

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SEPTEMBER 27, 2004
REGULAR SESSION MINUTES
"APPROVED"**

Present: George F. Dillon, Jr., Chair; Peter S. Cunningham, Vice Chair; John L. Saball, Clerk (arrived at 6:59 p.m.); Virginia C. Wood, Member; Robert W. Nordblom, Member; Maria Casey, Administrative Assistant and Kathleen Newell, Office Assistant.

The Meeting opened at 6:55 p.m.

Conservation Commission Appointment – Marshall Giguere

Conservation Commission members Bruce Easom, Bruce Clements, Conservation Administrator Barbara Ganem and Mr. Marshall Giguere were present for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. Cunningham moved to appoint to expire June 30, 2006. Seconded by Ms. Wood. 4 in favor, 1 absent (Saball).

Review Town Meeting Articles

The following is a review of the Town Meeting articles (enclosed herein) by article, department and explanation.

Article 1 – Recreation and Computer Committee – Ms. Liza Judge explained the transfer request was for the period budgeted for July to December. Ms. Judge stated an error had been made when the commissioners were getting familiar with the change from the revolving fund to the Town budget. Mr. Dillon asked if the transfer was current money. Ms. Judge affirmed.

Mr. Steve Webber stated the Computer Committee had \$20,000 in the wages line which could be used to keep the network running. Mr. Webber explained the IT position could not be filled at the current grade the Personnel Board had agreed to so the Computer Committee wants to contract the work out. Mr. Cunningham asked Mr. Webber if the trend would be to contract instead of having the work done in-house. Mr. Webber stated the cost was higher this year due to set up, but the yearly cost has not been figured.

Article 2 – Police Department – Chief Robert Mulhern stated a pre-employment physical had been conducted mid year, and the Dispatchers uniform allowance had fallen through the cracks and had not been paid. Mr. Dillon stated the contract needs to be clarified.

Article 3 – Water Department – Mr. Dillon read the summary.

Article 4 – Police Department – Chief Mulhern stated this was payment from the first year of the contract and should have been paid in FY2003.

Article 5 & 6 – Land Fill Capping Committee, Board of Health, Administrative Officer – Mr. Dillon stated the Capital Asset Fund was below the minimum level. Mr. Cunningham stated the original contract was with CDM and asked if there were any outstanding bills. Ms. Jenkins stated she would hold \$25,000 against any final bills. Mr. Cunningham stated CDM had substantially completed the work and any ongoing monitoring would go through the Board of Health budget.

Article 7 – Library, Police Department, Board of Assessors, Town Accountant – Mr. Manugian stated \$10,000 had been added to the Library budget and the budget was erroneous. The requested amount would bring the budget to what it should have been last spring. Ms. Jenkins stated there had been calculation errors due to the use of a new spreadsheet which had not picked up items not connected to hourly wages i.e. money for Sunday hours at the library. Chief Mulhern stated there needed to be a line item for the Quinn Bill money.

Mr. Cunningham asked what the source of the money would be. Ms. Jenkins stated there were several sources such as encumbered funds or the stabilization fund. Mr. Cunningham stated the source needed to be defined. Ms. Jenkins stated she could put together a proposal but would like to hear what would be proposed first.

Article 8 – Water Department – Ms. Jenkins stated this was for the Water salary due to the same calculation error. Ms. Wood stated the money comes from the Water Department and would not impact the Town budget.

Article 9 – Recreation Commission – Mr. Dillon stated the Recreation Department had been given funding through December. Mr. Peter DiFranco reviewed the programs, revenues and expenditures.

Article 10 – Highway Department – Mr. Webber stated the estimate for the truck which was deferred in the spring had been \$25,000 and was now \$33,000.

Article 11 – Finance Committee – Mr. Steve Webber stated the increase puts the Finance Committee Reserve Fund back to \$75,000.

Article 12 – Administrator Officer – Ms. Kitchen stated the Finance Committee had recommended a copier be leased until it was discussed and discovered that it would cost less to purchase.

Article 13 – Administrative Officer – Ms. Kitchen stated she had been working with the Historic Districts Commission to assure the lighting style would be consistent. Ms. Kitchen stated a consultant had been hired and she was unclear as to what GELD will cover. Ms. Kitchen stated there may be some funds left over from the four-corners intersection.

