

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING  
MINUTES NOVEMBER 20, 2017  
APPROVED**

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

**Members Absent:** Barry A. Pease

**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. Haddad wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and said that the Town Hall hours would be 8-1 on Wednesday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, closed on Thursday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> and closed on Friday, November 24<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Pine said she attended the Veteran's Day celebration and wondered why no one from the BOS was asked to speak at the ceremony. She said that one of them would have been more than happy to speak. Mr. Petropoulos said that they had always been asked to attend but not asked to speak. Mr. Degen said that they all respected the veterans in the country but was disappointed the Board was overlooked.

Ms. Pine said that she had always felt grateful to live in Groton, was grateful for what Groton was and in her newly elected position was personally grateful for the dedicated employees who were generous with their time, and a huge number of non-profit organizations who were adding to the quality of life. She said she was also grateful to serve with her fellow board members who had helped her be a Selectman.

Mr. Petropoulos said that the NESSP Temple was hoping to open that week but was still going through some last-minute punch list items. He told those interested to keep an eye out for status updates.

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Mr. Richard Lewis said he was not opposed to charity and the music venue but deeply opposed the BOS lowering the permit fee in an executive session. He said he thought it should have been done in public session especially where it was a non-taxable entity.

Ms. Marlina Gilbert invited the Board to the School Committee meeting on November 29<sup>th</sup> where they would be discussing the audit recommendations. She said that also thought it was forward thinking of the Board to decrease the Indian Hill permit fee adding there was a lot to be benefited by having Indian Hill there.

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

1. Mr. Haddad presented the Board with a proposed free cash policy. He said that the policy was drafted by Mr. Green, Mr. Petropoulos and himself with comments from the Finance Committee, Finance Team and Board of Selectmen having been incorporated already. Mr. Haddad reviewed the policy and the ways in which free cash would be used. He said free cash would not be used to fund operating expenses. Mr. Petropoulos said that they should be thinking about using free cash to offset the tax rate all the time and not just some of the time adding he thought it should be brought to the top of the priority list. Mr. Haddad said that the list was not a priority list even though that was how it appeared. Mr. Petropoulos suggested they prioritize the list. Mr. Degen said that the wording under section 2 did not work now that they had a GDRSD Cap Stab Fund recently approved. Mr. Robertson said that it said "excluding the GDRSD fund" (meaning the District's own fund). Mr. Haddad said they could add the words "the town created" to clarify which GDRSD Cap Stab Fund the policy was referring to under sections 3 and 5. Ms. Gilbert said that the GDRSD Cap Stab Fund was under the control of the School Committee and was a line item under their operating budget. She said that the School Committee was developing their own policy for the districts E&D and would be looking to Dunstable and Groton's policy on developing theirs.

Ms. Pine said she was okay with the policy as it was written and did not have enough experience to put the items free cash could be used for in a priority list. Ms. Manugian agreed adding that priorities changed through time. Mr. Degen suggested adding a short statement to clarify that it was not a priority list and that things were not listed in any particular order. Mr. Haddad said he would add the words "these were in no particular order and things may vary from year to year." Mr. Petropoulos said he didn't think it was necessary. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to adopt the policy with the addition of the words "town created."

*Ms. Manugian made the motion. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

2. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to designate one member to work with him and the Finance Committee representative to update the financial policies. Mr. Degen volunteered.
3. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to consider approving a one-day beer and wine license for First Parish Church for the Caring Committee Cuisine event to be held on Saturday, December 2, 2017 from 6:00pm-9:00pm.

*Ms. Manugian made the motion. Ms. Pine seconded the motion and explained what the Caring Committee did adding this was a fundraiser to replenish the amount they could provide in gas and food cards. The motion carried unanimously.*

#### **SENIOR CENTER BUILDING COMMITTEE UPDATE**

Peter Cunningham; John Amaral and Kathy Shelp were in attendance.

Mr. Cunningham said that they had been meeting for a couple of months with the Architect and OPM. He said that they were looking at the site and building and how best to work things adding they were hoping to be able to use some of the adjacent property also. He said there was a conservation restriction on the adjacent property but they were hoping to transfer some of that restriction to another part of the current Senior Center land. He said they had reviewed a couple of different site plans and thought they had one they preferred. He said they had also been discussing add/renovate vs. new construction and voted that morning to go with new construction and have the building be a one level building.

