

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
MINUTES OCTOBER 2, 2017
APPROVED**

BOS Members Present: Joshua A. Degen, Chair; Barry A. Pease, Vice Chair; Alison S. Manugian, Clerk; Rebecca H. Pine, Member; John G. Petropoulos;

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Pease said that the Police had rescheduled their firearms training due to several situations in September and would have an aggressive schedule at the range for firearms training during the month of October.

Mr. Haddad reminded the Board of their Open Meeting Law training on Tuesday night. He said that the training would be videotaped and broadcast live.

Mr. Degen expressed his condolences to all those who lost loved ones in the Las Vegas shooting.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Ms. Ellen Baxendale asked for an update on meeting notification. Mr. Haddad said it was still in process.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad said that he had appointed Jennifer Wade as a Custodian/Transfer Station Attendant for the Department of Public Works and asked the Board to consider ratifying the appointment.

Ms. Manugian moved to ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Jennifer Wade as a Custodian/Transfer Station Attendant. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to consider approving a One Day Beer and Wine License for First Parish Church for Saturday, October 7, 2017 from 7:00pm-10:00pm for Liverpool Night.

Mr. Pease made a motion to approve the request. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to consider approving a One Day Beer and Wine License for First Parish Church for Saturday, November 4, 2017 from 6:30pm-9:30pm for An Evening of Irish Songs and Stories with Kate Chadbourne.

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the request. Mr. Pease seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

MINUTES

Ms. Pine moved to approve the meeting minutes of September 18, 2017. Mr. Pease seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0-2 with Mr. Petropoulos and Mr. Degen abstaining.

LIAISON REPORTS

Mr. Pease said he attended the last meeting of the CPC. He said that the Board was forwarded an email from Mr. Easom explaining their warrant article on appointment terms. He said that the Planning Board reached out to CPC about having their representative appointed yearly adding that the CPC did not reach out to the Selectmen as they wanted continuity. He said he had no issue with their decision to not reach out to the Board of Selectmen about the at-large appointments. Ms. Pine asked if they were encouraged to speak to this at Town Meeting. Mr. Pease said he did.

Mr. Petropoulos said that the Non-Profit Council met that day and discussed providing a yearly report to the Town Meeting. He said that the report should only take about five minutes and would be led by Neelkanth Mishra from the new temple.

Mr. Haddad said that the Audit Review Committee met on Friday. He said that they were hoping to schedule their next meeting for sometime within the next two weeks to discuss additional information they had requested from department heads and Matrix. He said that they would plan to meet with the Board after Town Meeting.

7:15PM - ELECTRIC LIGHT COMMISSIONERS – 23 STATION AVE

Mr. Kevin Kelly said that they put out a second RFP for the sale or lease of the property where the old garages were located on Station Ave. He said that the Commissioners unanimously supported a proposal they received and were present to request that a warrant article be added to the Fall Town Meeting warrant. Mr. Haddad said that the Town Meeting needed to vote to authorize the Board to dispose of the property.

Mr. Degen asked who the respondent was. Mr. Andrew McElroy introduced himself and his family as the respondent. He said that they wanted to, in addition to the renovation they were currently undertaking at the Old Fire Station, rehab the old garages at the end of Station Ave to include things like an ice cream stand, vegetable stand, bike shop, etc. He said that they were also interested in putting solar panels on the roof and having a charging station for cars. Mr. Degen asked if they would be using the same footprint. Mr. McElroy said that they would adding they would like to add a brick façade to the building. Mr. Degen asked about parking and access. Mr. Haddad said he had a meeting with the McElroy's and the Town Planner that day and thought it might make sense to construct a parking lot behind Prescott and an access way from Prescott to the dirt road leading out to Broadmeadow. He said that the McElroy's were going to investigate the cost to do this and get back to him.