Article 14 – EMS Director – Mr. John Walsh stated the ambulance could possibly be replaced with a demo model if it met the specifications. Mr. Dillon stated it had appeared to be \$130,000 and now \$150,000. Mr. Walsh stated the ambulance would need to be equipped and the last quote he had received was \$190,000. Ms. Kitchen asked if there was equipment from the other ambulance. Mr. Walsh stated the equipment needed to be replaced.

Article 15 – Personnel Board and Recreation Commission – Ms. Joan Hutchinson stated the Personnel Board had had an additional

request from the Conservation Commission to add flexibility and asked that these positions be added because of an audit conducted last year. Mr. Dillon asked why this had not been done at the Annual Town Meeting. Ms. Hutchinson stated the process had been started for the Recreation Department. Ms. Kitchen explained the present need was so the positions can be advertised.

Article 16 – Conservation Commission – Mr. Peter Morrison stated the Commission was seeking \$150,000 for the Conservation fund. Mr. Dillon stated there was currently \$265,000 in the fund. Ms. Wood asked if there were any properties that were being pursued. Mr. Morrison stated there was one property on the wish list. Ms. Wood asked how the CPA would impact the need for the Conservaitno Fund. Mr. Morrison stated he did not see the Conservation Fund ever going away. Ms. Wood asked Mr. Clements if a proposal the Conservation Commission makes to the CPC can be land specific or general. Mr. Clements stated he thought it would need to be land specific so the Accountant would know which of the four funds to designate from. Mr. Dillon stated he anticipated a number of questions to be asked at the Special Town meeting on these articles. Ms. Kitchen asked if she should put the two articles together to shorten the discussion on articles.

Article 17 - Town Clerk – Ms. Onorina Maloney explained the article was to amend the code of Groton to make the times of Annual and Special Town meetings consistent.

Article 18 – Town Clerk – Ms. Onorina Maloney stated this article would amend the dog by-law exempting the registration fee for residents over 70 years of age.

Article 19 – Board of Selectmen, Sign Committee, and School Building Committee – Mr. John MacLeod reviewed the minutes for the previous Sign Committee meeting and stated he would contact the other members of the Sign Committee regarding language for the article.

Article 20 – Treasurer – Ms. Collins stated the properties in tax possession are owned by the Town and the intention is to auction them off, but they have to be offered to the Town's departments first. Ms. Collins stated there are three parcels which are of interest to Town Departments. Ms. Collins stated the article would ask the Town Meeting to allow the Board of Selectmen to forego potential revenue.

Article 21 – Board of Selectmen, formerly Community Preservation Research Committee – Mr. Dillon read the Community Preservation Committee make up.

Article 22 – Board of Selectmen, Treasurer – Ms. Wood stated the fee of \$4,000 had been agreed to.

Article 23 – Sewer Commission – Sewer Commissioner Jim Gmeiner stated the initial draft indicates a few different areas of environmental need abutter the sewer and held two hearings proposing funning sewer down Boston Road to Johnson's Restaurant. Mr. Dillon asked what the proposed time frame would be and what the capacity of the new line would be. Mr. Gmeiner stated the project would begin next summer and the capacity would be 29,000-30,000 gallons/day. Mr. Gmeiner explained that phase 1 would be a grinder pump and phase 2 would be a small pumping station.

Article 24 – Sewer Commission – Mr. Gmeiner stated this was a grinder pump.

Article 25 – Sewer Commission – Ms. Wood asked for clarification that "benefiting" is if the sewer passes a property regardless if the property is connected. Ms. Wood asked the cost of the project. Mr. Gmeiner stated \$800,000 – \$1,200,000. Ms. Collins asked how many units there would be. Mr. Gmeiner stated he was unsure.

Article 26 – Sewer Commission – Mr. Gmeiner stated all costs were paid for by the people who benefit from the service. Mr. Nordblom asked if the costs come back to the Town. Mr. Gmeiner stated the costs go to the Sewer Commission. Ms. Jenkins explained the money accrues to the Commission, which is a Town department but does not go into the general fund.

