

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
MINUTES AUGUST 25, 2015
APPROVED**

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

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

Mr. Petropoulos called the meeting to order at 6:00pm and reviewed the agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Eliot said that the Mountain lakes club was holding a community yard sale on Saturday, September 12th at 9am. A 10x10 space was available for a small fee.

Mr. Cunningham said that there would be a groundbreaking/foundation stone laying ceremony on August 29th starting at 9am at the site of the new Hindu Temple.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad said that he wanted to update the Board on the MassWorks grant. He said that their application had been submitted earlier that day. He said that this was the first day applications were allowed to be submitted. Mr. Haddad said that Town Meeting authorized \$300K for engineering to make the project shovel ready adding they only needed \$192K to do the engineering. Mr. Haddad said that construction money could not be spent without the grant.

Mr. Haddad said that they put out an RFP and hired Environmental Partners (EP) of Woburn. He said they were brought on and started to meet right away. He said that he contacted the State for a meeting with MassWorks program director to find out what they were looking for in an application. He said that the main components of a solid application were a shovel ready project, financial commitment with funding from another Town, that the project is fully permitted, that there is a regional component with another Town, adding that they had done with Ayer who was also contributing \$670K financial contribution from Ayer, and that the project be a mixed used development including a commercial and private component. He said that they also suggested including a housing component. He said that they reached out to Dave Moulton about his development and the portion of it that was a 55+ housing. He said that the project was fully permitted and the reason they reached out to him and asked if he would be interested in tying in. Mr. Haddad said that Mr. Moulton was happy to partner with the Town and pay for the connection. He would be contributing \$60K to connect. Mr. Haddad said that the State had signed off on allowing them to include Mr. Moulton's 55+ units in the inter-basin transfer and would request a change in the Four Corners District map at the fall Town meeting. He said that the last component of a solid application was that the project provides job growth. He said that they had reached out to existing businesses in Groton and Ayer and were provided job numbers and potential job growth

Mr. Haddad said that he thought it was a pretty solid grant application and was excited to have Ayer's commitment. He said that the grant application was requesting \$1.9M adding the total project cost was for approximately about \$2.9M project overall which included contributions from Ayer, Groton's engineering costs voted on at the spring Town Meeting and Mr. Moulton's portion to tie in. He said that this would not have been completed without the team adding that Michelle Collette had done an outstanding job and Tom Orcutt and Tom Delaney had also worked hard on the application. He said that he thought this was the best grant he had applied for in his 30 years of municipal experience. He said that they had a very competitive grant adding that the local Representatives and Senators were also very supportive of the project. Mr. Haddad added that Devens was also supportive of the application as they need Ayer's waste.

Mr. Degen asked if the project was standalone if Town Meeting didn't authorize the change in the district at the fall Town Meeting. Mr. Haddad said that it was adding that they just wouldn't connect Mr. Moulton's project.

2. Mr. Haddad said that he had made significant changes to the operation of the Country Club this year. He said that people were upset with the direction in which he was taking the club and decided to sit down with members to explain how he was planning to consolidate the operation. As everyone knew he brought on a GM/Head Pro that would oversee the club, improved the locker rooms, replaced the retaining wall and pool furniture, and reduced the budget by leasing out the Function Hall like they had done with the Tavern. He said that the Club's revenue was up 7.7% from May-July 2014 vs May-June 2015 and found it interesting that greens fees had only increased \$4,400 and cart revenue was up \$6,800, a 43% increase. Mr. Haddad said that they had made some internal control issues, with help of a consultant and used the example of leasing out the function hall. That alone had brought down expenses by 30%. Mr. Haddad said that things seemed to be tracking well and the new model was off to a good start adding that the membership seemed happy and liked the Head Pro. Mr. Haddad said that Mr. Campbell was doing a great job and off to a great start.

Mr. Cunningham asked how the function hall business was going. Mr. Haddad said that he had talked to Mr. Kenney who said that functions were slow but the tavern was doing very well. Mr. Petropoulos said that a lot of grounds work had been done and asked if those costs were included. Mr. Haddad said they were not adding that the work was done under other department budgets the last FY. He added that the money for the tee hole repairs was encumbered and was scheduled to be completed in the fall. Mr. Petropoulos asked if they could be provided with the numbers spent on the repairs this past spring adding it would be useful to know. Mr. Haddad said that it would be very difficult to provide those numbers. Mr. Degen said that he thought this was great news in terms of revenues adding that the changes and improvements had really helped. Mr. Haddad said that wages was also down because the Head Pro was spending more time in the Pro Shop and therefore needed less hours covered. Mr. Degen suggested that a capital plan be submitted along with this year budget request. Mr. Haddad said that a capital plan was part of the GM's budget plan. Mr. Petropoulos asked why there had been a decline in golf memberships. Mr. Haddad said that a lot of people might have signed up earlier than May. Mr. Schulman agreed.

