

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING  
MINUTES JANUARY 12, 2015  
APPROVED**

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

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

Mr. Degen called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Mr. Degen apologized for the actions of the Board over the last few weeks. He said that there had been a tremendous amount of issues over the last few months which had worn hard on the Board. He pledged to work cohesively as a Board for the Town.

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

1. Mr. Haddad said that the letter he was about to discuss was something that just arrived in the mail that day. He said that Dunstable was requesting that the Groton Selectmen join them at a meeting on January 21<sup>st</sup> to discuss the regional agreement. Mr. Haddad said that they needed to discuss it because the Board wouldn't meet again prior to that meeting occurring. Mr. Cunningham said that the last time they discussed this request it had come from the district. He added that he didn't think they had heard anything from the school committee about this. Mr. Degen said that they should do some further investigating into why they are requesting a meeting of the Boards. Mr. Schulman agreed. Mr. Haddad confirmed there had been no formal request made by the district. He agreed to follow-up with the superintendent.
2. Mr. Haddad said that he had been working closely with Selectmen Eliot on establishing more parking in the Downtown/Main Street area. He said that parking was very limited and they had developed several options that he wanted to bring to the Board's attention.
  - **Lot Next to Town Hall** - Mr. Haddad said that he had been in conversations with both Steve Webber, who owns the lot, and Dan McElroy, who purchased the Former Center Fire Station about purchasing the lot between the Town Hall and the Former Center Station. He said he would like to pursue the purchase of the lot and asked the Selectmen to allow him to enter into formal negotiations with Mr. Webber. He added that Mr. McElroy would like to work with the Town to make the improvements to the lot. Mr. Petropoulos asked what brought this all forward. Mr. Haddad said that the Planning Board came to the Board about the need for additional parking in the downtown area and about concerns around pedestrian safety along Main Street. Ms. Collette said that as part of the Master Plan, money had been spent on a traffic study and parking inventory adding that parking demands had only increased since the study was done. Mr. Degen felt as though numbers would be helpful for possible negotiations and moving forward. Ms. Eliot said there were a lot of needs that are not being addressed currently.
  - **Create Parking Behind Bank of America and Citizen's Bank** – Mr. Haddad said that Ms. Eliot, Ms. Collette, Mr. Delaney, Mr. Barringer and he had been working with representatives from Bank of America and Citizen's Bank about adding additional parking behind the two banks. He said that conversations had been very positive and they were very close to an agreement to allow the construction of public parking behind the banks. He thought it would cost somewhere between \$75-100K to construct the public parking. Ms. Eliot agreed that the meetings had gone well. Mr. Degen thought that before they placed any money articles on the warrant he look at all options and look into using some of the money from Robert Walker to construct some of this. Mr. Petropoulos said that they needed a good sense of need, cost and prioritization before they jump into a warrant article.
  - **Prescott School** – Mr. Haddad said that regardless of what happened with the Prescott School, he wanted to propose then construction of a public lot behind the School. He said he thought for \$100K they could get the lot paved and build the wetland crossing. Ms. Eliot said that the traffic studies had been done and a lot of work had been put into addressing the parking needs of the downtown area. She

said that they should pool all those reports together and not reinvent the wheel. Mr. Degen said he would like to see money go into work behind the banks in case they sell Prescott.

3. Mr. Haddad said that the Finance Committee had set the date of Saturday, January 24<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am for the Budget Hearing. He said they had invited the following departments: Police, Fire, DPW, Library, Water/Sewer and Parks. He said that a Selectmen's meeting had been posted. Mr. Haddad asked the Board if there were any issues they wanted him and his Finance Team to work on prior to the meeting. Mr. Schulman said that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the budget in detail adding that he thought Mr. Haddad had done a pretty good job in preparing the budget.
4. Mr. Degen said that he would like the Board to consider adding a new Agenda item to the weekly Selectmen's meeting setting aside time for public comment. He said that this would be in addition to any office hours Board members held. He said that he didn't think it should be any longer than 15 minutes. Mr. Schulman thought it was a good idea. Mr. Cunningham also agreed and asked if they thought it should be done at the end of their meeting. Ms. Eliot said that the School Committee does it at the beginning of their meetings. Mr. Haddad suggested adding it at 7:05pm, right before the Town Manager's report.
5. Mr. Haddad said that he had been asked by Mr. Degen to include a copy of the Board's Policies and Procedures for their review. He said that this was adopted by the Board in 2012 and drafted by Fran Dillon. He said that a periodic review was good as things had been amended. Mr. Degen suggested reviewing it during a work session. Ms. Eliot suggested that they all look at it and discuss whether or not they wanted to have a work session. Mr. Haddad said that he would add it to the January 26<sup>th</sup> agenda.
6. Mr. Haddad said that he had been working with Ms. Eliot and Mr. Cunningham along with Ms. Collette and Mr. Orcutt on the possibility of providing a sewer system to the Four Corners Business District. He said that they had met with both the business owners and a small group of residents to discuss the project and drive economic development in that area of town. He said that he and Mr. Orcutt had talked with the Commonwealth about the Inter-municipal Agreement with Ayer and about it being separate from Lost Lake. He said this would be purely betterment based with Town money only to be spent on engineering. Betterments would be assessed over 20 years with the possibility of TIF's being entertained from new businesses to make it more desirable. Ms. Eliot said the residents were pleased because they were included in the process. Mr. Haddad said that one of the corners was zoned residential so they would have to look at possibly re-zoning the property. He said the other possibility was to stub off that corner until a determination was made about how to develop that corner. Mr. Degen asked how much the preliminary engineering costs would be. Mr. Haddad said approximately \$300K. Mr. Petropoulos asked if they had a commitment from the owners; something to justify to the taxpayers the \$300K in engineering costs. Mr. Haddad said that this was needed to jumpstart economic development in the area. Mr. Degen said that one corner operates on a tight tank which was costly and one other corner would be better utilized if it had sewer. Ms. Collette said that it all would be subject to a Special Permit and it was all in the Water Resource Protection District. Mr. Petropoulos said that he couldn't imagine asking taxpayers to spend money without knowing what their return would be. Mr. Haddad said that this was all being done in order to spur economic development adding that he would like to give assurances but couldn't do that until the property owners had a chance to market their properties without knowing that sewer was going in. He said he didn't want to make any promises to Town Meeting. Ms. Eliot said there were approved plans that had not been built out. Mr. Haddad said that area of Town had languished for such a long time and needed a spur in economic development. Ms. Eliot said there was no return on Main Street sewer other than a healthier environment; that was the return. Mr. Schulman said he agreed with Mr. Petropoulos a little adding that they would get more votes with reasonable expectations.

