

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES NOVEMBER 4, 2013
APPROVED**

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

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

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

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad said that Barbara Ganem would be retiring with her last day being November 15th. He said that they had received 40 applicants for the position and a search committee made up of himself, Suzanne Loverin, Michelle Collette, Stuart Schulman, Craig Auman, and Rena Swezey interviewed 6 applicants, all of which were extremely qualified. He said that the search committee sent 2 finalists to the Conservation Commission for their recommendation. Mr. Haddad said the Conservation Commission unanimously recommended to him that Takashi Tada was their choice to serve as the new Conservation Administrator. Mr. Haddad said that if the Board ratified the appointment, Mr. Tada would start on November 18th. Mr. Schulman said that all candidates had potential but thought a good choice was made. Mr. Degen asked Mr. Tada if he were hired, what would his recommendation be to the Board if a piece of wet and swampy land surrounded by land protected under the Wetlands Protection Act were to become available. Mr. Tada said that the intent on purchasing the land would be important, that he would need to look at similar land purchases and he would need to look at whether or not it would be worth it to the town. He said that he believed strongly in land protection but would need additional information. Mr. Cunningham said that there was a delicate balance in being a Conservation Administrator. He said that there was the admin end as well as the philosophical end. He asked Mr. Tada how he would view himself in filling that role. Mr. Tada said that he was looking forward to serving the town and working with Mark Haddad, Michelle Collette and the Conservation Commission. He said that he didn't have an agenda and wasn't looking to put a stamp on anything adding that it was not his intention to be a philosophical force. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to ratify the appointment.

Mr. Schulman moved to ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Takashi Tada as Conservation Administrator.

Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. It was added that the appointment would be effective November 18th as a grade 10 union position in the SEIU Local 888. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Mr. Haddad said that he met with all the department heads in regard to the FY15 budget and provided the Board with a copy of the budget instruction letter given to the department heads. He said that item #3 on page 2 of the memo asked the department heads to look at all their part-time positions based on discussion at this past fall town meeting and discussions with the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Haddad said that his first 4 budgets as Town Manager in Groton were maintenance budgets with the last 2 being more of a solid look at where things could be improved. Mr. Haddad said that each department head was asked to look at their budgets and determine if things should stay the same or if services could be improved and outline the costs associated with that. Mr. Petropoulos asked about the software that was purchased and whether it had increased efficiency as promised. He asked how they could measure efficiency. Mr. Haddad said that because of the mini building boom the staff was busier adding that they would need to look at all of it.
3. Mr. Haddad said he had edited the Personnel Bylaws making them consistent with the Supervisor's Union contract. He said that the Bylaw and Personnel Board had both signed off on the changes. Mr. Schulman said that consistency with the unions was important. Mr. Degen asked about the holiday policy and how they were dealing with Monday holidays. Mr. Haddad said that if a holiday fell on a Monday, the employee was paid for 11 hours of work. He added there were times hours were extended on a Friday to make up for time. Mr. Degen said that he had a problem with the policy and wanted to look at it further. He was prepared to approve all other policy updates with the exception of the holiday policy. addad

Mr. Cunningham said that he would entertain a motion to adopt the updated Policy 13-01 titled

Vacation Entitlement Policy. Mr. Schulman made the motion. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Cunningham said that he would entertain a motion to adopt the updated Policy 13-02 titled Holiday Policy.

Ms. Eliot made the motion. Mr. Schulman seconded the motion.

Mr. Petropoulos asked if Mr. Degen could be given additional time to look at the policy. Mr. Schulman said that there was a Monday holiday the following week. Mr. Haddad said that they wouldn't be able to pay the 3 bylaw employees if they didn't act on this. Discussion ensued.

The motion carried 4-1 with Mr. Degen voting against the motion.

