

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
MINUTES SEPTEMBER 18, 2017
APPROVED**

BOS Members Present: Barry A. Pease, Vice Chair; Alison S. Manugian, Clerk; Rebecca H. Pine, Member
Members Absent: John G. Petropoulos; Joshua A. Degen
Also Present: Mark W. Haddad, Town Manager; Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Mr. Pease called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and reviewed the agenda.

There were no announcements.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad reviewed the Boards meeting schedule through Town Meeting as requested by Ms. Pine. He asked the Board to consider whether they should convene in Executive Session the following Monday to discuss budget guidance because it may affect collective bargaining. Mr. Pease said it might be possible to have an articulated conjecture regarding future negotiations but saw how they could go hand in hand. Mr. Green said that they should consult Mr. Degen as well but should add it to the agenda in case they decided they wanted to enter into Executive Session. Mr. Pease said he would argue for transparency and recommend that a summary of any budget guidance be given in Open Session afterwards.
2. Mr. Haddad said that Paula Martin would be retiring on September 29th and having advertised for the vacancy, they received 52 resumes for the Land Use Administrative Assistant position and interviewed 9 individuals. He said that he was bringing the appointment of Ms. Maureen Adema forward for ratification by the Board. He said that Ms. Adema was coming to the Town with a wealth of knowledge and experience from municipal building departments adding that her references were also impeccable. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to consider ratifying the appointment effective October 2, 2017 adding she was also the chosen candidate by the Land Use Director, Takashi Tada. Mr. Tada said that Ms. Adema's experience will allow for a seamless transition.

Ms. Pine moved to affirm the Town Manager's Appointment of Maureen Adema as the Land Use Administrative Assistant effective October 2, 2017. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Mr. Haddad said that for the vacancy of Assistant Assessor, they had received 37 resumes and interviewed 9 strong applicants. He said that Ms. Megan Foster rose to the top adding that she was from a long line of Assessors and had been involved in this industry since she was born. Mr. Haddad said that Ms. Foster had experience with appraisals and also had great references. Mr. Haddad said that he was very pleased to appoint Ms. Megan Foster as Assistant Assessor effective September 25, 2017 and asked the Board to ratify the appointment. Mr. Greeno said that they were looking for specific set of skills while conducting the interviews. He said that Ms. Foster had those skills adding that she had been doing cyclical inspections longer than he had. Mr. Black said he was also in favor of this appointment.

Ms. Manugian moved to affirm the Town Manager's Appointment of Megan Foster as Assistant Assessor effective September 25, 2017. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. *Ms. Manugian moved that they appoint Val Prest and Diana Keaney to the Recycling Committee term to end June 30, 2018. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*
5. Mr. Haddad said that they advertised to fill three vacancies on the newly established Prescott Oversight Committee. He said that he had reached out to several individuals as did the Friends of Prescott to recruit members. Mr. Haddad said that he was recommending that the Board appoint John Amaral, Heather Rielly, and An Hee Foley to the Committee. Ms. Manugian asked how this was advertised. Mr. Haddad said that there was an article in the newspaper about the need for volunteers to serve, that Mary Jennings had reached out to some individuals she thought might be interested and that he, Mr. Petropoulos and Mr. Degen had spoken to a few people about whether

they would be interested. Ms. Pine said she hoped that all three individuals would be present that night so they could have a discussion with them. She requested since there was no urgency with this, that this be rescheduled for another meeting. Mr. Pease asked if anyone had spoken to the Friends about these appointments. Mr. Haddad said that he had a conversation with Mr. Jennings and she had no objections. Ms. Pine asked Mr. Amaral why he was interested in being on this committee. John - family has lived here for 20 years. Prescott is something that will be front and center to the vitality of town. My background will work well with being a liaison between the tenant and BOS. Ms. Pine - you, John, are a perfect fit for this committee.