Mr. Petropoulos thanked the McElroy's for wanting to better the property and asked if they would operate the space or lease it out. Mr. McElroy said they did not have the details ironed out yet. Ms. Pine thanked them also and asked if the Town was giving up any rights to the dirt road. Mr. Haddad said they were not adding it was a right of way out to Broadmeadow. He said the Town should probably look at finishing the road. Mr. Degen said that there was a vision for that area as well as the need for municipal parking. Mr. Haddad agreed adding that this would finish the vision for Station Ave. Mr. Pease asked about zoning. Mr. Haddad said they would have to apply for a special permit in the overlay district through the Planning Board. Ms. Manugian asked about the solar panels and penetration to the other side of the building. Mr. McElroy said he didn't believe there were structural issues with the building and thus didn't think there would be an issue on the other side of the building. Mr. Degen suggested looking to see if there might be grant opportunities available for the road improvements.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT - CONTINUE

4. Mr. Haddad said that the Board needed to take final positions on some articles contained in the Fall Town Meeting warrant.
 - Article 13 – Unanimous support
 - Article 5 - Unanimous support
 - Article 6 - Unanimous support
 - Article 7 – Mr. Haddad said they were holding interviews for Design Architects on Wednesday beginning at 8am for the Senior Center and would hold OPM interviews soon after. Mr. Degen said there was no ballot question this time only a vote at Town Meeting. Mr. Petropoulos said it would be helpful of some sense of the range of cost for the project at Town Meeting.
 - Article 8 – Mr. Haddad said that the Finance Committee voted 5-2 in favor of creating a GDRSD capital stabilization fund and voted unanimously to fund it at \$500K. Mr. Petropoulos said that those voting against the creation of the fund just didn't see the need to open a separate account where the Town had one already. Mr. Degen asked if this could only be used for capital items. Mr. Haddad said it could be used with a Town Meeting vote for anything but hoped it would only be used for capital items as that was the intent.
 - Article 10 – Mr. Haddad said that they need to have an exact amount for a tax offset listed in the warrant. He said that he still planned to use \$272K in free cash to offset the debt in the spring. Ms. Manugian said she was still in the same place as the last time they discussed this adding she would be comfortable voting against the \$100K originally discussed adding they had tremendous needs within the town. She said that returning money

created a cliff for the next year. Mr. Degen said he was changing his position to be against offsetting the tax rate. Ms. Pine, Mr. Pease and Mr. Petropoulos were still in favor of this. Mr. Robertson said that this would reduce the average \$7K tax bill by \$25.00 and agreed with those against doing this. He said there were too many things going on right now. Mr. Pease said that he believed his money belonged in his pocket if it was not going to be used. Mr. Degen said he agreed but was also looking at things that might come down the pike.

Mr. Kevin Lindemer thanked the Board for the level of fiscal discipline they had shown over the past few years and added that he would rather they didn't save his money for something unknown coming up in the future.

- Article 16 - CPC bylaw - Unanimous support
- Article 19 – Mr. Haddad said he received a phone call the other day that there was a P&S in progress for the old Sacred Heart Church by someone looking to put housing there. He said he had not received official notification from the petitioners to withdraw adding it would still be printed in the warrant. Mr. Haddad said the article could be withdrawn at Town Meeting.

Mr. Petropoulos moved to authorize the printing of the warrant. Mr. Pease seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Mr. Haddad said that he received budget guidance the week before to not exceed 3%. He said that this guidance had not been voted on by the Board of Selectmen but received unanimous support from the Finance Committee. He asked the Board to tell him what he had to keep municipal spending to and to direct him to work with Dunstable and the School Committee to work on a percentage.

Mr. Haddad said that a member of the School Committee had made a statement the week before that the Town's budgeting practices were "stockpiling tax dollars by purposely and grossly underestimating revenues and over estimating expenses." He said that he had prepared a letter that he was going to send to the School Committee adding he hoped they would address it at their next meeting. Mr. Petropoulos said he was very disappointed with the statement made by a member of the School Committee. He said that they needed to work together and not force themselves apart. He said that questions could be provided with answers and things could be resolved in a more useful manner. Mr. Degen said he agreed with Mr. Petropoulos adding that the Selectmen were supporting many initiatives the schools were bringing forward and thought there were better ways to handle things. Mr. Haddad said he hoped that the good communication with the School Department over last 4 years would continue in FY19. He said that he believed that if the Board gave him guidance to meet the needs of the schools while keeping Dunstable in mind, that he could see that municipal spending not exceed 3%. He added that the School budget may impact the municipal side. Ms. Gilbert said speaking as an individual member that it was not unrealistic to say school operations would grow less than 4.3-4.5%. She said that with the loss of Title 1, foreign exchange reimbursement, and insurance coming in higher than expected, that was an additional \$380K they would have to come up with this year. She said that their E&D was only at 1.5% which was not a healthy level.