3. Mr. Haddad said that he and Mr. Degen had been working with representatives from Dunstable and the School Committee to hire a consultant to assist them with looking at the regional agreement. He said that they had advertised an RFP, to which the Town had agreed to commit up to \$10K towards, and received one bid from MARS. He said that their share would only be \$4,500 to hire the consultant to assist in the review. He said that three (3) individuals needed to be designated from Groton and suggested that the Board designate a representative, that the Finance Committee designate a representative and that they put out word to the public for a member at large. Mr. Haddad said that the Committee was looking to get started sometime after Labor Day.

Mr. Cunningham moved to offer Mr. Degen as the Board's representative to Regional School Agreement Review Committee. Mr. Schulman seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-0-1 with Mr. Degen abstaining.

4. Mr. Haddad said that they were now posting the Town Manager's report on the Town's website and would continue to do so weekly.
5. Mr. Haddad said that he received word from Kevin Kelly that FERC was not going to discuss the Groton route at their scoping meetings unless it is chosen as the primary route. He asked if the Board wanted to go forward with an article on the warrant for intervener status. Mr. Cunningham said that it was his understanding that if the Groton route was chosen as the primary route; they would have to start the process all over again. Mr. Cunningham asked if other communities were also looking into doing this with Groton. Mr. Schulman said that it had been discussed at their last municipal coalition meeting adding that FERC was receiving a lot of resistance from NH. He said the reason the Massachusetts route was chosen first was it was cheaper for Kinder Morgan. He said it was conceivable that it could come back and thought it wasn't a bad idea to put aside money. Mr. Cunningham asked if they could do it in concert with other communities. Mr. Schulman said that he didn't know how you would determine what each town would contribute. Mr. Degen said that he agreed with Mr. Schulman's position and didn't think there was any harm in moving forward in case

the route changes again. He said that they would not spend funds and would seek permission to expend them should they need to.

Mr. Petropoulos asked how this would impact the taxpayers. Mr. Haddad said that they would transfer the funds from free cash which would have no future impact to taxpayers of Groton. He said that should they not need the money they could close out the article and the money would go back to free cash.

Mr. Cunningham asked if they could we take a little more time and ponder the idea. Mr. Haddad said that he could place an article on the warrant and pull it if necessary. Mr. Degen asked when FERC was supposed to weigh in and actually vote on the route. Mr. Petropoulos said that he believed sometime in January. Ms. Eliot said that a tremendous amount of energy and time had been dedicated toward this and thought it would be a shame to pull it now and give up on it.

STEVE BOZCENOWSKI – PROJECT INTERFACE UPDATE

Mr. Bozcenowski said that he was present representing TADS to provide the Board with a 6-month update. He said that the numbers had been down a little bit over past 6 months adding that out of the nine towns they provide services to, Groton was still among the highest. He said that half of the calls made to the center were made by adults. He thought this was interesting seeing they expected most of the calls would be from school aged kids. He said that the highest reasons for those seeking services were for anxiety, depression and stress.

He said that starting in FY16 TADS would be paid for by public funds and wanted to thank the Board for supporting this service. He said that it was an important service that helped individuals find the care they needed.

Mr. Cunningham asked if they were still using the Herbert Lipton Community Center also. Mr. Haddad said that they replaced the Lipton Center with TADS. Mr. Petropoulos asked how many calls were logged for Groton. Mr. Bozcenowski said that 37 calls were made from Groton and Dunstable.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT CONTINUED

6. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to consider making the following appointments:
 - Mike Roberts – Community Preservation Committee – Term to end June 30, 2018
 - Karen Riggert – Local Cultural Council – Term to end June 30, 2021
 - Pat Lawrence – Local Cultural Council – Term to end June 30, 2021

Ms. Eliot moved to appoint Mike Roberts to the Community Preservation Committee term to end on June 30, 2018; Karen Riggert to the Local Cultural Council term to end June 30, 2021 and Pat Lawrence to Local Cultural Council term to end June 30, 2021. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

7. Mr. Haddad said that the Chairman thought it would be a good idea to review the annual goals of the Board and Town Manager quarterly to see how everyone was progressing. Mr. Petropoulos said that it made more sense to review them quarterly rather than annually along with the quarterly financial updates.

Mr. Haddad said that the Charter review would be done by July 2016. That the workshop between the Town Manager and the Board was very beneficial and they were in compliance with OML training. Mr. Petropoulos asked how rigorously this was being tracked. Mr. Haddad said that people sign that they have received it and will read it when they are sworn in adding that they had to trust that they will. He said that the Board amended their policy as such and that the Town Clerk was very faithful with this.