Mr. Schulman moved to adopt the updated Policy 13-03 titled Sick Leave Policy. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Schulman moved to adopt the updated Policy 13-04 titled Longevity Policy. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Schulman moved to adopt the updated Policy 13-05 titled Personal Leave Policy. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Mr. Haddad said that town meeting needed to approve 4 articles relative to Squannacook Hall. He said that because the re-zoning article did not pass, the remaining 3 articles were postponed indefinitely. Mr. Haddad said that Halsey Platt wanted to take a couple of weeks to think consider his options. Mr. Haddad said that in the meantime he wanted to notify the building inspector of plans to begin the process of demolishing the building, which under the demo-delay bylaw; the Historical Commission had 6 months to issue a decision. Mr. Haddad said that he had also been approached by Jon Ott of the Historical Society asking if some of Squannacook Hall could be made available to them to store some items during the rehabilitation of the Boutwell House. Mr. Cunningham asked if the Historical Society would require Squannacook Hall to be heated. Mr. Ott said that they would need the building to have heat, water and security. Mr. Cunningham asked where the items would eventually end up. Mr. Ott said that they would be taking an inventory and seeing where in the Boutwell House the items would go. He asked for 6 months to a year to go through everything and move it back. Mr. Degen asked if they would be willing to sign a waiver. Mr. Ott said they would have too. Mr. Haddad said that the Historical Society would also have to have an insurance rider put on the building.

Mr. Schulman moved to allow the Historical Society use of Squannacook Hall as a storage facility for 6 months. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to give it a date certain of April 28, 2014, the date of the Spring Town Meeting. Mr. Schulman modified his original motion to say "move to allow the Historical Society use of Squannacook Hall as a storage facility until April 28, 2014. The Historical Society would also be required to insure the building for their collection." Ms. Eliot seconded the modified motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Haddad said that the demo delay process did not preclude them from doing anything else during the 6 month timeframe. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to authorize him to start the process to enact a demo permit from the building inspector. Connie Sartini asked if the Board would consider waiting until after the Spring Town Meeting. Mr. Cunningham said that beginning this process now allowed them to "shake the tree" and have conversations, with the church for example, in the meantime. Mr. Degen said that town meeting will determine the future of buildings like Squannacook Hall.

Mr. Schulman moved to authorize the Town Manager to institute the procedures to demolish Squannacook Hall. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Mr. Haddad said that the Groton Dunstable Regional School Committee has asked to have a member of the Board of Selectmen serve as a liaison on the Superintendent Screening Committee. Mr. Cunningham said that Ms. Eliot was the Board's liaison. Ms. Eliot said that she would like to sit on the Committee.
Mr. Degen moved to nominate Ms. Eliot to serve as the Board's liaison on the Superintendent Screening Committee. Mr. Schulman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

ROCKY HILL CONSERVATION AREA FIRE

Mr. Haddad said that the cost to fight the brush fire was approximately \$40,000 with Groton's expenses around \$6,100. He said that the last time there was a fire in this area, it cost the Town \$20,000. Mr. Cunningham said that the property was owned by Mass Audubon adding that the Town was the grantee of a conservation restriction on the property. He said that access to the site of the fire was a problem for fire apparatus adding that Tom Delaney had done a lot to help with access issues during the fire. He also thought that Mass Audubon had been negligent in their oversight of the conservation area. Mr. Cunningham suggested that they have a meeting with the Conservation Commission and Mass Audubon. Mr. Degen said that he agreed with Mr. Cunningham adding that he thought they needed to create a partnership with Mass Audubon, biker, hikers, etc. to help monitor the land. He said that the whole purpose of setting the land aside was to protect endangered species. Ms. Eliot agreed that public access was a form of self-policing. Chief Joe Bosselait said that both fires, this recent one and the one 2 years ago were both started because of campsites. He said that the Chief Forest Warden was willing to meet with the Town to put a plan together. Mr. Cunningham said that it would be helpful to have the Forest Warden at the table but at the end of the day it came down to stewardship.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Petropoulos said that the Lost Lake Sewer Advisory Committee had received the report from CEI and would be reviewing the testing results that Thursday, November 14th at 6:30pm.

MINUTES

Ms. Eliot moved to approve the Executive Session minutes of September 30, 2013 and not release. Mr. Degen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Degen moved to approve the Executive Session #2 minutes of September 30, 2013 and release them. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Eliot moved to approve the Regular Session minutes of September 30, 2013. Mr. Degen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Eliot moved to approve the Regular Session minutes of October 7, 2013. Mr. Schulman seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Degen abstaining.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Degen moved to adjourn. Mr. Schulman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Approved: _____
Anna Eliot, Clerk

respectfully submitted,
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 11/18/13