

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
MINUTES SEPTEMBER 29, 2014
APPROVED**

Present: Joshua A. Degen, Chair; Anna Eliot, Vice Chair; Stuart M. Schulman, Clerk; Peter S. Cunningham, Member; John G. Petropoulos, Member (via Skype)

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

Mr. Degen called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Mr. Haddad said that the purpose of meeting at 6pm was for the Board to review their goals and objectives. He said that Mr. Degen had contacted him with an additional goal he would like to have added. Mr. Haddad reviewed each goal and objective.

I.A – Review of Charter – this was all set

I.B – Review Selectmen’s Role vs. Role of Town Manager – A workshop would be scheduled

I.C – Improve Compliance with Open Meeting Law – this has been completed – next steps would be discussed at a later date.

I.D – Establish Policy for Advisory Committee’s to Provide Annual Reports – Mr. Haddad said that standing committee’s really hadn’t been given that direction. Mr. Degen said that all advisory committees to the Board would be asked to provide the Board with an update of what they have been working on. Mr. Haddad said that he would draft a policy.

I.E – Revise Committee Appointment Process – Mr. Haddad said that he would work on a draft policy and bring it back to the Board.

I.F – Continue to Improve Communications with the Public – Mr. Haddad said that a lot of people had been visiting the Town’s website and asked for further direction from the Board of what else they would like to see him do. Mr. Cunningham said that they had also added additional information to the warrant and suggested that maybe a survey be done to see what the public thinks they could do to get more information out there. Mr. Degen agreed with getting ideas from the public.

I.G – Optimize the Community’s Access to Information through the Media – Mr. Petropoulos said that he would like to see an improved media policy. Mr. Petropoulos said that he could draft it with Mr. Haddad’s help to draft something that works with the Media. Mr. Degen suggested that the Media not be asked for their input but instead they be notified that they could discuss it with the Board once it was drafted. Mr. Cunningham was unclear of the need for this adding that he would look at the policy once it was drafted.

II.A – Determine and Achieve the Highest and Best Use for Prescott and Tarbell – Mr. Haddad said this goal was self-explanatory.

II.B – Improve Safety of Downtown Traffic and Availability of Parking – Mr. Haddad said that they had already been working with the Main Street businesses to identify additional parking as well as the installation of the bump outs in front of Town Hall to improve pedestrian access. Mr. Petropoulos said that people’s opinions were good but they needed a way to measure this goal. Mr. Haddad said that he didn’t know how else to measure this. Mr. Cunningham said that he agreed with Mr. Haddad and added that maybe they could check with the Police Chief for his opinion.

II.C – Develop Strategy to Address Proposed Tennessee Gas Pipeline – Mr. Haddad said that this goal and benchmark could not be filled in until the appointed committee makes their recommendations. He asked that Board to hold off on this one until they received the recommendation from the committee.

II.D – Installation of Underground Utilities on Main Street – Mr. Haddad said that he recently had a meeting with Chris Ferris for the Groton Inn and Kevin Kelly. Mr. said that Mr. Ferris was going to be working with Mr. Kelly to see if the utilities could be placed underground for the Groton Inn.

II.E – Review Country Club Operation – Mr. Haddad said that he had a meeting the following Monday at 4pm to discuss ways to improve the golf operation. He said that he didn't believe the pool operation needed to change adding that the function hall events were also progressing.

III.A – Determine Annual Growth of Municipal Budget – Mr. Haddad said that he would like to discuss this by the 1st of November as this was when he started his budget process. Mr. Schulman said that he was unclear of the need for this adding that this was what Mr. Haddad did already. Mr. Degen said that it allowed the Board to provide Mr. Haddad with their priorities. Mr. Petropoulos said that the goal was to set a policy for setting annual growth rates and setting growth rates for the current year. Mr. Cunningham said that the growth rate would come out from the process. Mr. Degen said that he would like to see the Board set priorities and guide Mr. Haddad through setting the budget adding that he would like to see it tied to new growth. Mr. Petropoulos said that if the revenue increased by 3.5% the municipal budget shouldn't increase by more than 3.5%. Mr. Cunningham reiterated that this would all be revealed as the budget developed. He said that the Town Manager needed to report back to the Board and if there was a need to increase the budget more than revenue there would have to be a compelling reason. He didn't like the idea of trying to lock them into a specific number adding that they may not wind up there. Ms. Eliot said that she understood Mr. Petropoulos's principal but said that the needs to the schools were still an unknown. Mr. Haddad said that he was confused by the discussion. He said that his job was to present a balanced budget to the Board adding that no one was more supportive of the schools than him. He thought this was holding the municipal budget to a different standard. Mr. Degen said that he and Mr. Haddad participated in the first tri-board meeting the week prior and thought it was a productive meeting. He said that they heard preliminary numbers adding that they knew the schools would be looking for more than 2 ½% the next FY. Mr. Haddad agreed that there had been great communication with the schools adding that they would be looking for somewhere between \$451K and \$691K. Mr. Brian DiGiovanni of APEX said that they didn't want to see a fixed number as it limited the availability of money for optional expenses. Mr. Cunningham said that the school district needed to be clear in what their needs were. Mr. Degen said that he wasn't sure it would work adding that there were too many unknowns such as fuel costs, insurance, etc. Mr. Haddad said that setting different standards for the municipal budget would pit the schools against the municipal side. Mr. Schulman said that he didn't like that approach. Ms. Eliot said that they were always adjusting it.

