

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
MINUTES OCTOBER 5, 2015
APPROVED**

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

Absent: 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.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad said that he wanted to start by thanking the Sargisson Beach Committee for a wonderful dedication they just had.
2. Mr. Haddad said that the Greenway Committee recommended that he appoint Matthew McCracken and asked the Board to consider ratifying the appointment. Mr. Pitkin said that they had been down a member and solicited a number of people. He said that Mr. McCracken came forward and would like to join committee.

SS - moved that they ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Matthew McCracken to the Greenway Committee with term to expire June 30, 2016. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

3. Mr. Haddad said that the Municipal Building Committee for the Prescott School was requesting \$3,500 at the Fall Town meeting for work relative to their efforts. He said that he had a couple of meetings the week before to discuss some of the issues facing committee like how to phase in construction work and how they might bring the building up to full accessibility. He said that the Committee would like to bring in an architect in to tell them how to make it handicap accessible. He said that this would be separate from the other architect adding he would have an idea of how much the Committee was looking for prior to town meeting. Mr. Haddad said that he thought it should be done as an amendment on the floor of town meeting as the warrants had already gone out asking for \$3,500. Mr. Sheldon said that this was raised at their meeting the previous week and he was asked to bring it to the Board's attention. He said that they were in the process of getting estimate. Mr. Schulman asked if this would vary depending on use. Mr. Haddad said this was just to make the building ADA compliant. More work may be necessary depending on use. He said that they would look at basic things like door widths, bathrooms accessibility, etc. Mr. Petropoulos asked if Mr. Sheldon was asking if the Board would entertain an amendment. Ms. Eliot said she would need to know the number before she commits. Mr. Petropoulos asked if they needed to vote. Mr. Haddad said that they did not need to take a vote yet. He wanted to provide the Board with the numbers first.

LIBRARY PRESENTATION

Ms. Vanessa Abraham, Library Director thanked the Board for their time adding that the library does a survey every 5 years as part of long range planning and the reason she was before the Board. She said that the Trustees and staff created the survey to which they received 600 responses, a 50% increase over 2010. She said that the survey was available online and in print and ran for 8 weeks and mailed one to every household in Groton. Ms. Abraham said that the reason for the survey was to see how they were doing and in order to fill out their long range plan every 5 years to help with grants and comply with state requirements.

Ms. Abraham said that 98% of responders rated the library as good or excellent adding that the average was 3.71 out of 4. She said that there were many comments submitted. She said that some of the top rated service areas were facility cleanliness (3.8%), facility (overall) came in second, and customer service, among the top three. She said that people use the library to borrow books and other print material which was the top use of the library. She said that some of the most valued changes included joining a library network, expanded hours, Sunday hours, downloadable e-books, and winter reading programs for kids and teens. Ms. Abraham said that

people would like to see the addition of more hours on Sundays, Mondays and Fridays a drive up book return, "bookstore like" popular materials, a new teen area and more space for teens, e-videos and more STEM programming (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math). She said that their goals for the next 5 years included an increase in the number of visits to the library and an increase in circulation of all types.

Mr. Schulman said that the lifelong learning course he took was great. Mr. Petropoulos said that he appreciated the focus on the numbers added it helped rationalize their decisions and support of them. Ms. Eliot said that the children's programs were wonderful and show the future of Groton. Ms. Jane Allen said that they get more people on Sundays than any other day. She said it showed the same results it showed 5 years ago which she was pleased to see.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Mr. Mike Rasmussen said that that the Committee prepared a very brief report. He said that they meet monthly from September through June adding that they take the months of July and August off. He said that the Committee had been fairly productive. He said that they took positions on two important issues over last 12-18 months. One was the Four Corners Sewer project and the other was the Prescott Reuse. He said that in addition to taking positions, they have been debating the creation of a new position in Town of an Economic Development Director. He said that they have a proposed job description they planned to present to the Board. He said that they were trying to turn their reputation of being not business friendly around. He said that the Committee didn't feel they should be less rigorous but that they needed to work on more of a set of cliffs notes for applicants. He said that they would have the Economic Development Director proposal in by the end of the month.