Mr. Haddad said that the Board developed a policy for advisory committees adding that they had set up a schedule and started inviting committees in to provide their annual reports. Mr. Haddad said that they revised their appointment policy and would continue with this policy for FY16 appointments next

spring. He said that in an effort to improve communication with the public, they had discussed developing a monthly newsletter to which he had received a lot of ideas. He said that they had also started to put the Town Manager's report on the Town's website. He said that Tom Orcutt had come to him with a good idea about the newsletter and thought that Town Hall employees could work in conjunction with Board to develop a monthly report. Mr. Haddad said that everyone month a couple of department heads could be designated to take that task on adding he thought they would be excited to do that. Mr. Degen said that he thought it was a great idea adding that they could integrate the two together. Mr. Haddad said that he was very impressed with the outstanding employees the Town has adding that they were proactive in trying to address this.

Mr. Petropoulos asked how they could measure this benchmark. Mr. Schulman said that the fact they were discussing it was a significant step up from where they were. Mr. Petropoulos said that there were ways to measure but it was difficult to do. He said that they had met with the Groton School and might be something their civics and statistics class could look at as an exercise.

Mr. Haddad said that the media policy had been completed and the Tarbell School should hopefully be through the Planning Board within the next week. Mr. Haddad said that parking on Main Street and safety of pedestrians was a goal of the Board and with the addition of parking lots and bump outs the project and goal was on its way to being completed.

Mr. Haddad suggested keeping underground utilities on their list and the new Country Club budget model seemed to be working well so far. Mr. Haddad said that they had set a policy concerning the annual growth in the municipal budget and would meet with the Finance Committee prior to construction of next FY operating budget. He said that one of the things the department heads were going to recommend as a change to the Charter to address this was to add the Finance Committee to the initial budget process.

Mr. Haddad said that as part of their new PILOT strategy he and Mr. Petropoulos met with the new CFO of Groton School Arthur Diaz. He said that earlier in the year they had reached out to all non-profits and asked them to consider paying 25% of their assessed value. He said that Seven Hills was the only one that increased their payment. He said that even before they had a chance to bring this topic up to Mr. Diaz, Mr. Diaz told them there would no longer be pomp and circumstance around presenting a check to the Board and they would increase their PILOT by 2 1/2 % and gave them their FY16 PILOT payment. Mr. Petropoulos said that Mr. Diaz explained the great relationship his last school had with the Town and that he wanted to have conversations about these kinds of things.

Mr. Haddad said that the OPEB strategy was well underway and Sargisson Beach had been fully funded. Mr. Haddad said that numbers on their current housing stock was outstanding. Mr. Degen said that they had a meeting scheduled for Thursday night and would bring it up for discussion at that time.

Mr. Haddad said that his goals were to assist the Board of Selectmen with the Prescott School, to settle all collective bargaining agreements, to move economic development forward in the Four Corners area, to submit a balanced budget for FY16 and address public concerns in a timely manner. He said that the staff works quickly to get this done adding he was pleased with his success on his goals.

Mr. Haddad said that he would work with the Chair to set a date to set their FY16 goals.

8. Mr. Schulman said that he prepared the Town Manager's review based on input he had received. He said that the Town Manager had had the opportunity to read it, reflect on it and sign it. He suggested that if they were done with it that they should vote to accept it and move on. Mr. Petropoulos asked if the individual Selectmen had provided Ms. Doig with their reviews. Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Petropoulos and Ms. Eliot had said they did. Mr. Degen said he had not and Mr. Schulman said that he didn't complete an individual review. Mr. Petropoulos said that it was their policy to make sure they were file and asked if they should allow ourselves to move forward. Mr. Petropoulos asked Mr. Degen if he would be placing his in the file adding that should they be asked to provide the document, according to the Secretary of State, it would need to be recreated. Mr. Schulman said that the way the policy was written, if they were to discuss an individual review then they become public at that point

adding it was his hope that they didn't discuss them. Mr. Petropoulos said that he was trying to make sure they were in compliance with their own policy. Mr. Cunningham said that the final review which was public had already been made available adding he didn't see any reason they should not move forward at this time

Mr. Cunningham moved to accept the evaluation as prepared by Mr. Schulman of the Town Manager for the last year. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion.

Mr. Degen explained why HR had not received a copy of his personal review. He said that the previous six reviews of the Town Manager were done by the Chairman at that time adding that they only revamped and voted to update their policy because of the feeling that he could not provide an unbiased review. He said that they have issues with their policy that need to be discussed. Ms. Eliot said that there was a motion on the floor and didn't think this was the right time to question the policy. She suggested they not delay this any longer. Mr. Degen said that he was trying to explain why they shouldn't approve the review.