Ms. Manugian moved that they appoint John Amaral to a three-year term on the Prescott Oversight Committee beginning immediately. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Pine said that she wanted to discuss the process for bringing candidates forward for Committees. She said that she thought there should be a stronger process. She said that they were supposed to seek applicants and interview candidates but allowed an article in the newspaper to be their advertisement. She said she appreciated all the effort but that it was their process and they should do a better job at it. Mr. Pease said that he heard that there were two members of their board who were active in recruiting. Ms. Manugian said she agreed but said she was always happy to discuss policy.

6. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to designate Marlena Gilbert to the Municipal Audit Review Committee to replace Mr. Degen on the Committee.

Ms. Pine moved the appointment of Marlena Gilbert to Audit Review Committee as the School Committee's representative. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Green called the Finance Committee to order at 7:31pm. All were members present. Mr. Cunningham convened the meeting of the Senior Center Building Committee.

Mr. Haddad read the public hearing notice into record and asked the Board to open the public hearing.

Ms. Pine moved to open the public hearing. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Pease reviewed procedures for the public hearing on the warrant. He said that no positions would be taken that night due to two members being absent. He limited presentations to no longer than four minutes adding that he would also not tolerate disparaging comments.

Article 1: Mr. Jack Saball said that the petitioners stand by the summary submitted. Ms. Pine asked what the best placement of this article was. Mr. Pease said they could talk about that later on. Mr. Pease asked Mr. Saball why the petitioners choose not to request that the stones be removed entirely. Mr. Saball said he thought this would-be part of their presentation at Town Meeting adding he would save further comments until then. Mr. Pease asked what the petitioners were proposing, if anything, to reimburse donations already received. Mr. Saball said this was proper discussion for Town Meeting. Mr. Pease asked if labor and replacement of the stones would be included in the costs. Mr. Saball said that the matter had been contemplated. Mr. Pease asked if the Board was going to be asked to support a new permit for these markers if Article 1 passed. Mr. Saball said that the process needed to be followed by whomever handled the permit. Mr. Pease asked if the permit originally applied for stated the wording. Mr. Haddad said it did adding that a new application would have to go before the Sign Committee. Ms. Pine asked if an organization had been formed to collect money. Mr. Saball said they had not formally formed an organization adding it was still early in the discussion.

Article 2: Mr. Haddad said that he provided the Board with a memo that day that outlined their finances. He said that the FY18 budget approved was \$36M which included \$73K approved for call firefighter pay incentive. Mr. Haddad said that at that time they were \$183,950 under levy limit with an estimated tax rate of \$18.64. Mr. Haddad said that he was always very conservative when he estimated receipts and since the Spring Town Meeting, they were within \$7K of estimated number. Mr. Haddad said that they were asking for \$41,500 of additional tax revenue at the Fall Town Meeting which would raise the

tax rate by 3 cents. He said that their free cash had been certified at \$2,369,261 with the reason for the higher than usual number was because \$800K was not released to free cash when it should have been last year. He said that they had also had a good year for building permits and motor vehicle excise taxes. Ms. Dufresne explained why the \$800K was not released the previous year.

Article 3: Mr. Haddad reviewed the amounts being requested for a couple of budgets. Mr. Green asked about the \$5K being requested by the Sustainability Commission and asked how many other Committees had a line item for those types of expenditures. Mr. Haddad said that there were no others. Mr. Green asked if there was a policy for the meeting notetaker line item being requested. Mr. Pease said that there was a vote taken at a recent Board of Selectmen Meeting authorizing the Town Manager to go ahead with this request. Mr. Sjoberg questioned this being authorized prior to a town meeting vote. Mr. Green said he thought it set a precedent moving forward. Mr. Haddad said that he sent an email to the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen stating they would seek funding at town meeting. Mr. Haddad said that this money would reimburse the Town Manager's budget at Town Meeting. Mr. Pease said that what had been expended in the Town Manager's budget had been approved by the Spring Town Meeting. Mr. Haddad said that he promised the Sustainability Commission he would bring this forward but said they could hold off on it and put it through the regular budget process. Ms. Pine agreed.