Mr. Rasmussen said that the Committee was comprised of 7 members adding they had lost 2 members and needed help looking for replacements. He said they had approached Jason Parent who is interested in joining committee since our report was done. Ms. Eliot said that having initiated the Economic Development Committee, her major thrust was the need to be proactive in supporting new and old businesses. Mr. Rasmussen said that Evans on the Common was interested in the Prescott School still adding that people want more shopping in Town. Mr. Schulman said that he had lived in Groton since 1975. He said that there had always been opposing forces where people wants shops but they want Groton to look nice also. He said that this leads to regulations which people perceive as onerous. Mr. Rasmussen said that some guidelines will help a lot. Mr. Rasmussen said that the Land Use Department had helped with one stop shopping adding that the reputation earned was sort of unfair. He said that they simply want things to look like right in Town at the end of the day.

Mr. Petropoulos asked if there anything they could do for the Committee. Mr. Rasmussen said that they put together a map of Groton a few years ago with all the businesses; something they would like to update but would need some financial resources. Mr. Haddad asked if it would help for the Committee to discuss their charge and suggest any changes. Mr. Rasmussen thought that would be helpful adding he would make sure it was on the agenda. Mr. Petropoulos asked if they would be providing the Board with a case for the Economic Development Director position or just the job description. Mr. Rasmussen said that they have the job description but don't have the case for it yet. He said that many towns have one and they are successful. He said it was hard to put a number on it adding they didn't know how much it would take. Mr. Petropoulos said that he would be looking for them to come forward with a benefit for the cost as well. He said if they could also define a sense of growth opportunity in Groton, it would be a good basis for a business case behind the development person. Ms. Eliot said that a lot of that was set by Zoning. Mr. Petropoulos said that they should know that if they were going to ponder it. He said he would like to see that as a deliverable in the next year.

SARGISSON BEACH COMMITTEE

Mr. Andrew Davis thanked the Board for coming down to the beach for the rededication. He said that some changes that were not pointed out included a new entry sign, larger swimming area, and lifeguards provided by the YMCA. He said that they have asked the YMCA for data to see if they need to change hours, etc. He said that they had a park ranger that summer that did a great job and hoped to have him back. He said that they changed the rules to allow kayaks and canoes and provided them dock space on the beach. Mr. Davis said that fishing off the pier was also busy this year adding that Mass Wildlife stocks the lake with trout. He said that the north point area was also busy with barbeques. Mr. Davis said that the entry way was restored, water bars were installed to help with run-off and they added lots of new signage. One area they were still working on was traffic flow in the parking lot. Mr. Haddad said that Leone Construction had done a great job on the restoration project.

Mr. Haddad thanked Mr. Davis for all his efforts and for spearheading the restoration project. Mr. Haddad said that he also wanted to take a moment to thank Bob Pine for all of his pro-bono engineering work. Mr. Davis said that they still needed to provide a final report to the CPC and will include utilization of the beach in that report. He said that they didn't require the YMCA to compile data and may change that in the contract next year.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