Ms. Pine asked for clarification on what the guidance being given was. Mr. Petropoulos said it was 3% growth on the municipal budget while maintaining increase without an override. He said it didn't sound like 3% on the school side would maintain services adding it was an exercise in futility to say 3% on the municipal side. Mr. Haddad said that the guidance of not exceeding 3% on the municipal side while working collaboratively with the schools to achieve that would do just that. He said he wanted to be careful thought that he didn't decimate the municipal side. Ms. Manugian said she was more comfortable asking the Town Manager to maintain on the municipal side rolling forward. Mr. Haddad said that the only problem with that was he had 7 union contracts up on June 30th and to roll things forward and not know what the impact was would be difficult. Mr. Petropoulos said that 3% was a level service budget. Mr. Pease asked what 1% of municipal budget was. The answer was \$135K. Mr. Pease said that they schools just told them they had a \$380K need and based on what they were talking about, they would be short. Ms. Pine said she thought there was some merit in a percentage guidance and thought a combination of 3% level services and working with the School Committee was something they should stick with. Mr. Petropoulos questioned doing this if it was not something they were able to do. Mr. Robertson said that there would come a time when

where the school budget had to level out. He said that those were decisions the Town needed to make adding there had to be a balance. Mr. Petropoulos asked about providing two budgets; one at 3% and one at 2.5%. Ms. Gilbert said that as a taxpayer she was not for cutting the heck out of the municipal budget but also not interested in funding schools at a level that was not in the best interest of their kids.

Mr. Pease did not agree with 3% guidance adding it was too aggressive. He said he would be more comfortable with a level service budget understanding it was hard to do. He said he was far more comfortable with 2% and zero. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to give him an opportunity to be the manager and allow him to meet the needs of the municipality while working with the School Committee in developing the FY19 budget. Mr. Haddad said that an exercise in multiple budgets kill morale and voiced his concern about providing multiple budgets.

Ms. Manugian moved to direct the Town Manager to develop an FY19 preliminary budget as level employee and service budget working in conjunction with the School Committee and Administration to not exceed anticipated revenue growth. Mr. Pease seconded the motion.

Mr. Petropoulos asked if this included capital. Mr. Haddad said that this would be operational only and that excluded debt would also not be included.

The motion carried 4-1-0 with Mr. Petropoulos opposed.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Pease said that it would be useful for new members and the public to receive all information as it relates to the budget process. He said that the initial discussion and brainstorming was done more so in a private sub-committee meeting than in the public. Mr. Degen said that they had had and heard a robust discussion for the past two weeks Mr. Pease said it would be his recommendation that they come into a meeting and get to the focal point as a group. Mr. Degen asked if Mr. Pease was suggesting they do away with the annual pre-meeting of the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee Chairs and Town Manager. Mr. Pease said he was expressing the reality of how this affected him adding it drove him the wrong way. He said he wanted to have more participation in budget guidance. Mr. Haddad said he understood the concern but explained that he used that meeting of the Chairs to really understand and see if the numbers made sense. Mr. Petropoulos suggested that they make this part of the policies and procedures going forward.

Mr. Pease said there had been a few instances where discussions had been happening between a couple of members over a period of time. He said he thought there needed to be notification sent to the rest of the Board. He said they all knew they couldn't break the Open Meeting Law but there were some impression things were being done behind closed doors even though that was not what was going on. Ms. Manugian agreed adding there was no issue or intent but the feeling like she was hearing about something that had been ongoing in the background. She said it put her in a difficult position adding it would be helpful to know what was going on. Mr. Degen said he couldn't think of a time that meetings had been going on longer than maybe 2 meetings. Ms. Pine said she also would like to know what was going on when even when she not involved but also thought that sometimes that might be unavoidable. Mr. Petropoulos said that there were times when it made a lot of sense to not disclose some things adding he would hate to be constrained by procedural "gotchas". Mr. Degen said that as elected officials it was not in their best interest to bring half-baked ideas to the board. Ms. Manugian agreed adding that the element of a half-baked idea strengthened if they worked on it as a team. She said it was a balancing act. Mr. Degen said a lot of ideas were hatched through those smaller meetings also.

Mr. Degen adjourned the meeting at 8:57pm.

Approved: _____
Alison Manugian, Clerk

_____ respectfully submitted,
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 11/13/17