Ms. Pine moved to remove the Sustainability Commissions \$5K request. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Article 4: Mr. Orcutt said that their transfer request was to cover their 25% cost share for upgrading the Pepperell Wastewater Treatment. Mr. Pease asked if there was any impact on the rate payers. Mr. Orcutt said that they had a rate increase in August to pay for the upgrade. Mr. Haddad said that this would come from the enterprises free cash.

Article 5: Mr. Haddad said that capital stabilization fund had a balance of \$118K. He said it was part of their financial policies to have 1.5% of operating budget placed in capital stabilization. Mr. Haddad said he was requesting a transfer of \$500K from free cash into this fund. He pointed out that a transfer required a 2/3 vote which was a higher threshold. Mr. Pease said that it looked better to Wall Street to have stabilization funds. Ms. Manugian asked what amount would be exactly 1.5% and what capital stabilization funds could be used for. Mr. Haddad said \$430K but he was asking for a little bit more. He said the money could be used for items they couldn't borrow for and only use it toward capital items and would continue to do so.

Article 6: Mr. Haddad said that stabilization fund currently had a balance of \$1.7M. He said he was looking for \$10K to meet the financial guideline of 5% of the operating budget. Ms. Manugian said she was struggling with the 5% recommended number. Mr. Haddad said that the 5% was DOR's recommended number. Mr. Prest asked if the 1.5% and 5% thresholds affected their bond rating. Mr. Haddad said it would adding Wall Street liked to see reserves. Mr. Green said that they had written policies based on best practices and DOR guidelines adding they were not excessive with their stabilization funds. Ms. Manugian said that she assumed the total spending included the schools. Mr. Haddad said it was inclusive of the full budget.

Article 7: Mr. Cunningham said that they would really like to build a senior center. He said that this article was seeking money to pay an architect to design a new building or renovation and addition to the existing. He said that bids would be opened on Wednesday. Mr. Haddad said that they anticipated the cost to be in neighborhood of \$400K of which \$225K would come from free cash and \$175K from receipts received (sale of Tarbell School and the Old Center Fire Station). Ms. Manugian asked who would work with the architect. Mr. Haddad said that the Senior Center Building Committee would work with designer per the charge of the Committee. Mr. Cunningham said that they would meet with the Selectmen to provide updates going forward. Mr. Pease asked if the motion could include "renovation" like the summary. Mr. Amaral asked if it could include "for renovation and expansion of current or new build". Ms. Shelp assured the public that they had never been looking for anything grandiose. She said that you always start at a higher cost and make cuts from there. She said that it would be up to the architects to be creative with space and costs adding they were looking for functionality.

Mr. Degen called into the meeting at 8:31pm.

Ms. Pine asked if the Designer Selection Policy would be distributed to the Town Meeting adding she thought it should be included. Mr. Haddad said they could do that.