III.B – Develop New Pilot Strategy – Mr. Haddad said that they had already started that process adding that letters were already sent out.

III.C – Develop OPEB Strategy – Mr. Haddad said that he would make a proposal to the Board in his FY16 budget.

III.D – Fully Fund Sargisson Beach – Mr. Degen said that the Sargisson Beach Committee was willing to go another year without lifeguards. Mr. Haddad said that he would propose funding in his annual budget.

IV.A – Four Corners Redevelopment – Mr. Haddad asked the Board for input.

V.A – Mr. Haddad said that they needed an annual goal from the Affordable Housing Trust.

Mr. Cunningham moved to adopt the following FY15 Goals of the Board of Selectmen – Category I, Category II, and Category III up to III.D as presented. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. Roll Call – Schulman-aye; Degen-aye; Eliot-aye; Cunningham-aye; Petropoulos-aye

Mr. Degen said that the Board had been emailed that day a possible goal whereas Board members would have to adhere to votes taken by the Board at a duly posted meeting. Mr. Degen read the goal and benchmark. Mr. Petropoulos asked if the objective was to develop the policy that night. He said that he was fine with looking at a potential policy for discussion at a future meeting. Mr. Schulman thought the wording of the goal and benchmark was fine and thought a policy could be drafted. Mr. Haddad said that he would draft a policy for the Board to review.

Mr. Schulman moved to insert the goal Adhere to the Votes of the Board into the FY15 Goals and Objectives. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. Roll Call – Schulman-aye; Degen-aye; Eliot-aye; Cunningham-aye; Petropoulos-aye

Mr. Cunningham moved to adopt V.A to include the Affordable Housing Plan as approved by DHCD. Mr. Schulman seconded the motion. Roll Call – Schulman-aye; Degen-aye; Eliot-aye; Cunningham-aye; Petropoulos-aye

Mr. Degen welcomed the public at 7:00pm and read through the agenda.

Mr. Gary Green called the meeting of the Finance Committee to order at 7:00pm.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad said that he wanted to request that the Board reconsider the mosquito control article. He said that the FY15 budget was on tract so far. He said that the FY16 and FY17 budget was causing him some concern. He said that in 6 years as the Town Manager he had the most detailed meeting he had ever had with the school department. Mr. Degen said that he agreed that he had gotten more information than he had received in 4 years. He said that a strategic plan was also being formulated. Mr. Haddad said that he strongly believed that they needed all money available and asked the Board to reconsider moving forward with the mosquito control article this fall. He said that it would be better to wait until the spring to place it on the warrant but added that meant they would have to wait until 2016 for the treatment to start.

Mr. Jason Weber called the meeting of the Board of Health to order.

Ms. Eliot said that tax payers had not received their tax bill with the increases yet. Mr. Haddad agreed adding that they would not receive them until January adding that the average tax bill was increasing \$394. Ms. Eliot added that they still had yet to feel the big hit. Mr. Degen said that the impact for FY16 would be an additional \$265K on top of the 2 ½% that is already budgeted for. He said that Mr. Haddad was trying to be fiscally responsible. Mr. Degen said that it wouldn't be right for them or the Town Manager to make the decision; it should be up to the voters. Mr. Cunningham said that because they had made the commitment to bring the article back he thought it was the right thing to do even though he would speak against it. Mr. Petropoulos said that he also thought it should be up to town meeting adding that it didn't think they should be incurring any additional obligations until they know what their priorities are in the spring. Ms. Eliot said that she voted against it last spring adding that she was taking the same position. Mr. Jason Weber said that he agreed with Mr. Cunningham. The two issues were whether to bring it back to the town meeting and if the voters wanted to have it brought back.