Mr. Degen said that the review was delayed while they developed a policy. He said that there was an issue with he was chairman in that there was a request for an investigation. He said that the Town Manager didn't trust that he could conduct an unbiased review so Mr. Schulman was voted to do review by the Board. He said that Mr. Schulman had requested that they each fill out a review and return it to him. Mr. Degen said that Mr. Schulman wrote a draft summary and released the document at a public meeting making the document public. He said that only 4 reviews were submitted (Mr. Schulman didn't do an individual one). He said that he was now being asked to recreate his review which was hand written. Mr. Degen said that he didn't keep a copy and didn't believe that his comments were incorporated into the final review. Mr. Degen said that it was a very heartfelt review and not something he could reproduce. He said that a fresh policy was created and not followed adding he thought they should redo the Town Manager's review so it follows procedures.

Mr. Cunningham asked if the document existed or not. Mr. Schulman apologized for inadvertently destroying the individual review adding that he thought it was a copy. Mr. Petropoulos said that if they were to delay this, Mr. Degen was going to have to recreate the document. Mr. Petropoulos said that they all voted on Mr. Schulman serving as the proxy, and thought they needed to move forward and asked Mr. Degen to recreate his document or state that he didn't and move forward. Mr. Degen said that he thought the Town Manager should be able to review the individual reviews. Mr. Cunningham said that they had spent an large amount of time on this policy and thought they should move forward and vote.

The motion made by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Ms. Eliot carried 4-1 with Mr. Degen opposing it.

9. Mr. Haddad said that the Economic Development Committee (EDC) was meeting that night to discuss their annual report to the Board. Mr. Petropoulos said that the original discussion was a suggestion to have a selectman report back at every meeting about a meeting they had with a local business. He said that these meetings with the businesses would be to discuss any issues they would be facing and to receive good feedback.

Ms. Eliot said that the EDC was in the process of preparing their report. She said that she was the one that initiated the EDC and had since brought on the Groton Board of Trade (GBOT). She said that GrotonFest was a classic example of how they can bring as many businesses together as possible to display what they provide. Mr. Petropoulos said that he wasn't trying to undermine the EDC or GrotonFest adding he liked the idea of getting exposure. He said that he would like for them to meet with business and ask what it's like to do business in town. He said that this would allow the businesses to talk a little bit about themselves thus providing them with some additional exposure. Mr. Schulman said that he was not sure he was in favor of this. He said that he didn't want to see competing businesses in town become upset and feel like the Board was promoting one over another. Mr. Degen said that he originally thought it was a good idea adding that he hadn't thought about Mr. Schulman's perspective. He said it might look like they are promoting a business.

Mr. Petropoulos said that he was fine if they were uncomfortable with this. Ms. Eliot said that the Land Use Department revamped their application process to assist businesses throughout the process. She said that the businesses asked for additional Main Street parking and that was something they were working on. Mr. Cunningham said that he thought the EDC was a conduit for businesses and us along with GBOT. He thought that was a natural resource they could tap into.

10. Mr. Haddad reviewed the upcoming Board of Selectmen meeting schedule with the Board.
11. Mr. Haddad said that the public hearing on the warrant would be held on September 21st and not the week prior due to Rosh Hashanah. He sincerely apologized for the error.
12. Mr. Haddad said that the Trails Committee had recommended that Christopher Bussiere be appointed to the Trails Committee. He asked the Board to consider making that appointment.

PC made a motion to appoint Christopher Bussiere to the Trails Committee. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

13. Mr. Haddad said that they had received 8 responses to the Town Counsel RFP. Mr. Degen said that the matrix Mr. Haddad had done included everything he needed to make a choice on whom to interview. Mr. Petropoulos said that their next step was to decide on a process and interview candidates. The Board decided to interview Deutsch Williams, Blatman, Bobrowski, Mead and Talterman and Kopelman and Paige on Thursday, September 17th beginning at 5pm.

LIAISON REPORTS

Mr. Cunningham said that he attended a Council on Aging meeting of the Future Planning Committee where they continued to work hard on the surveys received. He said that a former board member was helping them and they hoped to have a final report in mid fall.

Mr. Haddad said that the Department Heads had asked to meet with the Charter Review Committee and would do so on September 2nd.

Mr. Petropoulos said that the Lost Lake Watershed Advisory Committee had issued an RFP for engineering type services to demonstrate whether or not a problem in the watershed existed. He said that funding was limited and that public grants were available. He said that bids were due on September 10th. Mr. Haddad said that they had received 20 requests so far.

MINUTES

Mr. Cunningham move to approve the Regular Session meeting minutes of August 3, 2015. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-0-1 with Mr. Cunningham abstaining.

Mr. Degen moved to adjourn. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Approved: _____

Stuart Schulman, Clerk

respectfully *submitted*,
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 9/21/15