

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING  
MINUTES MARCH 31, 2014  
APPROVED**

**Present:** Peter S. Cunningham, Chairman; Josh A. 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 7:00pm.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Cunningham said that there would be a special election held on April 1, 2014, from 7am-8pm and encouraged residents to vote on the Fire Station debt exclusion. Precinct 1 would vote at the Senior Center and Precincts 2 & 3 would vote at the Prescott School.

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

1. Mr. Haddad said that it had been a while since he updated the Board on the Fire Station project. He said that permanent power had been completed, the elevator installation had begun and 90% of the doors and hardware had been installed. He said that 50% of the radiant flooring in the garage bays was done, the trenches were done, and the concrete pour was scheduled for the following week. The installation of the flooring had been scheduled for 4/15/14 and they were on track for a mid-May completion date. Mr. Haddad said that they would be ready to start punch list work on June 1st and anticipated occupancy on July 1st.
2. Mr. Haddad said that the School Department had done a great job putting together their FY16 and FY17 projections in the format they did. He said that he was concerned about their operating projections and had taken their projections and placed them in his five year projection spreadsheet. He said that he was glad they were able to do this so that the Town would be able to plan accordingly. Mr. Degen said that he appreciated the numbers adding that they were baseline expenditures. Mr. Degen said that if they planned to restore any programs that had been cut, it may be challenging. He said that the School Committee had already changed their policies to allow for Groton and Dunstable Board of Selectmen and Finance Committees to sit down with them in the fall to look at the FY16 budget. Mr. Schulman agreed that they were baseline numbers adding that the 2016 budget showed a 2.9% increase. Mr. Haddad said that their numbers were conservative like his were. Mr. Robertson said that it was a great step forward. He said that the health insurance numbers might not be real world numbers adding that even though they were projecting increases in FY16 and 17 of 1.7% and 2.1%, the Town's projected increases were 2.9% and 2.57%. Mr. Haddad said that it was all predicated on the debt exclusion the following night and whether or not it passed.
3. Mr. Haddad said that he would like to appoint George Faircloth as an Election Worker, Ray Tennant as Country Club Pro Shop Staff and Jim Hanlon as Country Club Pro Shop Staff. He respectfully requested that the Board ratify the appointments.  
*Mr. Schulman moved that the Board ratify the appointments as made by the Town Manager as follows: George Faircloth – Election Worker, Ray Tennant – Country Club pro Shop Staff, Jim Hanlon – Country Club Pro Shop Staff. Mr. Petropoulos seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*
4. Mr. Haddad said that he was very excited about things going on at the Country Club. He said that they had contracted out thru a competitive RFP with Luke and Katie Kenney, owners of Blackbird Café to lease and run the Tavern at Groton Country Club. He said that they had also successfully hired a new golf professional, Jim Tennant.
5. Mr. Haddad said that he had received in the mail that afternoon a letter from the School Committee Chair, Alison Manugian, notifying the Board of their intent to vacate the Prescott School that summer. Mr.

Haddad read the letter into record. He said that the main reason for the school committee wanting to move was to reduce their budget costs. Mr. Haddad said that he would put a discussion on their agenda for the following week.

#### **DIVISION OF LOCAL SERVICES – TOWN'S FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REPORT**

Mr. Cunningham said that the report was a follow-up to the original review that was done in 2004. He said that he thought it was a positive review and focused on how the Town had addressed goals specified in the 2004 report. Mr. Cunningham said that it was available on the Town's website for those that wanted to review the report. Mr. Haddad said that he had received a call from Kevin Kelly of the Light Department and Mark Gerath, Library Trustee, who said it was suggested by the report that elected Boards and personnel report to the Town Manager. Mr. Haddad said that GELD and the Library were separate entities adding that the Charter also had them listed that way, and that he did not want to take them over. Mr. Schulman said that he interpreted the report as meaning elected officials such as Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Board, etc.

