

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES DECEMBER 11, 2013
APPROVED**

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

Absent: Peter Cunningham, Chairman

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

Mr. Degen called the meeting to order 8:33 a.m.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad said that he wanted to take his report out of sequence a little by asking the Fire Chief to speak about the EMT's response to an incident at Lawrence Academy in October. Chief Bosselait said that on October 9, 2013 the Fire Department responded to an unresponsive male at Lawrence Academy where CPR was performed on the teenager. He said that thanks to the quick action of Capt. Susan Daly, Lt. Tyler Shute and EMT Frank Mastrangelo the teenager's life was saved and was proud to report that the teenager had fully recovered and had no apparent side effects from the medical call.

Head of School, Dan Scheibe, said that he too wanted to thank all those who responded to the medical call. He said that student was from Hong Kong, that he was able to return home and would be returning to school in January. Mr. Degen said that all of Groton's Fire Fighters and EMT's had worked hard and done well servicing the town and all the schools located in town.

Mr. Haddad said that he had received a letter from Groton School which he read into record. *(letter attached)*

Groton School was donating \$25,000 towards outfitting the training room at the new fire station. Mr. Degen commented on how much this donation was greatly appreciated. Mr. Petropoulos thanked Chief Bosselait and Lawrence Academy for bringing this recognition to their attention adding that the department never ceased to amaze him adding how important they were to the community. Mr. Schulman said that it was hard for him to comprehend their dedication due to the nature of their duties. Ms. Eliot said that it was humbling to be in the presence of those that perform these duties.

CONTINUATION OF THE TAX CLASSIFICATION HEARING

Mr. Haddad said that the hearing originally scheduled for Monday, November 18, 2013, had been opened and continued until Monday, December 9, 2013 at 7:15pm and continued a second time until this morning, Wednesday, December 11 at 8:45am. He said that this had been the most difficult year for the Assessors' Office this far and thanked Rena Swezey for all her hard work.

Mr. Schulman moved to reopen the tax classification hearing. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Swezey said that the Board of Assessors was recommending a single tax rate. 96% of the town was residential properties with 4% of the town being commercial properties. She added that the excess levy capacity was \$611,038.60. Mr. Haddad said that the tax rate would be set at \$17.38 with the average tax bill being raised by \$152.

Mr. Schulman moved to close the public hearing. Mr. Petropoulos seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Eliot moved to adopt a single tax rate of \$17.38 for FY14. Mr. Petropoulos seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT CONTINUED

2. Mr. Haddad said that he was once again very pleased with his department heads and the budget process this year. He said that they were able to maintain services, re-open Sargisson Beach and add an additional employee. He said that they also addressed all part-time positions. Mr. Haddad said that the town liked to keep \$500,000 in excess levy adding that the Finance Team kept that in mind when reviewing the budgets. He said that the budget

was in good shape this year and couldn't thank the departments enough. Mr. Haddad said that he would make his formal presentation to the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee on January 6, 2014.

Mr. Petropoulos asked why a surplus was kept. Mr. Haddad said that a surplus was kept so that there could be funds available, depending on the need, at any given year. Mr. Degen said that having an unexpended tax capacity allowed them wiggle room should something come up. Mr. Haddad added that the town could use that money to help the schools or public safety, as examples, should an emergency arise. Mr. Degen said that he sat in on the Finance Team meetings and thought that a lot of consideration was given to what gets cut, added, level funded, etc.

3. Mr. Bouchard said that he wanted to discuss issues related to using Prescott School as the polling location for precincts two and three. He said that they choose to move out of the Middle School for security and scheduling reasons. He said that Prescott School was an okay location but had its issues. He said that parking was an issue as well as training voters to go to a new location. Mr. Bouchard said that there were three elections in 2014. Prescott could not handle the expected 60% turnout for the gubernatorial election. Mr. Bouchard asked if a few people could be appointed to help determine a permanent polling location for precincts two and three. Mr. Degen said that he was not in favor of moving the elections back to the school due to the safety concern for the children. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to allow the Town Clerk and himself to come up with the make-up of the committee and bring it back before the Board at their meeting on December 23rd.

ANNUAL LICENSE RENEWALS

Mr. Haddad read into record a memo from Ms. Dunbar requesting that the Board approve the listed Alcoholic Beverages, Common Victualler (CVL) and Class II licenses to expire on December 31, 2014. *(memo attached)*

Mr. Schulman moved to approve the licenses as presented with the condition that the expiration year on the memo be changed from 2013 to 2014. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion asking that Omahi Realty be voted on separately. Mr. Degen asked for AL Prime to also be voted on separately. Mr. Schulman amended his original motion to exclude Omahi Realty (871 Boston Road) and AL Prime (619 Boston Road) to be voted on separately. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Schulman moved to approve the Alcoholic Beverage license and CVL license for Omahi Realty located 871 Boston Road. Mr. Petropoulos seconded the motion. Ms. Eliot said that because she didn't vote in favor of the issuance of the original license she could not vote in favor of the renewal. Mr. Degen, Mr. Schulman and Mr. Petropoulos voted in favor of the motion. Ms. Eliot voted against the motion. The motion carried in favor 3-1.

Mr. Schulman moved to approve the CVL license for AL Prime located at 619 Boston Road. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. Mr. Degen said that because he did not approve the issuance of the original license, he was going to stay consistent and not approve the renewal license. Mr. Schulman, Mr. Petropoulos, and Ms. Eliot voted in favor of the motion. Mr. Degen voted against the motion. The motion carried in favor 3-1.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Arleen Martino of the LaRouche Political Action Committee introduced herself and asked the Board to write a letter to Congresswoman Tsongas asking her to sign on to the House Bill to re-enact the Glass-Steagall Act. Mr. Degen asked the Board if they wanted to take some time review the material provided and discuss it at a later meeting. Mr. Petropoulos said that he didn't feel it was his role as a Selectman to ask the Board as a whole to act on this. Mr. Schulman agreed adding that he didn't feel this had any direct bearing on Groton. Ms. Eliot and Mr. Degen also agreed.

LIASION REPORTS

Ms. Eliot said that the Superintendent Search Committee had interviewed two applicants so far. The 14 member panel identified four individuals to interview. A recommendation will be made to the School Committee after all interviews are done.

Mr. Petropoulos said that there would be a Lost Lake Sewer Advisory Committee meeting on Thursday, December 19th at 6:30pm in the town hall.

MINUTES

Ms. Eliot moved to approve the minutes of their Regular Session meeting of November 18, 2013. Me. Schulman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Eliot moved to approve the minutes of their Executive Session meeting of November 18, 2013 and not release them. Mr. Schulman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Schulman moved to adjourn. Mr. Petropoulos seconded the motion. Roll Call: Degen-aye, Schulman-aye, Petropoulos-aye, Eliot-aye.

Approved: _____
Anna Eliot, Clerk

respectfully *submitted*,
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 1/13/14