

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING  
MINUTES NOVEMBER 9, 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 to the Town Manager

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

Mr. Petropoulos said that Mr. Degen was not able to attend the meeting that night and was not able to participate by phone. He said that not having all Selectmen present for the discussion on the Town Manager's contract and Town Counsel affected their ability to discuss these items and would be pushed off until the following week.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Eliot said that on Wednesday, November 11<sup>th</sup> at 11am on Sawyer Common would be the Annual Veteran's Day Celebration and thought it was a great way to give tribute to the veterans.

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

1. Mr. Haddad said that the building security at Town Hall was underway adding that cameras had been installed at both entrances and in the interior of the building along with key card readers on both exterior doors. He said that this was going to impact entering and exiting Town Hall when the building was not opened adding that the purpose was to track who comes in and out of the building. He said that the doors have timed locks on them and this would eliminate the need for a lock box on the rear of the building. He said that he was working on a memo to all boards and committee chairs to explain the new process. Mr. Cunningham asked about the ease of access. Mr. Haddad said that the Chairs will be provided with key cards and will be able to unlock and relock the building when they need access after regular business hours. Mr. Cunningham said that he understand the need for security but didn't want to make it more difficult for boards and committees. Mr. Haddad said that there would be growing pains but that was something they could address as they go down the road. Mr. Petropoulos asked if this was being proactive or did something happen. Mr. Haddad said that this was them trying to be proactive adding this what phase 2 of a 3 phase project planned for in the capital budget for the past 2 years.
2. Mr. Haddad said that he had made the suggested changes to the Town Manager's Review Policy and asked the Board to ratify it that night.  
*Mr. Cunningham moved to adopt the updated Town Manager Review Policy TM review policy. Mr. Schulman seconded the motion. Ms. Eliot asked that they reference the modified date of November 9, 2015. The motion carried unanimously.*
3. Mr. Haddad said that at the October 19<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Board provided him with a list of Goals and Objectives they would like to keep and others they wanted to add for the ensuing year and asked the Board to adopt the goals. Mr. Petropoulos asked about the underground utility goal and more specifically what progress had been made to date and what was reasonable to expect over the next year. Ms. Eliot said that she was not sure it was a goal for the next year but more so something that they should have and keep discussing as something they would like see done in the future. Mr. Petropoulos asked if it was a land use practice. Ms. Eliot said that it was not adding it was a goal for Main Street. Mr. Cunningham asked if the Groton Inn agreed to put the utilities underground. Ms.

Eliot said that they did and were planning to. Mr. Haddad said that when GELD constructed their new building they also placed conduits underground to eventually place their utilities underground also. Mr. Delaney said that there was some conduit under the road and would like to put to more under there at some point. Ms. Collette said that installation of underground utilities for new construction has been in place since she started working for the Town adding that the 3 units at Tarbell School would have their utilities brought underground. She added that having the utilities placed underground by GELD on Main Street and within the HDC would be a goal the Planning Board would like to see completed. Mr. Haddad said that it was more its more so Verizon and others lines that were harder to get done. Mr. Easom said that Concord had been trying to do this since 1960 and eventually put an article on the warrant to add a surcharge to the light bills and when the amount needed was reached they used the money to install underground utilities. Mr. Cunningham said it was treated like the CPA was approached. Mr. Cunningham suggested that they set up a meeting with the Light Commissioners to kick this idea around. Ms. Eliot said that the sub-committee was meeting until they hit a road block with Verizon.

*Mr. Cunningham moved to adopt the FY16 Goals and Objectives of the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

4. Mr. Haddad said that the Municipal Building Committee for Prescott School has requested an increase in their membership to 8 members and requested that the Board ratify the appointments of Annika Nilsson Ripps and Bruce Easom. Ms. Eliot said that this was not a group that was adjudicating anything adding that both individuals had been coming to meetings and participating all along.

*Mr. Cunningham moved to expand the size of the Municipal Building Committee for Prescott School to 8 members. Mr. Schulman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

*Mr. Cunningham moved to ratify the appointments of Bruce Easom and Annika Nilsson Ripps to the Municipal Building Committee for Prescott School. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

5. Mr. Haddad said that he wanted to let everyone know that the Town was not successful in receiving the Mass Works Grant. He said that he was very disappointed about this. He said that the State received 101 proposals and 49 projects in 46 municipalities. He said that there were some very good projects funded but some that didn't compare to Groton's application. Mr. Haddad said that he wrote to the State and asked for a meeting to find out where their application lacked. He said that they hit every single criteria and didn't know why it wasn't funded. Mr. Cunningham recognized and appreciated all the hard work that went with the application adding that they State sometimes works strangely. He said that he would be interested in hearing the post mortem. He thought the application was still very much alive and could be resubmitted next year. Ms. Eliot asked if those awarded funding were first time applicants or reoccurring. Mr. Haddad said that would be a good question to ask. Mr. Petropoulos said that he was not in favor of this but after seeing all the work put into this application and project he was impressed. He said that he would be interested to find out many applications submitted were funded at 100%.
6. Mr. Haddad said that Groton Wellness was holding a ladies night on Thursday, November 12th and wanted to serve wine. He said that the application had just come in adding they were not aware they needed a one day license. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to consider granting the request.

Ms. Eliot moved that they approve the one day beer and wine liquor license for Groton Wellness's Ladies Night to be held on Thursday November 12th from 6-9pm. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0-1 with Mr. Schulman abstaining.

