

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
MINUTES FEBRUARY 23, 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 7:10pm.

ANNOUCEMENTS

Mr. Cunningham said that after 10 years the Squannacook Greenways signed a lease to begin moving forward with the rail trail in Townsend. The 3.7 mile trail will run from Town Center to West Groton.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad said that it was with great pleasure and excitement that he inform the Board that the search for a new General Manager/Head Professional for the Groton Country Club was concluded. Mr. Haddad said that for the past several months he had been working with the PGA of America, Country Club Staff and members to hire the best possible individual. He said that of paramount importance to him as they started the process was to be as thorough as possible. He said the goal was to find an individual that would lead the Club in to the future and develop the best possible plan to increase profits and make the entire Club an enjoyable experience for both members and daily users of the facility. He said that through advertising in the local newspapers and through PGA of America, they received over 40 resumes for the job. He said that he was assisted by Jack Feeney, members, Jane Barrett, members, Stuart Schulman, Selectmen, Patricia Dufresne, Town Accountant, Donnie Lyons, PGA Professional, Melisa Doig, Human Resources Director, and Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant to review the resumes. That review narrowed down the applicants to six (6) individuals that were brought in for interviews and further narrowed down to three (3) who were brought in for a second, more in-depth interview with himself, Mr. Schulman and Bud Robertson of the Personnel Board and Finance Committee. He said at the conclusion of the second interview it was clear that one applicant had risen to the top. Shawn Campbell, a member of the PGA for 24 years of experience was chosen as the next General Manager/Head Professional of the Groton Country Club and one that could lead the Club. For the past 15 years, Mr. Campbell had served as the Director of Golf at Potowomut Golf Club in Warwick Rhode Island. His background and reference checks were impeccable. Mr. Haddad introduced Mr. Campbell to the Board and requested that they ratify his appointment. Mr. Schulman agreed that they had a lot of good candidates adding that Mr. Campbell was the best for the job.

Ms. Eliot moved to ratify the appointment of the Town Manager of Shawn Campbell as General Manager/Head Professional of the Groton Country Club. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

GROTON-DUNSTABLE REGAIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE – COMMITTEE VACANCY

Town Clerk, Michael Bouchard explained that there was a vacancy on the GD School Committee due to the recent resignation of John Giger. He said that this vacancy could be filled in one of two ways.

- The Board could appoint someone to fulfill the vacancy through the next Annual Election scheduled for May 19, 2015. The School Committee would be responsible for advertising the vacancy and requesting interested parties to return an interest form to the Office of the Superintendent.
- The remainder of Mr. Giger's term could also be placed on the ballot in May. The Board would have to notify the Town Clerk if they desired to have it placed on the ballot. This seat would expire in May 2016; it would be a one year seat.

Mr. Bouchard said that if the Board chose to place this one year term seat on the ballot, this May's ballot would have two (2) 3-year terms and one (1) 1-year term available. Mr. Petropoulos said that he had a conversation with Mr. Giger who expressed willingness to be reappointed. Mr. Degen said that Mr. Giger did try to rescind his vote but couldn't, according to Town Counsel. Mr. Cunningham said that he had received a different response from Mr. Giger. Mr. Degen said that he, School Committee Chair Alison Manugian, Ms. Eliot, Ms. Dunbar and Mr. Haddad had met that afternoon adding that they didn't have to necessarily fill the vacancy for the short period of time until the May 2015 election. Mr. Haddad said that they would still have to go through the process even if they didn't fill the vacancy.

Mr. Cunningham moved to authorize the Town Clerk to place the one (1) year term for the Groton Dunstable Regional School Committee vacancy to the ballot for the May 19, 2015 Annual Election. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Haddad said that the deadline to submit interest forms was March 5th and it would be discussed again at the Board March 9th meeting. Mr. Bouchard said nomination papers for the one year seat would be available the next day and had to be returned by the end of March.

PUBLIC HEARING – REPORT FROM ELECTRONIC VOTING STUDY COMMITTEE

Mr. Degen moved to open the public hearing. Mr. Schulman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Schulman moved to continue the hearing to begin after the next agenda item. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Degen made a request that the individual who sent the email that would be discussed be kept private. Mr. Haddad disagreed adding that any communication that came into the office was public record. Mr. Petropoulos said that they allow a lot of things to be kept private. Mr. Degen said that 95% of the emails that come into the Selectmen's office via their email address are addressed by the Town Manager adding the remainder where emails the Selectmen needed to address. Mr. Degen said that this issue was in regard to a concern about the Council on Aging survey. Mr. Haddad said that the office received an email with question about a recent survey that was mailed and expressed dissatisfaction with the Council on Aging Director. Mr. Haddad said that he forwarded the email to the COA director and the Board of Selectmen and asked for any information she could provide him. Mr. Haddad said that the individual requested a response by February 11th. Mr. Haddad said one Selectman responded to him asking him to answer the question and there was nothing to hide and another Selectman said they should form a response. Mr. Haddad said he did not respond to the email.

Mr. Degen said that they had the right to respond to emails to the Board adding that the Town Manager was in charge of town personnel. Mr. Degen said he put a call into the individual who did not return the call. Mr. Petropoulos said that the individual meant to send it to the Selectmen and wanted them to respond. Mr. Cunningham said that it clearly stated on the Town's website that emails sent to selectmen@townofgroton.org go to the Town Manager. Mr. Degen said that Selectmen Petropoulos wrote to the individual and was responded back to. He said that COA concerns still needed to be addressed. Mr. Haddad said that when they attended Open Meeting Law Training they were told by Town Counsel that any correspondence to the Board of Selectmen was public record which included any responses. Mr. Petropoulos said that he had no doubt that was true but added that Mr. Haddad demanded he be copied in the email. He said that he could not be forced to give it to Mr. Haddad. Mr. Haddad said that he wanted to understand when he demanded anything. Mr. Haddad said that he wrote that he appreciated being copied on the email.

Marie Melican, Vice Chair of the Council on Aging Board of Directors said that the Council had no problem with Mr. Petropoulos questioning a constituents email and after reading the email felt as though this individual had the right to ask those questions but felt as though Mr. Petropoulos responded and maybe answered those questions without consulting with the Council on Aging. She said that the Council of Aging are the ones that make those decisions and without knowing what had been said in his email to the individual, he should have come to them for more information. Mr. Petropoulos said that he didn't know how the Council came to the conclusion that he answered any questions. Mr. Petropoulos said that he didn't answer any of the questions asked in the email adding that he asked Mr. Haddad to answer them. Mr. Haddad said that he did not answer them adding because Mr. Petropoulos had sent him a follow-up email, he thought it was all set.

Mr. Degen said that he felt like he had been a referee for the past six (6) months adding this was school yard politics and asked for it to stop. Mr. Cunningham said that a subsequent email from Mr. Petropoulos said that there was validity to the individuals concerns. Mr. Cunningham said that the Council on Aging was feeling left out in the cold. Mr. Cunningham said the Town Manager was responsible for the day to day operations and if there are concerns out there, he should be made aware. Ms. Eliot thought that the situation was disgusting and that all parties had been degraded by this. She said that Council on Aging was a legitimate Board and both the Director and Board were the Town Manager's responsibility. Ms. Eliot said that if she had done this she would have been reported to the Attorney General. Ms. Eliot said that Mr. Petropoulos sent his email to Mr. Degen and pierced that private confidentiality. Mr. Cunningham said that the core issue was the survey and the concerns Mr. Petropoulos thought had validity. Mr. Petropoulos said that he told the individual that Mr. Haddad would respond to the questions as he didn't have those answers. Mr. Petropoulos said that the individual was angry that the Town Manager was involved in the process adding that they needed to discuss the email policy. Mr. Degen said that Mr. Petropoulos responded to the individual and emailed him the responses. He said that response was clean and milky white adding that Mr. Petropoulos didn't respond to any of the questions. Mr. Degen thought the individual had a certain right of anonymity.

Kathy Shelp, Council on Aging Director, said that a lot of people had felt a lot of angst over the past two (2) weeks and left the Board of Directors wondering why there requests had not been answered. Ms. Shelp asked why this had to carry on like this. Mr. Degen said that if the email was sent to the Council on Aging they could have answered the questions adding the email was sent to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Petropoulos said that he did in fact get a hold of the Board of Directors Chair to set up a meeting for the following week adding he didn't intend for this to go down the road it had. He said his request for a meeting didn't happen. Mr. Degen said that he had been asked by Mr. Petropoulos to attend a meeting of the Council on Aging but when he found out that Mr. Cunningham was planning on attending as liaison he had it added to the agenda that night instead. Mr. Degen also wanted to make clear that this was not a serial communication adding that Mr. Cunningham was the liaison and said he would like to attend with Mr. Petropoulos. Mr. Degen said that he asked Ms. Dunbar to place this on the agenda last week.

Gail Chalmers said that she wanted to go back to the original email. She said Ms. Shelp was the Director of the Council on Aging and her door was always open. She said they would not been here that night had Mr. Petropoulos walked into her office. Mr. Degen said the Town Manager would provide answers to the individuals questions in a joint email with him.

Mr. Schulman introduced a draft policy they could follow as a Board of Selectmen and in particular when it came to complaints. Mr. Cunningham said that it was a good starting point adding that they needed to recognize protocols in the Charter for managing day to day operations. Ms. Eliot said that they had policies and procedures which they should be adhering to. Mr. Degen said that due to the weather they had not been able to review those policies adding it would be on a future agenda.

Mr. Petropoulos said that had the individual written to him and complained about individuals he would have copied anyone unless forced to and would not in this case either. Mr. Schulman said coping people on communications was

a standard practice in most industries adding that that kind of communication was essential. Mr. Haddad asked how they could address issues unless that knew it was coming. He said not having the full understanding of an issue was not a good to manage. Mr. Haddad said that if there is an issue where a department head is involved somehow, they sit down and talk about it adding he expected the same courtesy from his direct report the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Degen said that if an email comes into the Board they have a right to respond adding that Mr. Petropoulos's response had nothing negative in it and didn't answer any questions. Mr. Haddad said that he would not effectively manage his department heads without knowing issues. Mr. Cunningham said email were public record adding that most people assumed emailed to public officials were public record citing a recent poll on the Groton Line which asked that same questions.

Ms. Shelp said that they recently had been going through an accreditation process and received a program of excellence for their Veterans Wall. She said the meeting with the accreditor was a lively one where they met with the Board of Directors, key volunteers and staff. The Groton Senior Center was noted for standing out based on their energy and collaboration between the center and the municipality as a whole. She said that the Board of Directors was vested and shared an opinion which was a great compliment to everyone. She said that relationship between all of the Town's department heads was remarkable. Anytime anyone needed something, they always received help, guidance and a quick response. Ms. Shelp contributed that all to Mr. Haddad's leadership adding she had never worked with a better group of people.

Ms. Shelp was asked to provide responses to the individual's questions and Mr. Degen and Mr. Haddad would respond.

PUBLIC HEARING – REPORT FROM ELECTRONIC VOTING STUDY COMMITTEE

Mr. Schulman moved to reopen the public hearing. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Jason Kauppi called the meeting of the Electronic Voting Study Committee to order.

Mike Manugian, Vice Chair said that one of the first things the Committee did was set their goals. He said that Mass General Law limited electronic voting to attendees only. He said that they looked at a number of towns that either used electronic voting or had looked into it. He said that only one vendor had been selected by all using electronic voting. Mr. Manugian explained how the electronic voting worked. He said that it was used for all voting, and only the Moderator and Town Clerk review the votes. He said that all information was permanently deleted at the end of each vote. He said that each vote was timed and only allowed for one minute each vote. Any lost remotes would be paid for by the Town. Mr. Manugian said that in speaking with the Town of Wayland voter turnout increased when they first started using the handhelds and decreased back to attendance numbers before they started using them.

Mr. Manugian said that another goal of the Committee was to save time at Town Meeting. Mr. Manugian said that 4% of time at Town Meeting was spent on voting adding that time for electronic voting would be longer. Cost was a factor when looking into electronic voting. Mr. Manugian said that sharing them with other towns was not an option. The cost for 800 remotes for 3 days was \$39K and servers and hotspots as well as on site assistance was additional.

Mr. Manugian said that pros for having electronic voting were anonymity. The cons were cost, longer meeting times, and increase check-in times to name a couple. Mr. Manugian said that the Committee voted unanimously to retain manual voting and plan to evaluate electronic voting again in the future. Mr. Schulman applauded the Committee for their presentation. Mr. Cunningham asked about remote sites and overflow seating. Mr. Manugian said that they could accommodate overflow turnout adding that they could set up for voting in other rooms also. Mr. Petropoulos asked if they explored purchase options. Mr. Manugian said that they did and the cost was too high. Becky Pine said that a three (3) year contract needed to be signed with a vendor and they had to write in the number of handhelds they would be requiring into the contract.

Mr. Haddad moved to adjourn the meeting of the Electronic Voting Study Committee. Mr. Robertson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

2. Mr. Haddad said that the Sustainability Commission was recommending that Patricia Karohl of 515A Main Street be appointed to fill a vacancy on the Commission. He respectfully requested that the Board consider making the appointment. The term would end of June 30, 2015.

Mr. Schulman moved that they appoint Patricia Karohl to fill a vacancy on the Sustainability Commission with a term end date of June 30, 2015. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Mr. Haddad said that the Economic Development Committee was recommending that Art Prest of 8 Weymissit Road be appointed to fill a vacancy on the Committee. He respectfully requested that the Board consider making the appointment. The term would end of June 30, 2015.

Mr. Schulman moved that they appoint Art Prest to fill the vacancy on the Economic Development Committee with a term end date of June 30, 2015. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Mr. Haddad said that they had successfully completed negotiations with the SEIU, Local 888 Town Hall Library Employees Union. He said it was a three (3) year agreement with 6% wage adjustment over the life of the agreement. Mr. Haddad said that he wanted to take a moment to clear up some confusion. He said that in addition to the wage adjustment each employee has an opportunity to earn up to an additional 2% performance incentive increase if they are above or exceed expectations on their annual review. He said that it was not a guaranteed extra 2% and had actually saved them money compared to the guaranteed step increases that used to exist. He respectfully requested that the Board ratify the contract. Mr. Schulman asked if bonuses affected base salaries. Mr. Haddad said that it did unless someone was maxed out within their range. Mr. Haddad thanked SEIU 888 for being a great bargaining unit and for understanding what the financial obligations were. Mr. Degen agreed it was a fair and equitable contract.

Mr. Cunningham moved to ratify the contract between the Town of Groton and SEIU, Local 888 for a term of July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2018. Mr. Schulman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Mr. Haddad said that he met with the Finance Committee this past week to continue to assist them in their review of the FY16 Proposed Operating Budget. He said that he provided the Committee with a couple of reductions the Finance Team had made. He said that they were now \$33,000 under the levy limit and on a downward trend. He said that they received one proposal for the lease of the Function Hall and would be negotiating that. He said that the Finance Committee would like to be \$100,000 under the levy limit. He said that Sargisson Beach and School Resource Officer were two (2) things they would be looking at. Art Prest said that an issue was raised that day about the School Resource Officer. Ms. Dufresne said she needed to study the law a little bit more on it.

Mr. Haddad said that he would be bringing the appointment of a new IT Director position to the Board at their next meeting.

Mr. Cunningham mentioned the policy on mailbox replacement. Mr. Haddad encouraged residents to visit the DPW website for the policy. He said they had a lot of snow this year adding that they were one of a few town's that replaced mailboxes. He said the DPW had done a phenomenal job this winter and thanked them for all their hard work.

MINUTES

Mr. Schulman moved to accept the Executive Session meeting minutes of February 10, 2015 as amended and not release them. Mr. Petropoulos seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0-2 in favor with Mr. Degen and Mr. Cunningham abstaining.

Ms. Eliot moved to accept the Regular Session meeting minutes of February 10, 2015. Mr. Petropoulos seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0-2 in favor with Mr. Degen and Mr. Cunningham abstaining.

Mr. Schulman moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:05pm. The motion carried unanimously.

Approved: _____

Stuart Schulman, Clerk

respectfully submitted,
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 3/2/15