Article 8: Mr. Haddad said that he was proposing that they create a capital stabilization fund for GDRSD. He said that this was not the stabilization fund Town Meeting approved 3 years ago. He said it would act like their municipal capital stabilization fund. He said he was proposing funding it with \$600K to start out with the money coming from free cash. Mr. Degen said he thought this was a brilliant idea adding that the capital needs of the district had been demonstrated. He thought it was a prudent idea to use free cash every year they could to add to this. He said that \$600K was \$100K more than he and Mr. Haddad had talked about adding that he thought \$500K was much more palatable. He said he would support \$500K not \$600K. Mr. Robertson said he too thought this was a good idea but also agreed with Mr. Degen. He thought that \$600K was a little too high right now adding that he thought \$400K was a good amount. He said that it was more like what the Groton side of capital costs would be. Mr. Robertson said that they also needed to be thinking long term in that the Schools needed to also put money into their capital fund. Ms. Leonard said she didn't understand why they needed to have a third separate stabilization fund. She said it was a 2/3 vote no matter what but agreed that they needed to salt away money for the school's capital needs. Mr. Sjoberg said he tended to agree that they already had funds in place. Mr. Green said that the school district's budget was way bigger than the Towns. He said he would not discount \$600K as the wrong number right now adding they knew there was potential for capital needs within the district. Mr. Pease said that the Town was dedicated to protecting the school's infrastructure and thought by highlighting and having a separate fund they were making a statement to the tax payers that the Town was aware of the districts capital needs. He said he didn't think this number was aggressive enough. Ms. Gilbert said it was very important that the district have 5% in stabilization funds on the municipal side. She added that she would like for the Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen to relook at the percentages spelled out within the financial policies. She said she wished the district could contribute toward their fund adding they were not at 5% yet. Mr. Degen said that they were also looking to fund \$350K for the school's phone and internet infrastructure which would mean the district would be getting \$900K. Mr. Robertson said that they should be covering what was coming up asking why they should be putting more in at this time.

Article 9: Mr. Haddad said that this article was to request funding for the GDRSD phone system and internet infrastructure. Ms. Gilbert said that they were in need of upgrading their phone lines and infrastructure adding this was also a safety issue.

Article 10: Mr. Haddad said that he had given this article some thought and would like to remove it and move the request into article #3. He said that this was going to be recurring expenses in the Assessor's budget. Mr. Greeno said that for the office to be the most productive he thought that the whole town needed to be measured and listed adding he didn't think between him and his new Assistant Assessor that they had the ability to get this done by 2022 as directed by DOR. He said he was hoping that after a couple of years they could bring this back in house but thought they needed to work to make sure their data was good and accurate. He said that a full measure and list was never done when they converted software from Patriot to Vision adding it hadn't been done in over 10 years. Mr. Haddad said that they would be going out to bid for this. Ms. Pine said it made sense that they do things the right way. Ms. Manugian asked about doing this all at once and not over a few years. Mr. Haddad said that they could leave the article and ask for the funds all at once. Mr. Green said it might be cost advantageous to do it all at one time. Mr. Pease asked if there was a problem with too much data for a relatively new office structure. Mr. Greeno said that if it were him, he would prefer to do it all at once. Mr. Degen asked if there was a financial benefit to do it all at once. Mr. Greeno said that when they did a full measure and list of personal property they received about \$72K in revenue back from it. Mr. Degen said he would support doing this all at once. Mr. Haddad said that the vendor would put all the information into the database.

Article 11: Ms. Collette said that the Town was awarded a Complete Streets grant in August for \$339K and because they have to hire an outside consultant to provide engineering, they were requesting \$45K to cover design engineering for the crosswalks, flashing pedestrian lights and ADA curb cuts on Main Street. Mr. Degen applauded the Committee for receiving this grant. Mr. Pease said he didn't fully understand that they needed to fund the engineering if they received the grant. Mr. Delaney said that the former Land Use Director, Laurie Bonavita didn't know that they needed to pay for engineering adding they learned after she left that the Town needed to scope out the engineering.

Article 12: Mr. Pease asked that they table a discussion on offsetting the tax rate for the time being because of the possibility for a lengthy discussion.

Article 13: Mr. Haddad asked the Board to consider opening the warrant for the purpose of adding this article.

Ms. Pine moved to open the October 23, 2017 Fall Town Meeting Warrant for the purpose of adding an article submitted by GELD. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call: Degen-aye; Pease-aye; Pine-aye; Manugian-aye.

Ms. Pine moved that they add an article to the warrant for sale or lease of 23 Station Ave as submitted by GELD Commissioners to the October 23, 2017 Town Meeting Warrant. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call: Degen-aye; Pease-aye; Pine-aye; Manugian-aye.