### **TOWN MANAGER'S CONTRACT**

Mr. Petropoulos said that should they decide next week when all members are present to renew the Town Manager's contract he wanted to ask that a salary survey be done. He said that he believed that one had been done and wanted to ask that the Personnel Board have a chance to review it. Ms. Doig said that one had been done and had been based on multiple factors. Mr. Schulman said that he didn't see a need for it to be reviewed by the Personnel Board. Mr. Petropoulos said that it was good practice for the Personnel Board to review it. Mr. Petropoulos asked Ms. Doig if she had done a salary survey before. Ms. Doig said that she had done them when she worked in the Town of Ayer adding that all her data came from the MMPA. Mr. Petropoulos said that he thought that needed to have a professional perspective. Mr. Schulman said that they had a professional perspective adding that the survey was done by a professional HR Director and took exception to his comments. Mr. Petropoulos said that the Personnel Board was an independent appointed board who could review the salary survey adding he was not alleging anything. Ms. Eliot suggested that Mr. Petropoulos get this information from Ms. Doig and review it himself for accuracy. Mr. Cunningham said that he was not sure why they were doing this. He said that they rely on HR and had been comfortable with this in the past adding he was not sure why this was coming up now. Mr. Petropoulos said that if the Board did not agree with this suggestion then he would let it go adding he would let it pass.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Petropoulos said that this agenda item was not coming up because of an issue. He said that it was the appearance of an individual that appointments coming before them were being rubber stamped and the Board was not being given the ability to object or play itself out. He said that he was not sure he agreed. Mr. Cunningham asked when the concerned was raised if Mr. Petropoulos talked to him about the process for them approving appointments. Mr. Petropoulos said that he did not.

Mr. Haddad said that he wanted to take a minute to review the process for the public. He said that if the vacancy was for a department head vacancy, he sets up a search committee to include a member of the Selectmen, Personnel Board, HR Director and department heads. He said that once the search is narrowed down, the HR director does a background and reference checks on the individuals. He said that having a member of the Board of Selectmen participate in the process acted as a conduit to the rest of the Board. He said that when it gets to Board of Selectmen, it's before you a week in advance. He said that when it comes to subordinate employees, he leaves this process to the HR Director and the department head. He said that he does this because that person is working for the department head directly. He said that once the HR Director and department head decide on a person, he then meets with them for a final conversation. He said that one could say he rubber stamps the decisions of the department heads. He said that in any case, the Board of Selectmen received this information a week in advance also. Mr. Haddad said that there had been times where members have had an issue with someone and asked him to pull it from the agenda and follow-up with them before placing it on the agenda again. He said that the rubber stamp was just an appearance adding that candidates were fully vetted before coming before the Board. Mr. Petropoulos asked about background checks. Mr. Haddad said that he reviews them adding there has been the occasion where someone was not offered the position because of a background check. Mr. Haddad said that background checks on department heads were done by the Police Department. The HR Director performs all CORI check and reference calls. Ms. Doig confirmed that it was a very detailed process. Mr. Schulman said that quite often appointments that they make appointments based on recommendations made by committees that they appointment. He said that there was also the occasion that more than one person applies for a seat and they in turn interview them and have ballot votes, etc.

Mr. Haddad said that not all of their decisions were perfect adding that they make mistakes and hire some that don't meet expectations. He said that in those cases they move quickly to correct the mistakes. He said that he thought this was a good discussion to have had adding that he wanted the public to understand the process and how things happen. Mr. Petropoulos said that there was very little he could add to the selection process adding that hiring and management of individuals needed to be left to the Town Manager.

Mr. Schulman said that he wanted to discuss moving their meetings back to 7pm. Mr. Haddad said that the employees like the 6pm start. Ms. Eliot agreed adding that she was in favor of keeping it at 6pm for the benefit of employees. Mr. Cunningham said that he was good with whatever. Ms. Judy Anderson said she found it difficult to get home and eat and get here by 6pm. Mr. Petropoulos said that it was really for the people who watch them adding it there was no way to tell how it served the community starting at 6pm. Mr. Haddad said that the meetings were replayed numerous times. Mr. Petropoulos asked if they received feedback from the public. Mr. Haddad said that they only received one comment from Ms. Anderson. Ms. Eliot said that the employees were their public also. Mr. Bruce Easom said that the 6pm start time was nice for committees with meetings at 7pm on the same night. He said that they are able to attend the Selectmen's meetings before their regular meeting and didn't have to suspend their meetings.

Ms. Eliot said that she noticed in their correspondence that Jennifer Mieth was resigning from the Board of Registrars. Mr. Haddad said that she did resign because it was a conflict for her to be on the Board of Register and be an officer on the democratic or republican town committee. He said that the Town Clerk would be notifying both political parties and requesting recommendations. He said it would be up to the Board to choose from those recommendations who to appoint.

Ms. Eliot said that she also noticed that they had received a letter in their correspondence that the give and take shop was closing and asked if they were looking for a new location. Mr. Haddad said that they were closing and not relocating. Ms. Eliot said that that had been a service the Town had provided for decades and was sad to see it closing. She suggested they maybe ask them to come into one of their future meetings.

### MINUTES

Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the regular session meeting minutes October 13, 2015. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Schulman moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:57pm. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

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

Stuart Schulman, Clerk

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respectfully *submitted*,  
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 12/7/15