

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
NOVEMBER 17, 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; Administrative Officer Jean E. Kitchen; and Kathleen Newell, Office Assistant.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Tax Class Hearing**

Mr. Hugh McLaughlin, Ms. Sylvia Sangiolo, Mr. Edward Kopec of the Board of Assessors; Ms. Rena Swezey, Mr. Harlan Fitch and Ms. Elisabeth Holweck were present for this hearing.

The hearing was opened at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Cunningham read the legal notice published in the Groton Herald on October 31, 2003. Mr. Hartnett queried the audience for support. The Board of Assessors reported that 28.5% of cities and town have split rate for commercial and residential properties. The remainder, of which Groton is included, has only one rate for both classifications. The Board of Assessors explained that the majority of businesses in Groton are “mom & pop” stores, which can’t absorb large tax increases. The BOA expressed concern over the potential loss of small businesses should there be an increase in commercial property taxation. The BOA explained that over the past five (5) years there has been an increase in residential values over a poor business climate. Ms. Swezey stated that there were two ways of assessing when addressing commercial property 1) cost analysis in which Income & Expense (I & E) forms are sent to all the commercial properties; and 2) sales/market and cost. She stated that very few of the businesses return the forms. Ms. Swezey stated that she would like the Board of Selectmen to institute a fine for failure to return the I & E statement. Ms. Wood stated she would not be in favor of such a fine. Ms. Wood stated that a goal of the Board of Selectmen has been to encourage business to come to Town, and inquired of the Board of Assessors if there were any exemptions or incentives. Ms. Swezey stated it has been difficult to encourage business. Mr. McLaughlin stated that there are forty-two (42) exemptions available by law and those exemptions can be viewed at the website or can be discussed by calling the Assessors’ Office.

Mr. Fitch and Ms Holweck spoke in favor of the single tax rate.

*Mr. Cunningham moved to close the hearing at 8:03 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Wood. Unanimous vote.*

*Mr. Cunningham moved to approve a single level classification for FY04, as recommended by the Board of Assessors in the amount of \$15.44. Seconded by Mr. Dillon. Unanimous vote.*

**Review Regular Session Minutes of November 3, 2003**

*Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the Regular Session Minutes of November 3, 2003 as amended. Mr. Saball seconded. Unanimous vote.*

**Selectmen Liaison Updates**

Mr. Hartnett stated that the Sewer Commission will be coming before the Board and he would be attending a meeting on Wednesday.

Mr. Cunningham stated that the Housing Partnership would be meeting on Tuesday for the Squannacook Hill housing project. Mr. Cunningham had met with the Housing Authority the previous Wednesday and they are looking to increase rental properties, which will count 100% toward affordable housing.

Mr. Dillon and Mr. Hartnett will be attending a meeting of the Sign Committee on Tuesday.

The Board discussed the MRPC 418 report; Mr. Dillon stated that some of the data was incorrect.

*Ms. Wood moved to adjourn at 8:12 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 24, 2003