Ms. Pine moved to close the October 23, 2017 Fall Town Meeting Warrant. Mr. Pease seconded the motion. Roll Call: Degen-aye; Pease-aye; Pine-aye; Manugian-aye.

Mr. Haddad said that bids were due that week. He said that Town Meeting would need to authorize the Board to dispose of the property if there was a bid submitted acceptable to the Commissioners. Mr. Pease asked if they could have The Commissioners in to discuss any bids received. Ms. Manugian said it would be helpful for her to understand where the funds would go. Mr. Haddad said that it would go to GELD to offset the cost of the Downes Property purchase.

Article 14 & 15: Mr. Haddad said that these articles pertained to setting up an account for the Four Corners Sewer project.

Article 16: Mr. Haddad said that the Board had the authority to place an advisory article on the warrant. He said that a vote under this article would be advisory only adding he was recommending that this article be pulled. Ms. Pine said she was not in favor of this article and agreed with removing it. Ms. Manugian agreed. Mr. Degen said that he saw no reason to have this contained in the warrant since it was advisory.

Mr. Degen moved to remove this article from the warrant. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call: Degen-aye; Pease-aye; Pine-aye; Manugian-aye.

Article 17: Mr. Haddad said that this clarified the CPC appointment process. Mr. Pease said he thought this should go to the Bylaw Review Committee or be run by them for a recommendation. Mr. Degen said he was fine with what they were asking for.

Article 18: Mr. Haddad said that they had cleaned up this proposed bylaw up after last week's discussions. He said that Town Counsel said the proposed complied with the law adding that no one could dump trash on the street and if someone did, they would be fined. Mr. Haddad said that fines would also be assessed if snow was thrown in the streets. Mr. Degen asked for clarification on the modifications. Mr. Haddad said that they removed all reference to private property. Mr. Degen said he was all set with the changes made. Ms. Pine said that this did not address dumping on private property. Mr. Delaney said that there were laws to cover that.

Article 19: Mr. Haddad said that the public hearing to discuss the layout of Chamberlains Mill Lane was scheduled for September 25th.

Article 20: Mr. Steve Palmer said that he had been exploring an opportunity to change the Old Sacred Heart Church into an arts theater. He said that he had presented the plan to various groups and the support had been very strong. He said that because he had a limited budget to draw from he needed to know if he could rezone this property to acquire investors. Mr. Degen recused himself from the discussion because he had been helping Mr. Palmer acquire investors. Mr. Haddad said that if Town Meeting rezoned the property it didn't matter who owned it, it would operate under that zoning. Mr. Palmer thought it only changed zoning if and when he acquired the property which was not the case. Mr. Green asked if Mr. Palmer was under an agreement with the seller. Mr. Palmer said he was not adding he was hesitant to lock into a P&S without knowing if the zoning could be changed.

The Finance Committee left the meeting to meet separately at 9:55pm.

Mr. Haddad asked the Board to continue the public hearing until 7:15pm the following week.

Ms. Pine moved to continue the public hearing. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call: Degen-aye; Pease-aye; Pine-aye; Manugian-aye.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- 7. Mr. Haddad presented a spreadsheet of Executive Session meeting minutes that had taken place since the last time the Board reviewed the minutes. The Board did not release any previously non-released minutes.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Haddad asked the Board if they wanted to take a vote that warrant articles received from Groton Dunstable Regional School Committee shall automatically be placed in the warrant. Ms. Manugian said she would feel more comfortable if this was a policy and not just a record of a vote. Mr. Haddad said he would bring back a draft policy to their next meeting.

MINUTES

Ms. Pine moved that they approve Parts 1 and 2 of the Executive Session meeting minutes of July 24, 2017 and not release them. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call: Degen-aye; Pease-aye; Pine-aye; Manugian-aye.

Mr. Pease adjourned the meeting at 10:07pm.

Approved: _____
Alison Manugian, Clerk

_____ respectfully submitted,
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 10/2/17