Mr. Petropoulos said that he read in the Charter that the Department of Finance will administer reports... not less than one financial quarter. Mr. Petropoulos said it had been challenging to obtain the report he was looking for adding that Mr. Haddad felt it was unnecessary to do it even though the Charter called for it. Mr. Petropoulos said that he contacted the gentleman from DLS that wrote the financial management report and he said that if it was in the Charter, it should be done. Mr. Haddad said that he disagreed with Mr. Petropoulos adding that the Board received these reports monthly. Mr. Haddad also said that he took exception to Mr. Petropoulos's comment that it had been challenging adding that this was the first time a request had been made. Mr. Petropoulos said he received from the gentleman at DLS who wrote the financial management report a quarterly budget projection document template. He said that they had not been receiving periodic reports like the example. He proposed that the Board receive a more finalized report quarterly. Mr. Cunningham said that they had received the report and will continue to see them. Mr. Haddad said that the Board received them monthly and were always available to them if they asked to see a report. Mr. Schulman agreed adding that the reports were always available. Mr. Petropoulos said that the report was hard to understand. Mr. Cunningham said that the items were summarized at the bottom of each department and percentages were there adding that he thought Mr. Petropoulos was asking for additional busy work when everything they needed was right there. Mr. Degen said that under Section 5.3 of the Charter as worded they hadn't seen the full accounting once a quarter. Mr. Degen suggested that maybe the Board receive what Ms. Dufresne is generating monthly be done on a quarterly basis and be part of their packet. Ms. Dufresne said that this report was generated monthly and also given to all departments to check against their budgets. Mr. Haddad said that he sits down with the Finance Team monthly to review the budgets and like Ms. Dufresne said, the reports are given to the department heads also. He said that they should not be compared to the school department adding that they had always had a balanced budget. Ms. Dufresne said that they are given every line item on the report because that's how the budget is voted on at Town Meeting. She said that if they rolled it up they would miss something. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to look at page 30 of the warrant. He said that each line item was a line item vote and what the report from the Accountants' office shows. He said that roll-ups and executive summaries tell you nothing adding that if he overspent a single line item by one dollar that would be illegal. Mr. Petropoulos asked if they could see the report in an excel spreadsheet. Ms. Dufresne said that they could but it wasn't pretty. Mr. Petropoulos asked if it could show the percentage used. Ms. Dufresne said that the percentages were already there.

Mr. Lindermere asked if the BOS were accountable for finances and spending and the overall financial health of the Town. Mr. Cunningham said that it was ultimately the CFO of the Town but at the end of the day "yes." Mr. Lindermere said that the chapter of the Charter read by Mr. Petropoulos said that a quarterly financial report has to be provided and couldn't think of a company that practices stewardship without one adding that he was surprised it wasn't happening. Mr. Schulman said that the discussion was maddening adding that that it was happening, they were getting monthly reports. Mr. Degen said that anytime he has had a question, Ms. Dufresne and Mr. Haddad have answered them adding that maybe the reports could be send out electronically. Mr. Petropoulos said that he

thought they should follow the template sent by DLS and adopt it as a best practice. Mr. Haddad said that he would get the Board a quarterly revenue report adding that it would create extra work as it was something they already received monthly. Mr. Petropoulos asked Mr. Haddad to take a look at the DLS report template and use it as a model. Mr. Cunningham asked if the gentleman at DLS was aware of the reports they were receiving monthly already. Mr. Cunningham read the conclusion of the report which stated that Groton stands out in terms of changes that have been made since the original report was done in 2004.

### **REVIEW WARRANT FOR 2014 SPRING TOWN MEETING**

Mr. Haddad said that he provided the Board with a copy of the draft warrant and article assignments. He said that articles 30-35 would be part of the consent agenda that the Town Moderator talked about at their last meeting. He added that the Town Moderator had drafted an excellent explanation that is located in the warrant. He said that we worked with the Town Moderator and Town Clerk to place items in the consent agenda that were non-controversial.

The Board of Selectmen's positions on the 2014 Spring Town Meeting warrant articles were as follows:

Article 1 – No position taken

Article 2 – Recommended unanimously

Article 3 – Recommended unanimously

Article 4 – Recommended unanimously

Article 5 – Mr. Haddad said that the article was based on the assumption that the debt exclusion passes on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Degen said that he would support contingent on the debt vote passing. – Recommended unanimously

Article 6 – Ambulance – Recommended unanimously

Forestry Unit Conversion – Recommended unanimously

Pick-Up Truck – Recommended unanimously

IT Infrastructure – Recommended unanimously

Building Security – Recommended unanimously

Roof Top Units – Recommended unanimously

Police Cruisers – Recommended unanimously

Rough Mower – Recommended unanimously

Golf Carts – Recommended unanimously

Boom Sprayer – Recommended unanimously

Article 7 – Mr. Haddad suggested that the Board hold off on taking a position until their next meeting.