4. Mr. Haddad said that he contacted the Town Administrator in Pepperell as asked by the Board about filing for intervener status. He said that Pepperell had not officially filed yet. He said that they have passed a resolution to become an intervener should an official application be filed with FERC by Tennessee Gas. Mr. Haddad said that if the Board wanted to do this, he could prepare a document for the next meeting. Mr. Petropoulos said that he didn't feel compelled to do this but could entertain it. Mr. Schulman said that when the Town held a Special Town Meeting over 400 people showed up adding they had an obligation to do this. Ms. Eliot said it would not cost them anything and didn't think they had anything to lose. Mr. Petropoulos said that intervener would cost them something if they decided to go down that road.
5. Mr. Haddad said that he contacted Lisa Mead for a price proposal for Town Counsel services. She said that the flat fee covers all regular litigation that could happen but does not cover extraordinary litigation like civil rights claims, and land fill litigation as examples. Mr. Haddad said that he was told by Ms. Mead that in the 10 years they have done flat fees they have had about 10 cases that were extraordinary. Mr. Haddad said that he expanded the report for FY16 adding there was a pretty dramatic price for what this proposal would cost. He said that this information was purely informational in an effort to help the Board with their decision making. Mr. Schulman said that this price didn't include labor related items adding that was where a lot of stuff comes up. He said that they would have to negotiate with whomever they chose for separate labor counsel if they went down this path. Mr. Haddad said that the last 2 fiscal's years they spent about \$25K on labor issues adding this this year was already upwards of \$10K. He said that looking at it from a budget perspective he was concerned. Mr. Petropoulos said that they would probably be looking at an average cost of \$20K or 25% more than the Mead proposal on separate labor counsel.
6. Mr. Haddad said that he wanted to provide an update on the Country Club. He said that General Manager/Head Professional Shawn Campbell had done a great job as the GM/Pro this year. He said that they would typically have only seasonal employees at the club including this position but added that because Mr. Campbell was also the GM this was not the case this year. Mr. Haddad said that Mr. Campbell was not leaving adding that he was an employee of the Town and was doing a great job. Mr. Haddad said that Mr. Campbell would be returning at the Pro next year.

7. Mr. Haddad reminded the Board that they were meeting in joint session with the Finance Committee on Tuesday, October 13th to discuss the budget. He also reminded the Board that Town Meeting would be held on Monday, October 19th.

LIAISON REPORTS

Ms. Eliot said that the signing of the Community Compact was a nice event. Mr. Haddad agreed adding it went very well. He said that many were present to see Mr. Petropoulos sign the compact on behalf of the Town adding that also present was Lt. Governor Polito, the Mayor of Leominster along with one of their council members, Selectmen Eliot, Cunningham and Schulman and many of the Department Heads. Mr. Petropoulos explained what the compact was and that Groton had chosen best practices in budget and cyber security as their areas to improve upon over the next 2 years.

Mr. Petropoulos said that he wanted to assure folks that the Board was not going back to issues they had a few months ago based on the tension felt at their last meeting. He said that the Board will never agree on everything adding it was up to all of them to make sure they don't go back to where they were 6 months ago.

Mr. Haddad said that there was a vacancy on the Municipal Building Committee for Prescott School. He said that he received an email that day from Alison Manugian who said that the School Committee decided not to have active participation on the Committee. He asked the Board if they wanted to amend the charge to remove the requirement and open it up to others and if so, ask the committee for recommendations. Mr. Petropoulos asked if this would open it up to the public. Mr. Haddad said it did and asked the Board if they wanted to take a vote. Ms. Eliot said that she was trying to figure out if they need the school there. She thought they should be reaching out to the School Committee before they make a decision. Ms. Eliot asked if they could have a copy of the charge to look at before making any decision.

Mr. Schulman said that the Charter Review Committee was starting to review people's thoughts and beginning to think about their recommendation. Ms. Eliot asked if people could have copies of people's comments and what the future meeting dates were. Mr. Schulman said that all comments were posted on the Town's website and they would be meeting every Wednesday moving forward.

Mr. Bud Robertson said that the Light Department had their grand opening over the weekend. He said it was a great opening with bucket rides and cowboys performances. He thought they did a great job and should be complimented. Mr. Petropoulos said that the cowboys came in 2nd place in a statewide lineman's contest and should be congratulated.

MINUTES

Ms. Eliot moved to approve the Regular Session meeting minutes of September 21, 2015. Mr. Schulman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Eliot moved to adjourn at 7:25pm. Mr. Schulman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Approved: _____

Stuart Schulman, Clerk

respectfully submitted,
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 11/02/15