

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
NOVEMBER 3, 2003  
REGULAR SESSION MINUTES  
“APPROVED”**

Present: Thomas D. Hartnett, Chair; George F. Dillon, Jr., Vice Chair; John L. Saball, Clerk; Peter S. Cunningham, Member; Virginia C. Wood, Member (arrived at 7:05 p.m.; Administrative Officer Jean E. Kitchen; and Kathleen Newell, Office Assistant.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

**Treasurer Christine Collins – Treasurer Notes – Loan \$4.9m @ 3.79%**

Ms. Christine Collins was present for this portion of the meeting. Ms. Collins stated that she had submitted closing documents for the Town's \$4,935,000 municipal purpose loan and documents for the refinance of \$1,100,000 in existing loans. Ms. Collins stated that the Town had received an upgrade in its bond rating from A2 to A+, which resulted in an interest rate of 3.79% for the 4.9m and 2.60% for the 1.1m.

*Mr. Cunningham moved to authorize the Treasurer to borrow \$4,935,000 @ 3.79 for 2003 Series A Bonds from FTN Capital Markets and \$1,100,408.55 @ 2.6% for 2003 Series B Bonds from Fidelity Capital Markets per the verbiage in the bond document dated November 18, 2003 (enclosed herein). Mr. Dillon seconded. Unanimous vote.*

**Fire Protection Study**

Mr. Chris Kelley, Mr. Gordon Newell, Mr. Tom Orcutt, Mr. Jack Risdon, Mr. Bobby Blood and Mr. Stuart Shuman were present for this portion of the meeting.

The committee submitted a report on behalf of a “voluntary” Study Committee appointed by the Board of Selectmen in 2002 comprised of representatives of the BOS, Fire Chief, Finance Committee, Board of Water Commissioners and Water Superintendents from the Groton

Water Department and West Groton Water Supply District. The Committee was charged with reviewing the 1993 Fire Protection Study. The FY93 System allocated funds based solely upon the number of hydrants within the municipal water system on a flat fixed fee dollar amount. The present formula determines an assessment to each utility based upon the area of coverage within their respective water supply areas, a percentage of their operating budgets, and a factor taking into account the volume and duration of fire flows at a number of key delivery point within each respective water distribution system and/or water supply area. A nominal amount is assessed to offset the maintenance and upkeep of each hydrant that is in service with each water system. Since the 1993 report a number of aspect of providing fire protection within the respective water supply systems have changed. A second storage tank went into service in West Groton, water flow is now supported from two separate sites increasing flow; the water distribution system in West Groton has been expanded to provide coverage in new subdivisions. Both water supply systems have made significant improvements to their fire hydrants. The assessment of taxpayer funding also assigns some of the cost of providing fire flow capabilities to the owners of all property in Groton. Tax based payments retain a certain influence for the fire department and the town in determining how these funds are spent. Ms. Wood asked if the reason for the hydrant fees was tied to fire protection, and if so she recommended taking another look at stabilization accounts for capital improvements. Mr. Newell stated that the reason for the tank was for fire protection. Mr. Orcutt stated that the Water Departments were trying to reduce reliance on town funds for fire protection. Chief Bosselait requested the name of the charge be changed from hydrant fees to fire protection fees. Ms. Wood and Ms. Kitchen concurred that the fire protection study needs to be reviewed yearly. Mr. Cunningham requested that the item be put on the Board's future agenda to be discussed.

**Harmonious Development – Gibbet Hill Farm Restaurant**

Ms. Wood recused herself at 7:50 and left the room.

Mr. Josh Webber was present for this portion of the meeting.

Ms. Kitchen stated that the harmonious development by-law gives the Board an opportunity to review very basic plans; the Board then submits their comments to the Planning Board and Building Inspector. The Board reviewed an architectural plan of the project. Mr. Webber explained that they are going to incorporate the barn into a restaurant and function hall, trying to keep the building similar to the existing structure. Mr. Webber stated that the building

inspector is ready to issue a permit, and the permit allows for 200 seats in the restaurant and 200 seats in the function hall. Mr. Hartnett inquired when the expected opening date would be. Mr. Webber stated that he hoped to start construction very soon and hoping for a mild winter the target date would be in September 2004. The Board requested that Ms. Kitchen send comments to the Planning Board and Building Inspector. Ms. Wood returned at 7:55 p.m.

### **Personnel Board**

Ms. Joan Hutchinson and Ms. Pam Keith were present for this portion of the meeting. Ms. Hutchinson stated that as a result of a debate on inequitable healthcare contributions between Groton-Dunstable Regional School (GDRS) District and By-Law Town Employees, the Personnel Board had done a benefits study of the By-Law employees and Bargaining Unit employees. Ms. Hutchinson referenced the comparison of contributions of survey towns. The GDRS District contributes a flat dollar premium for health insurance and 65% of the Dental Plan, whereas the Town provides zero dental contributions. Ms. Hutchinson reviewed the additional benefits provided to the Bargaining Units and School District, which are not enjoyed by By-Law employees. Ms. Hutchinson stated that overall the Bargaining Units have richer benefits than the By-Law employees.