2. Mr. Haddad said that Mr. Petropoulos had requested that the Board consider opening the Warrant for the Fall Town Meeting to add an additional article would appropriate funding to assist the Town in its review

of the proposed Tennessee Gas Pipeline. Mr. Petropoulos said that he was asking Town Meeting to authorize them to spend \$50K on legal expenses if they should find a legal issue with the pipeline. Mr. Petropoulos said that he had a conversation with Gary Green and it made sense that funds only be administered on a unanimous vote of the Board not a 4/5s majority. He said that it was also suggested that if the Board voted in favor of spending a portion of the money, that they wait 10 days and allow the public to provide feedback. He said that there was no way one town could do this alone but if 20-30 towns set aside some money it could make a difference. Mr. Green said that frequently, residents in Town only pay attention to the Board after the Board acts on something. He added that this would give the residents an opportunity to provide feedback. Mr. Schulman said that the 12 town coalition had been meeting since this summer and sent a couple of letters to representatives, etc. He said that the idea of raising money had not been discussed by them. He said that he didn't think the idea would go to well with other towns as there were too many strings attached. Mr. Cunningham asked if funds in the legal budget could be dedicated to this should the need arise. Mr. Haddad said that nothing would prohibit them adding that they could also request a reserve fund transfer in the spring. Mr. Schulman said that he would prefer that route. Ms. Eliot asked if the Finance Committee had met on this. Mr. Green said they had not adding they would be meeting after the Board's meeting. Ms. Eliot pointed out that no one had made a recommendation that they needed legal help at this time. Mr. Cunningham agreed. Mr. Degen agreed with what was being said adding that he understood what Mr. Petropoulos was trying to do but a reserve fund transfer if needed was the better way to go. Mr. Bob Hargraves said that he hoped the Town would hold off until an appropriate time. Mr. Petropoulos said that he didn't think it was necessary at this point to open the warrant based on the discussion.

3. Mr. Haddad asked if the Board wanted to adopt a policy on the release of Executive Session minutes. Mr. Petropoulos said that the policy was well written and incorporated a lot of points. Mr. Degen said that personnel matters would not be released adding that that policy would remain in place. Mr. Petropoulos suggested having Town Counsel review the minutes prior to being released or not released. Mr. Haddad said that that was already addressed in the policy adding that Town Counsel had review the policy. Mr. Degen said that in the event something came up, Town Counsel could always review them.
4. Mr. Haddad said that the Board was in receipt of the final draft of the Warrant. He said that it would be going to the printer first thing in the morning. He said that Attorney Collins had requested that Tarbell School be removed from the Warrant adding that Mr. Lyman would like to keep his bid in place until the spring. He asked for the Board's permission to remove the articles.
Mr. Schulman moved to removed articles 13 & 14 from the warrant. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. Roll Call – Schulman-aye; Degen-aye; Eliot-aye; Cunningham-aye; Petropoulos-aye
5. Mr. Haddad said that as the Board was aware, Open Meeting Law training was conducted on September 17th. He said that several committee members could not make the training for a variety of reasons and due to an email glitch, some were not notified. He said that there were approximately 70 members that still needed to take the mandatory training. He asked the Board for direction on how they wanted to proceed. Mr. Petropoulos said that he was impressed by the number of people who came out and participated. He suggested that 3 additional airings be provided giving people ample opportunity to attend a viewing. Mr. Degen thought it was a great idea and said he would be remised if he didn't thank everyone for completing the training.

LIAISON REPORTS

Mr. Cunningham said that an RFP for a solar array had been issued and Solar City had been selected from the proposals submitted. He said that the Town Manager would enter into negotiations with Solar City and discuss the lease of town owned land. Mr. Degen asked if the lease agreement was in addition to the PILOT. Mr. Cunningham said that future discussions would be held to better understand the terms.

MINUTES

Ms. Eliot moved to approve the Regular Meeting minutes of September 8, 2014. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. Roll Call – Schulman-aye; Degen-aye; Eliot-aye; Cunningham-aye; Petropoulos-aye

Mr. Cunningham moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:04pm. Mr. Schulman seconded the motion. Roll Call – Schulman-aye; Degen-aye; Eliot-aye; Cunningham-aye; Petropoulos-aye

Approved: _____

Stuart Schulman, Clerk

respectfully *submitted*,
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 11/24/14