Ms. Manugian said the update sounded good and hoped to see some drawings as they went along. She asked where the current programs and offices would go in the meantime. Mr. Haddad said they were planning on using the Country Club for programs and Legion Hall for admin offices. Ms. Pine asked for more detail on how they evaluated new vs. renovation. Mr. Amaral said that they worked closely with the OPM and Architect on a number of different factors. He said a 3 stop elevator would add an additional \$150K to the current building to make it assessible. He said they also looked at a number of different locations on the lot and we were limited with parking spaces if they tried to leave the current building. He said the 60 parking spaces did not meet the needs of the programs. Building new and reconfiguring the location on the site allowed them to achieve the desired parking spaces. Ms. Pine asked about the size of building. Mr. Amaral said the Architect was coming in originally in excess of 12K sqft which they told him was a non-starter. Mr. Amaral said they were looking at a building closer to 11K sqft. He said they were also discussing making this serve as an emergency shelter for West Groton. Mr. Degen said that the number at town meeting was between 9K and 11K sqft adding he would like to see it kept below the max number. Mr. Cunningham said that was something they were still working through. He said they were also being mindful of the additional needs along with the budget range expressed at Town Meeting. Mr. Petropoulos said he was impressed with the new vs. renovation analysis they did but was not sure he wanted to spend extra money on an emergency shelter but was willing to hear what they had to say. Mr. Degen asked about the septic system and whether it would have to be abandoned. Mr. Amaral said the septic system was part of the all-in construction costs.

Mr. Robertson said there was confusion within the Finance Committee between new vs. reno and asked the Committee consider putting costs into both a reno of the current building and into new construction together. Mr. Amaral said that real numbers were put toward bringing the current building to code adding it was well over \$1M to do that. He said they would also need to add an additional 5K sqft to the building for program space which added an additional million dollars. He said that to make the building equipped for an emergency shelter, the only thing that appeared to be an added cost was the addition of showers. He said the rooms could be converted to meet the needs of an emergency shelter. Mr. Cunningham said

that it would cost them additional money to task the architect to do two different designs (reno and new construction) like what Mr. Robertson was asking.

Ms. Gilbert asked the Committee to consider what they were investing in. She thought that seeing the drawings and hearing where programs would take place was enlightening. She thought that thinking about it as just sqft could be short sided. She said they needed to look at it as a multi-use purpose. Mr. Degen asked Mr. Haddad to keep the BOS apprised of the meetings coming up. Mr. Cunningham said he would be copying the Board on all their agendas.

Mr. Richard Lewis said that the present site was only accessible with one bridge to the rest of the town and thought that they should be looked into. Mr. Amaral said that was one of the reasons both chiefs supported that location.

**LIAISON REPORTS**

Mr. Petropoulos said that the NRWA was looking for people to participate in the scenic river plans.

Mr. Petropoulos said he received questions about Groton Schools purchase of land on Farmers Row. Mr. Haddad said that Groton School had paid property tax on that property and would continue to do so. Mr. Degen said that this was something that was negotiated a number of years ago. He added that they had just received a PILOT payment from Groton School in the amount of \$113K.

Mr. Degen said that the Affordable Housing Trust had not met in a number of months but there had been a lot of talk about the "loan" they made the developer. He reiterated that this was not a loan but an investment and were still working to try to cover the funds.

**MINUTES**

*Mr. Petropoulos moved to approve the Regular Session meeting minutes of October 30, 2017. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0-1 with Mr. Degen abstaining.*

Mr. Degen asked for a motion to adjourn regular session and enter into executive session and not return to open session.

*Ms. Manugian made a motion to enter into Executive Session with no intent to return to Open Session pursuant to MGL, c.30A, Section 21(a)(7) – “to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements” for the purpose of reviewing and approving Executive Session meeting minutes. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Pine-aye; Petropoulos-aye; Degen-aye*

Open session adjourned to executive session at 8:20pm.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Alison Manugian, Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_ respectfully submitted,  
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 12/11/17