Ms. Hutchinson reviewed part-time employee benefits; highlighting the potential costs associated should all part-time employees participate in health coverage. The Personnel Board recommends that the Board of Selectmen consider revising the contribution level for FY2005.

### **Lost Lake/Knops Pond Weed Management Update and Committee Charge Change**

Dr. William Egers stated that ACEC mandates that there be a management committee with all towns that have great ponds. Dr. Eger further stated that the Town has a large investment in lake properties and the Committee has concentrated on the things that they could do. The request is to create a sub-committee to review all the ponds within the town's boundaries.

*Mr. Cunningham moved to approve Groton Great Pond Management Advisory Committee for the purpose of: researching issues of lake management that relate to health, safety, water quality, environmental protection, and the preservation of property values, of the Great Ponds located within Groton and make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen regarding the same in order to provide for a balanced targeted usage appropriate for each water body's unique situation, as a subcommittee of the Lost Lake/Knops Pond Weed Management Advisory Committee with at least 7 and no more than 10 members. Mr. Dillon seconded. Unanimous vote.*

Dr. Egers gave an update on the Lost Lake/Knops Pond Drawdown. The drawdown is in limbo and probably will not happen this year. The Conservation Commission has not been told whether they can issue conditions. Dr. Egers stated that the Committee would request that the Board of Selectmen would allow the drawdown to resume next year, and during the year it would give the Committee an opportunity to work on the wells. Ms. Kitchen informed Dr. Egers that if they were going to have any capital expenses to fill out a capital plan.

### **Growth Management Committee – Community Preservation Act (CPA)**

Mr. Chuck McKinney, Mr. Scott Wilson, and Mr. Steve Webber were present for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. McKinney that the GMAC (Growth Management Advisory Committee) had met to discuss the Community Preservation Act (CPA) which when adopted by a community, provides that the town commits a portion of its property taxes to preserve open space, provide affordable housing, develop recreational facilities, and preserve historic resources. In return, the state provides guaranteed matching funds for these activities. Mr. McKinney stated that the Community Preservation Trust administers the matching funds, which are distributed once a year in October to all the towns who have passed the act and raised the funds. If funds are not fully distributed there is a second distribution, which takes place and is only open to towns that have adopted the 3% surcharge. Ms. Wood asked if a committee needs to be put together either appointed or elected and if GMAC would take over this committee. Mr. McKinney stated that GMAC would not take over the Committee; the Board of Selectmen would create a new committee. Mr. Cunningham asked if each board would appoint their own representative. Mr. McKinney stated that the Committee controls the money and the Town cannot spend monies without the Committee's blessing. Ms. Kitchen stated that people didn't feel comfortable with that. Ms. Wood suggested a layout of cost analysis of the CPA was necessary. The Board concurred they would like to further pursue this. Mr. Cunningham stated he would like to target it to the Town Meeting date. Mr. McKinney stated that if the Board thought there was any chance they wanted this on the Town Meeting warrant, it is crucial not to wait until finding out what the state plan is, but to work towards finding necessary information. Mr. Wilson suggested a major public awareness education campaign be promoted. Mr. Dillon suggested looking back at objections presented and address those as well as looking at other towns that are involved.

Ms. Kitchen stated she would prepare a committee charge for the following meeting.

**Zoning Board of Appeals Associate Appointment – Jay Prager**

*Mr. Cunningham moved to appoint Jay Prager to the Zoning Board of Appeals Associate Member for the un-expired vacant one-year term to expire June 30, 2004. Ms. Wood seconded. Unanimous vote.*

**Alternate Electrical Inspector – John Dee**

*Mr. Cunningham moved to appoint John Dee as the Alternate Electrical Inspector one-year term to expire June 30, 2004. Ms. Wood seconded. Unanimous vote.*

**Review Regular Session Minutes of October 27, 2003**

*Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the Regular Session Minutes of October 27, 2003 as amended. Mr. Saball seconded. Unanimous vote.*

**Selectmen Liaison Updates**

Mr. Saball stated he had attended an EMS meeting, which highlighted some radio communication problems.

Mr. Dillon stated that the Thompson Pond dredging is completed as far as it will go, the port-a-dam will be removed this week and they are digging up a portion of the parking lot.

Mr. Cunningham stated he had met with the Council on Aging trustees and was impressed with what they are doing.

Mr. Cunningham stated he would like to commend and offer praise to the EMT's, in their handling of an injured bicyclist.

Ms. Wood stated that she was working with a group starting to review whether our by-laws are too cumbersome to start a business in town.

*Mr. Hartnett moved to adjourn at 9:15 p.m. Mr. Dillon seconded. Unanimous vote.*

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
John L. Saball, Clerk

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*Respectfully submitted,*  
Kathleen Newell, Office Assistant

Date Approved: November 17, 2003

Enclosure (1): Treasurer 2003 Series A & B Bonds Agreement