Article 8 – Recommended unanimously

Article 9 – Mr. Orcutt said that this was similar to the request made by the Water Commission. They needed to transfer money to meet the budget. Mr. Schulman said that he would like to see more information. –

Recommended unanimously

Article 10 – Recommendation deferred until Town Meeting

Article 11 – Mr. Degen said that he didn't support this article adding that he didn't believe in taxing twice. Mr.

Haddad said that they were mandated to do this adding that the Town had to comply with Rules and Regulations as set forth by the Commonwealth. Mr. Petropoulos said that he would also vote against this article. – Recommended by Majority vote (3 in favor, 2 against)

Article 12 – Recommended unanimously

Article 13 – Recommended unanimously

Article 14 – Recommended unanimously

Article 15 – Recommended unanimously

Article 16 – Recommended unanimously

Article 17 – Recommended unanimously

Article 18 – Mr. Haddad suggested waiting until their next meeting to take a position on this article.

Article 19 – Recommended unanimously

Article 20 – Recommended unanimously

Article 21 – Mr. Haddad asked the Board to hold off on taking a position until their next meeting. Ms. Eliot said that they had met with Mr. Yanchenko with regard to his offer to purchase the Prescott School. She said that they would be meeting with him again that Thursday. Mr. Cunningham asked if Mr. Yanchenko was open to the idea of allowing for community uses. Ms. Eliot said “yes.” Mr. Degen said that there were some issues that would need to be resolved before Town Meeting. Mr. Haddad said that he had been approached by a local broker wondering why we didn’t reach out to a broker to help market the building. Mr. Haddad said that they received 5 really good proposals for the Fire Station. He said that as far as Prescott went, they had gone through the RFP process a couple of times and didn’t think a broker would have helped. Mr. Petropoulos said that he felt like they could have done a better job marketing than they had. He said that he would have a hard time supporting this article. Mr. Degen said that at the end of the day it was up to the Town Meeting voters to decide. Ms. Eliot said she thought it was fairly well marketed the last time as a hotel. She said since then, there had been a lot of exposure adding that realtors were out there and there still was not a lot of interest. Mr. Cunningham said he didn’t think they were ready to take positions. Mr. Schulman said that professional marketing had been done on the Sacred Heart Church and that was still sitting there. He said that he wasn’t sure if he would support throwing a lot of money into marketing. Ms. Eliot said that the Fire Station was a lot easier to renovate and less money also.

Article 23 – Mr. Haddad said that they had received 5 good bids for the Fire Station. He said that he worked with a group of individuals to review the proposals and unanimously on a bid submitted by Dan McElroy of Groton. He said that Mr. McElroy offered \$100K for the building and had plans to convert the second floor into a residence and the first floor into a bike shop, vegetable stand have public restrooms available for those using the rail trail. Mr. Haddad said that the committee felt the use would complement the rail trail and Station Ave. Mr. Petropoulos said that he needed to abstain as someone contributed to his election campaign. Mr. Cunningham said that he supported this moving forward. Mr. Degen said that his vote was contingent on the Purchase and Sale.

Articles 24-27 – Recommended unanimously

Article 28 – Mr. Haddad said that the HDC met the week prior and may be holding off on this article. He asked the Board to hold off on taking a position.

Article 29 – Mr. Haddad said that the chairmen of the Sewer Commission and Board of Health were working out the details. Mr. Orcutt said that the Sewer Commissioners were unanimous in support of the changes. Mr. Jason Weber said that the Board of Health voted the night before to support the changes. Mr. Orcutt said that the changes made said that the administrative work would be done by the Sewer Department but the enforcement would be handled by the Board of Health. – Recommended unanimously

Articles 30-35 – Recommended unanimously

## **MINUTES**

*Ms. Eliot moved to approve the Regular Meeting minutes of March 10, 2014. Mr. Schulman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

*Mr. Schulman moved to approve the Executive Session minutes of February 24, 2014 and not release. Mr. Degen said that the changes he had requested had been made. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-1-0 in favor with Mr. Petropoulos opposed.*

## **LIASION REPORTS**

Ms. Eliot said that she attended the Boston Strong fundraiser for Rachel Mead of the Police Department who was running in the Boston Marathon in April.

Mr. Petropoulos said that the Blood Farm Fundraiser was a success and raised approximately \$30K so far for the employees of Blood Farm.

*Mr. Degen moved to adjourn at 8:55pm. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Anna Eliot, Clerk

Date Approved: 4/22/14

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respectfully *submitted*,  
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant