

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
MINUTES JULY 20, 2015
APPROVED**

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

Absent: Joshua A. Degen, Member

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

Mr. Petropoulos called the meeting to order at 6:08pm and reviewed agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Mr. Ellen Baxendale asked how the new tax (meals tax) was going. Mr. Haddad said that so far the Town had collected approximately \$45,000 through the first five months. He said that January and February appeared to have been slow months because of the hard winter but thought they would be close to their estimate of \$50,000 once June was provided. Ms. Baxendale asked if they had received any complaints. Mr. Haddad said that the office had not received any complaints. Ms. Baxendale asked if the money was earmarked for anything. Mr. Haddad said that it was not yet but could be in the future.

Ms. Baxendale said there used to be Saturday night concerts at the gazebo. She said she talked to the gentleman that used to run it who said there was not enough interest and not money from the Town. Mr. Petropoulos said that the concerts were independently run by Bob Wright of Main Street Café adding that the Town had not received any requests but might entertain a request for funds like that. Ms. Baxendale asked how she could suggest for someone to come forward to run the Saturday night entertainment. It was suggested that individuals do the legwork and bring ideas with plans forward.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Eliot said that the Groton Historical Society was running their annual West Groton Ramble the following night starting at Clover Farm Market at 6pm. She said that she also wanted to mention that there was a new store at Mill Run Plaza called Classy 360 Consignment and encouraged people to stop in and visit.

Mr. Petropoulos said that there would be a meeting of the Friends of Prescott on July 30th at 7pm at First Parish Church.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad said that there had been a failure to elect a Park Commissioner at the spring annual election. He said that Ms. Haberlin was there that night as Chair of the Park Commission to talk to the Board about next steps. He said that because they did not receive any interest forms they had an option to re-advertise now, wait and do it again in the fall, among other options.
2. Ms. Haberlin said that the Park Commission had met the previous Monday and though it would best to wait and re-advertise in the fall. She said the Commission felt as though because it was summer time, people may not be willing to volunteer because of busy schedules. She said that the Commission was still planning on moving forward as planned but thought this was the best course to take. She said that anyone interested could submit an interest form to Fran Stanley at the Town Hall. Send out interest form to BOS or Fran Stanley if interested.

Mr. Petropoulos asked what it was like to be on Park Commission. Ms. Haberlin said that they were busy. She said that they are in charge of caring for the parks and playing fields in Groton. She said that they had done a lot to improve the playing fields, had plans to move the playground equipment from Prescott School to Cutler Field among other projects.

Ms. Eliot pointed out that it was not just tax dollars that get put into these properties. She said that it was a lot of volunteer efforts and time also. Ms. Eliot said that recreational groups had also been formed to contribute efforts to improve the facilities. Ms. Haberlin said that Cow Pond Fields was an example of this adding that youth soccer bought the fields and donated it to the Town.

Ms. Eliot said that being a Commission member was a time commitment. Ms. Haberlin added that they held a seat on the Community Preservation Committee also. Mr. Petropoulos said that Parks has emerged within the Town budget also over the past couple of years. Ms. Haberlin said that there was a standard of care for all the properties adding that they all look fantastic. She said that they even do all our own repairs.

Mr. Schulman said that he thought this was an appropriate committee for parents who want enrichment for their children and encouraged parents to consider signing up for this. Mr. Petropoulos asked if volunteers would be appointed now and would have to run for re-election next spring. Mr. Haddad said that was correct adding that they could only appoint for one year and the applicant would have to run for the remaining two years of the term. He said that they had already advertised and would not have to again.

3. Mr. Haddad said that he and Ms. Doig had proposed consolidating the Town's Sexual Harassment Policy and Discrimination Policy into one combined policy to the Board a couple of meetings ago. He said that the Board requested that they have Town Counsel and the Personnel Board review and comment on this proposal. He said that Town Counsel reviewed and approved as to form the proposed policy. He said that he and Ms. Doig met with the Personnel Board and Ms. Doig had spent a lot of time working with Mr. Robertson over the last couple of weeks on format changes to make it flow better. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to consider adopting the policy that night. Mr. Robertson agreed that they had spent a lot of time on it. He thought that the reordering was a good process adding that it made it flow better and thus easier for a town employee to understand it better. He said that Ms. Doing had put a lot of time into it.

Mr. Schulman moved to adopt this policy. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Mr. Haddad said that the Board had recently adopted the charge for Invasive Species Committee. He said that they had advertised the Committee positions and received interest from Olin Lathrop, Susan Black, Brian Bettencourt, and Mary Minifie. He said that they had also asked the Trails Committee to designate a representative. Mr. Lathrop said that the Trails representative might be him. Mr. Haddad said that it was his recommendation that the Board set the size of the Committee at five (5) and appoint the above referenced individuals. Mr. Cunningham asked what the original number of members was set at. Mr. Haddad said that the Board was open to anywhere from five to eleven members.

Ms. Susan Black said that she thought Mr. Degen was interested. Mr. Haddad said that he had not said anything to him about wanting to sit on the Committee and wasn't there that night to ask. Ms. Black also asked if they could have associates members. Mr. Cunningham said that they could make it work. Mr. Schulman said that the meetings were open to the public and anyone could contribute. Ms. Black said that Mary Metzger would like to be an associate. Mr. Petropoulos said that they were there that night to vote on the number of committee members and appoint those that had expressed interest with an interest form.

There was a brief discussion on a suggestion to develop a brochure on common invasive species.

Mr. Cunningham moved that the Board appoint Olin Lathrop, Susan Black, Brian Bettencourt and Mary Minifie to the Invasive Species Control Committee and establish the membership of the committee to five (5) members with terms to end on June 30, 2016. Mr. Schulman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Mr. Haddad said that he received a phone call on Friday morning that Alex Woodle would like to fill a vacancy that existed on the Lost Lake Watershed Advisory Committee. He said that Mr. Woodle had been very active at the meetings and would be an excellent addition to the Committee. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to make that appointment.

Mr. Cunningham moved that the Board appoint Alex Woodle to the Lost Lake Watershed Advisory Committee with a term to expire on June 30, 2016. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Petropoulos said that in an effort to improve communications to the Town an idea had come to his attention pertaining to written notification from the office. He said that this could be done as correspondence in the form of a summary instead of meeting minutes. He said a newsletter was something that could be created and pushed out through local media, email, etc. It would be something that users could sign up for and have it pushed out to them. He said that he thought he would bring it up for discussion and didn't know if this would be possible to start adding that it could possibly start out as the Town Manager's Report. Ms. Eliot said she thought it was a great idea adding that she also thought the Groton Channel already did a weekly news update. Ms. Eliot also thought that they should consider expanding this through their own media outlet. Mr. Haddad said that a good example of this was a recent interview that was done with the Town Clerk on the Charter Committee. Mr. Haddad said that they try to use Cable Access as much as possible. Ms. Eliot said that maybe holding a roundtable once in a while would also be a good idea.

Mr. Cunningham said that he liked this idea adding that this could provide expansion on some of the things they were working on and thought they should try to pursue it. Mr. Petropoulos thought that video was one way to do this but also thought that written communication was different. He thought that a hard copy or email, etc. vs a scheduled airing might interest residents adding residents might find it easier to read a newsletter at their leisure AE – set up meeting with Cable committee.

Mr. Schulman said that he agreed in principal but had trouble visualizing what it would look like. He asked who was going to write it. Mr. Cunningham said that if coming from the Board then they would have to take responsibility for contributing towards it. Mr. Schulman asked who would be publishing it. Mr. Haddad said that he could edit the newsletter and send it to the Board for approval. Mr. Schulman liked the idea of it being a selectman initiated thing.

Ms. Baxendale suggested that before the Board put too much energy into this they might consider putting something on the Town's website asking people if they want this and whether they would read it. She said she thought newspapers were falling by the wayside. Mr. Cunningham agreed that people were turning to social media and online news. Mr. Petropoulos said that he understood but was willing to invest the time to see if people would read it instead of asking them first.

Ms. Connie Sartini and Mr. Russ Harris said that they had done stories in the paper on various things like Sargisson Beach and the need for call firefighters. Mr. Harris said that the Selectmen could have a corner of newspaper also adding it was a timely process to put together a newsletter. Mr. Schulman thought that it was a generous offer.

Mr. Petropoulos suggested that they take one cycle of Board of Selectmen meetings to think about this. Mr. Petropoulos said that department heads could be asked to write something once a month. Mr. Olin Lathrop suggested that maybe Committees might be willing to contribute to discuss projects they are working on. Mr. Petropoulos thought that the papers should be consulted with also. Ms. Eliot added that they should also consult with their cable outlet. Mr. Petropoulos said that he was talking about a written document but don't want to rule cable access out. Mr. Haddad said that he would out this on the Board's next agenda.

LIAISON REPORTS

Mr. Schulman said that the Charter Review Committee was holding their public hearing on Wednesday, July 22nd at 7:00pm. He said that the public hearing was to discuss the ground rules, and inform the public on how suggested changes can be brought forward.

Mr. Schulman said that the pipeline was heating up again. He said that Groton was not in the proposed preferred route but they shouldn't assume that it won't come back with proposed routes on projects like this changing all the time. He said that the Coalition met that morning to discuss some important meetings that were

coming up such as the FERC Scoping meetings. He said that these meeting were so that FERC could listen to concerns and get public input. He said would be good for FERC to hear if people were for it or against it.

Ms. Eliot said that she attended a meeting the previous Tuesday with Michelle Collette, Takashi Tada and Kevin Kelly to discuss the surplus property at end of Station Ave. She said that they were looking to achieve a unified vision for the parcel and what should happen with it. Mr. Haddad said that it was the piece of the property where the old garages sit. Ms. Eliot said that she suggested Kevin Kelly meet with Selectmen adding that Mr. Kelly asked that the Board start to think about it. Mr. Haddad said that Mr. Kelly had asked for this to be placed on the Board's next meeting agenda.

Ms. Eliot said that the Planning Board was meeting this Thursday to discuss the Tarbell School. She said that it was interest to the Board to attend the meeting. Mr. Haddad said that the applicant wanted to put garages on site and was receiving pushback from the neighborhood. He said that they were used to using the property for sledding, etc. Mr. Haddad said that the Town would maintain the playground piece there with the rest of the property being Mr. McGoniagle's. Ms. Eliot said that having the Board support this proposal would be important. She asked the Board to take a look at the property and see how they felt about this.

Mr. Petropoulos said that the Lost Lake Watershed Advisory Committee appointed a new member that night. He said that the Committee was working to generate an RFP for consulting services. He said that the point of a consultant was to determine if there was a problem and to demonstrate it. He said that with this the taxpayers could make an informed decision adding that there was no assumption that there was a problem. He said that their next meeting was on the 28th of July.

Mr. Cunningham said that the Town's pipeline committee would be holding their next meeting on Monday, July 27th.

MINUTES

Mr. Cunningham move to approve the Regular Session meeting minutes of June 22, 2015. Mr. Schulman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the Executive Session meeting minutes of June 22, 2015 as amended and not release them. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the Regular Session meeting minutes of July 6, 2015 as amended. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:06pm.

Approved: _____

Stuart Schulman, Clerk

respectfully submitted,
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 8/3/15