel Board took issue with not posting the job. Mr. Haddad stated that he is entering his busiest time and that he would not have time to train a new person and that Ms. Dunbar was the obvious choice. Mr. Robertson stated that it was following Best Business Practices to post the position.

At this point Ms. Garvin needed to leave the meeting and Michelle Collette continued taking the minutes.

Mr. Haddad informed the Board that Conservation Administrator Barbara Ganem submitted her retirement notification as of November 15, 2013. He said the vacancy has been posted in house as required in the SEIU 888 Town Hall Library Contract and will be advertised next week. He said he spoke with Conservation Commission Chairman Peter Morrison about representatives from the Commission on the Search Committee.

Mr. Morrison recommended Craig Auman and Rena Swezey. The Search Committee will consist of Town Manager Mark Haddad, Land use Director Michelle Collette, Human Resources Director Suzanne Loverin, Conservation Commission Members Craig Auman and Rena Swezey, and a representative from the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Schulman volunteered to serve on the Search Committee, and the Selectmen agreed.

OTHER BUSINESS

Groton resident Rule Loving stated his concerns regarding the Town Meeting warrant that is mailed to all postal patrons two weeks before Town Meeting. He said a second packet is available at Town Meeting that differs than the warrant mailed to voters. He stated that the warrant received in the mail should be complete with all funding sources and supporting information so there would be no need for a second document.

Mr. Haddad said the warrant articles are general and have flexibility. The motions made on the floor of Town Meeting are specific and contain the exact amount of the appropriation and source of funding based upon the most up-to-date information.

Mr. Cunningham suggested putting the funding source in the summary of the article in the warrant. Mr. Degen said there is new information from public hearings that may occur after the warrant is mailed to voters. Mr. Schulman suggested that Mr. Loving visit the Groton Dunstable Middle School cafeteria prior to Town Meeting to observe how many Boards and Committees are meeting to discuss last minute information an hour before the Town Meeting is convened.

Mr. Loving said this is not the best way to make decisions. All documents should be submitted when the warrant is closed. The voters should have more time to consider the facts.

Mr. Cunningham said the Selectmen opened the warrant for the October 21, 2013 Town Meeting on July 1, 2013 and closed it on August 29, 2013. Public hearings and deliberations will continue up to the Town Meeting. He suggested that Mr. Loving make his comments to the Town Meeting Study Committee at the public hearing on September 17, 2013.

Mr. Loving said the town must have a sense of change in order to improve the process. More information earlier would improve the process. Time is a cherished possession. The change must be made at the Board of Selectmen level. Mr. Cunningham said there have been many changes and improvements to the process over the years. Open Town Meeting is not as neat and concise as the private sector. It is a democratic process. Mr. Degen said there are meetings with department heads and legally required public hearings that must be held. Town Meeting voters will attend informed, not informed, or not attend at all.

Mr. Schulman said the articles that take the longest at Town meeting are sometimes the articles that have had the most information in advance. He urged Mr. Loving to attend the Town Meeting Study Committee's public hearing on ways to improve Town Meeting.

LIAISON REPORTS

Ms. Eliot said she attend the open house at the Lost Lake Fire Station sponsored by the Fire and Police Departments on Saturday, September 7, 2013.

Mr. Schulman said he attend the opening at 134 Main Street, also on Saturday, September 7, 2013. Mr. Cunningham gave credit Bob France and Senate Construction for investing and working on the project. Ms. Eliot said the Town's Affordable Housing Trust also invested in the project.

Mr. Degen encouraged people to attend the Planning Board's public hearing on the Groton Inn, 128 Main Street, Concept Plan on September 19, 2013.

MINUTES

Ms. Eliot moved to approve the minutes of August 26, 2013. Mr. Degen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. [Document 4-Draft Minutes 8-26-13]

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Degen moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 PM. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Approved: _____
Anna Eliot, Clerk

_____ respectfully submitted,
Patrice Garvin, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 9-23-13