#### **ANNUAL REVIEW PROCESS OF TOWN MANAGER**

Mr. Degen said that Town Counsel, Brain Maser had drafted a new policy based on the Board's discussion. Mr. Degen read the new policy. Mr. Degen said that the role of the Chair was to administer this policy. He said that the Chair would meet with the Town Manager to prepare a draft evaluation which would be given to the Board at a public meeting. Mr. Schulman asked about the Town Manager's Self Evaluation. Mr. Degen said that Mr. Haddad did not want to do a self-evaluation on his own adding he wanted it done in conjunction with the Chair. Mr. Schulman said he always liked seeing what employees were thinking. Mr. Haddad said that he would do it in conjunction with the Chair. He said that because that piece would become public record and it was a very public process he wanted it done in conjunction with the Chair. He added that no other employee's evaluations had to be a public document. Mr. Petropoulos said that after the self-evaluation was done, it looked as though each individual Selectman would do their piece. He asked if preliminary documents were public record. Mr. Haddad said they would have to be if part of a public meeting. Mr. Schulman said that reviews done in the corporate world are private. He said that he couldn't review under those circumstances adding that he would have trouble being candid or frank. Mr. Degen said that because they were an elected Board, it had to be public. Mr. Schulman had concerns about the summary evaluation adding that he thought it was up to the Chair's discretion to use some or all of the comments provided. Ms. Eliot said that if you had a comment you wanted added and it wasn't, it would have to come back to a public meeting for discussion.

Mr. Haddad said that the reason they were there was because one Selectman wanted negative comments added to his evaluation when they weren't. He said that he wanted to sit with the Chair to draft the review that goes to the Board adding he wanted them to consider how they would feel sitting where he was sitting. He said that he wouldn't want it to go any other way. Mr. Haddad said that he would rather have the Board review him with him being in the process. He said he was reviewed every Monday night adding he thought he was doing a great job as Town Manager. He said that he didn't want to do a self-evaluation adding that if he had to he wanted it done in conjunction with the Chair.

Mr. Degen said that in 5 out of the last 6 years the average score included as part of the summary was at a 90% plus. Mr. Petropoulos asked what the definition of a summary was. Mr. Degen said that the Charter stated that they would draft a summary which was drafted by the Chair and included comments from Board members including common themes. He said that outliers always had to be considered but may not be included. It was at the discretion of the Chair. He said that draft would be brought forward and voted on by the Board. Mr. Petropoulos asked if the summary would have 5 sections, one for each of their comments adding he preferred seeing all comments be input in each section. Ms. Eliot said the final document would be brought forward at a public meeting. She said if there were omissions it could be brought up at that time.

Mr. Haddad asked to be excused at 8:35pm.

Mr. Cunningham said that all had a responsibility to sit down with the Town Manager to review their review with him and thought they should not feel uncomfortable doing it. Mr. Petropoulos said it should be part of the policy. Mr. Schulman said that he didn't think that was necessary adding that nothing in their review should be a surprise to the Town Manager. Mr. Degen suggested using the language "encourage member to review their review with the Town Manager." Mr. Schulman also suggested that maybe the document should be brought to a public meeting. Mr. Degen said that that was the only way he could hand them out. Mr. Petropoulos said he didn't think the self-evaluation should be public record. Ms. Eliot suggested because there were so many edits being discussed that they set up a working session to discuss this further.

### **LIAISON REPORTS**

Mr. Cunningham said that the Pipeline Committee had met and although the proposed route had changed, they wanted to continue meeting maybe just not as regularly. Mr. Schulman said that although the Coalition had not yet met in January, there were still Town's affected by the route and he too was going to continue to move forward.

Ms. Eliot said that then Prescott Building Committee had met and outlined dates for future meetings. Mr. Degen said that 1 member had resigned adding that they should modify the Committee from 10 to 9 members.

*Mr. Schulman moved to modify the Municipal Building Committee for Prescott School from 10 to 9 members. Mr. Petropoulos seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Mr. Degen said that the Electronic Voting Committee was close to making their recommendation. He said that a public hearing was scheduled for February 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm during the Board of Selectmen's meeting.

**MINUTES**

*Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the Regular Session meeting minutes of November 24, 2014. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

*Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the Executive Session meeting minutes of December 23, 2014 and not release. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-0-1 in favor with Mr. Schulman abstaining.*

*The meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.*

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

Stuart Schulman, Clerk

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respectfully submitted,  
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 2/10/15