

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
NOVEMBER 10, 2003
REGULAR SESSION MINUTES
"APPROVED"**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M.

Present: Thomas D. Hartnett, Chair; George F. Dillon, Jr., Vice Chair; John L. Saball; Clerk; Peter S. Cunningham, Member; Virginia C. Wood, Member; Administrative Officer Jean E. Kitchen and Maria Casey, Administrative Secretary.

Tax Class Hearing

The Tax Class Hearing was postponed until November 17, 2003 and will be held with the Board of Assessors' in attendance.

Committee Profile - Community Preservation Research Committee

Ms. Kitchen drafted a committee profile for the Boards review (attached). Mr. Cunningham suggested 5 members on this committee and explained that this is a local initiative that allows for certain fees assessed on records and real estate monies with a yet to be determined about from 1% to 3%. The committee will recommend as to how that money is spent, with a minimum of 10% allocated to Housing. The representation was discussed and suggested as Historical Commission, Housing, Conservation, Planning, Park Commissioners, and 2 members at large. Mr. Cunningham further discussed potential representation from GMAC. Ms. Wood queried if 5 should be elected and 2 appointed and that there be seven members as per state statute from the Community Preservation Act. The Board will review this again on an upcoming agenda.

Williams Barn Committee

Mr. Vic Burton was in attendance for this portion of the meeting. He stated that this committee would relieve some of the responsibilities from the Conservation Commission and will organize and administer the facility for the benefit of the general public. He further stated that the Commission endorses the formation of this committee. The Committee held an Open House on Columbus Day Weekend, which was a success. The mission statement includes 1) To preserve and maintain the historical integrity of the Williams Barn as provided in the agreement with the Massachusetts Historical Commission; 2) To establish a Learning Center for education in the areas of conservation, environmental studies, agricultural history, barn architecture and local history; 3) To encourage such other uses of the barn as may be of benefit to the community; 4) To cooperate with the Conservation Commission with respect to the use of the surrounding conservation land and trails; 5) To raise the necessary funds to fulfill the goals of the mission statement. The consensus of the representation of the committee and the members included Trails Committee, Greenway; Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Historical Commission, Historical Society and a Member-at-Large. *Ms. Wood moved to form Williams Barn Committee with a total of seven (7) members with representation as follows: One from Conservation Commission; One from Planning Board; One from Historical Society; One from Historical Commission; One from Greenway; One from Trails Committee and One Member-At-Large. Seconded by Mr. Cunningham. Unanimous vote.*

Mr. Cunningham moved to appoint Bruce Clements as Conservation Commission representative; Josh Degen as Planning Board representative; Lili Ott as Historical Society representative; Bayard Underwood as Historical Society representative; Al Wyatt as Member-At-Large, Stacey Chilcoat as Greenway Committee representative and Victor Burton as Trails Committee representative to the Williams Barn Committee. Seconded by Ms. Wood. Unanimous vote.

Police Commendation - Darlene Touchette

Lieutenant John Rooney was in attendance on behalf of Chief Mulhern and read Chief Mulhern's Commendation Memo to the Board of Selectmen (attached) and presented Darlene Touchette for commendation. Lt. Rooney stated that Darlene has been with the Groton Police Department since July of 1999 and full time since 2000. She is one of the Police Department's outstanding employees. The Board commended Darlene.

Full Time Officer Appointment - Joseph Fortunato

Lt. Rooney requested the appointment of Joseph Fortunato. Mr. Fortunato is currently part-time for another town. The process for appointment was extensive and Mr. Fortunato received the highest ratings from the supervisory staff. He has successfully completed an extensive background investigation including pre-employment physical and a psychological examination. He is a graduate of the Reserve Intermittent Academy and full time class of Boylston Police Academy; possess a B.S. from Anna Maria College and a Masters from Western New England College. *Ms. Wood moved to appoint Joseph Fortunato to the position of full-time Police Officer effective November 17, 2003, term to expire June 30, 2004 with a one-year probationary period. Seconded by Mr. Saball. Unanimous vote.*

Selectmen's/Administrative Officer's Budgets

Ms. Kitchen presented and reviewed all of the budgets under her purview to the Board of Selectmen for approval. She noted that in order to level fund with the increase to wages and health insurance, her suggested cuts would be to reduce the # of Town Reports printed, eliminate the printing and mailing of Warrants; eliminate one office phone line and eliminate Engineering and Consulting line item. She also noted that the copier is beginning to show signs of wear (it is four years old) and would need to be replaced. In

the Insurance & Bonding account, she noted that she upped the deductible from \$1,000 to \$5,000 under Property in order to save money and that the Town received \$6,000 credit for loss run management; however that insurance costs are up and rising. In Town Counsel line item, we currently do not have sufficient funds for this year and that \$75,000 will not be sufficient for next year either as we will begin contract negotiations and potential 40B litigations. In the Selectmen's budget, she noted that with the additional selectmen, we need additional monies for conferences.

Discussion on Appointments

Mr. Dillon made the suggestion that prior to any appointments coming before the Selectmen, he'd like the Board to have an additional one-week's prior notice in order for ample time for review and/or comment. He'd also like all the committee interest forms from the Town's database for any residents that are interested in that particular appointment. The other Board members unanimously agreed. Ms. Kitchen will draft a policy and will inform all Departments, Board, Committees and Commissions of this change in policy.

Fire Protection/Hydrant Charges / Committee Discussion

Mr. Cunningham stated that the rationale was lost in the past report presented by the Fire Protection Study Committee and also noted that the Water Department does not cover the whole town. Ms. Wood stated that the Water Department should be less reliant on town funds and that the Department has its own monies to subsidize the water infrastructure. She would like to work with the Water Commissioners in order to support their own enterprise fund without overburdening the ratepayers. Regarding Stabilization Funds, Ms. Wood queried if it would make sense to have specific stabilization funds to support the water infrastructure? Also, if new legislation can be written for new water lines to support the increase for the fire hydrants. Mr. Dillon felt that hydrant monies should be put into a capital fund for use and noted that Groton Water Department's coverage for the Town is only 60% and not totally dependent versus West Groton Water Department's coverage at 85% and is a lot closer to dependence.. He added further that any needed improvements should not be done w/out this funding mechanism. Ms. Wood suggested that the Board form another Committee "more globally" and look at how other communities handle fire protection as it relates to water distribution. The Board was in consensus and Ms. Kitchen will draft a committee charge for review at the next meeting.

Administrative Officer Report

Ms. Kitchen gave an Administrative Officer Report updating the BOS on RFP for the Cell Tower, Jenkins Road question regarding town counsel; V.H. Shea agreement been reviewed yet; bids on the MacGregor house demolition; and order of taking for Nicole Lane.

Selectmen Liaison Updates

Mr. Cunningham gave an update regarding the Housing Authority. GHA will be meeting with the community of Westford on the different ways they may be able to fund projects. Westford has a good track record.

Executive Session

Mr. Cunningham moved to enter into executive session in accordance with MGL Chapter 39, Section 23B for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining and will not reconvene in Open Session. Seconded by Ms. Wood. Roll call vote: Hartnett-yes, Dillon-yes, Cunningham-yes, Wood-yes, Saball-yes.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Approved: _____
John L. Saball, Clerk

Respectfully submitted,
Maria Casey,
Administrative Secretary

Date Approved: December 8, 2003

Attachments (2) - Committee Profile - Community Preservation Research Committee

Memo re: Request for commendation Darlene Touchette dated October 15, 2003