Article 27 – Water Commission - *Ms. Wood moved to remove this article from the warrant. Seconded by Mr. Cunningham. 4 in favor, 1 abstention (Saball)*

Article 28 – Water Commission – Water Commissioner Chris Kelley stated this would give the Town the option to interconnect with contiguous towns. Ms. Jenkins asked if the inter-municipal agreement also allows for incurring debt in common. Ms. Kitchen stated it would have to go back to Town Meeting for a vote. Mr. Webber stated interconnection was very important to providing water in times of need. Mr. Harlan Fitch stated the Board of Selectmen should be a part of any inter-municipal agreement. Mr. Dillon stated he was tempted to remove this article from the warrant, but would be willing to go through the public hearing to get more input. Ms. Wood agreed.

Article 29 – Water Commission – Ms. Wood asked if this were an encumbered fund article. Ms. Jenkins stated it was an authorization to borrow.

Article 30 – Board of Assessors – Assessor Sylvia Sangiolo explained the abatement for improvements for additions for persons over 60 years of age, stating the abatement stops when the eligible person leaves. Ms. Wood asked if the Building Inspector was involved and how did the Assessors know if the improvements/addition would be for a person over 60 years of age. Ms. Sangiolo stated the applicant was required to sign a form attesting to the eligibility of the exemption.

Article 31 – Board of Assessors – Assistant Assessor Rena Swezey stated that each year the Assessors requested to increase the exemption from \$500 to \$1,000.

Article 32 – Groton-Dunstable Regional School District – School Committee Chairman Alan Vervaeke explained the request for a Stabilization fund which would allow the School to set money aside for specific purposes.

Article 33 – Board of Selectmen, Planning Administrator, Highway Surveyor – Mr. Dillon stated the Town had currently been taking care of these roads however if the roads are officially taken over they would be eligible for Chapter 90 funds.

Article 34 – Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, Town Accountant & Treasurer

Article 35 – Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, Town Accountant & Treasurer

Article 36 – Walter H.B. Platt, Petitioner – Mr. Platt stated the property was currently four apartments, which he would like to change to three apartments with a first floor architectural studio. Ms. Wood asked if the Planning Board had acted upon this request. Mr. Platt stated a hearing would be held on October 14, 2004. Assessor Eddie Kopec stated he was in favor as the Town was short on businesses.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Local Cultural Council Appointments: Owen Shuman; Ray Ciemny; Lindsay Commons; Susan Wiggins

Mr. Cunningham moved to appoint Owen Shuman, Ray Ciemny, Lindsay Commons, and Susan Wiggins to the Local Cultural Council for the six-year terms to expire June 30, 2010. Seconded by Mr. Saball. Unanimous vote.

Computer Committee Appointment: Jeff Pike

Mr. Cunningham moved to appoint Jeff Pike to the Computer Committee to fill the vacancy for the one-year term, term to expire June 30, 2005. Seconded by Mr. Saball. Unanimous vote.

Sign Committee Appointment: Alberta Erickson

Mr. Cunningham moved to appoint Alberta E. Erickson to the Sign Committee to fill the open vacancy for the one-year term, term to expire June 30, 2005. Seconded by Mr. Saball. Unanimous vote.

Underground Fuel Storage License – Groton-Dunstable Regional School District – Florence Roche Elementary School

Mr. Cunningham moved the approval of an amendment to the fuel storage license for Groton Dunstable Regional School District, Florence Roche Elementary School, 328 Main Street, from two 5,000 gallon tanks to one 10,000 gallon tank. Seconded by Mr. Saball. Unanimous vote.

MINUTES

Mr. Saball moved to approve the Regular Session Minutes of August 2, 2004, as amended. Seconded by Ms. Wood. 4 in favor, 1 abstention (Cunningham).

Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the Regular Session Minutes of August 23, 2004, as amended. Seconded by Mr. Nordblom. 3 in favor, 2 abstentions (Wood and Saball).

SELECTMEN LIAISON REPORT

Ms. Wood stated the Affordable Housing Task Force met with the Planning Board for its input into affordable housing. Ms. Wood stated she had contacted the State and the plan had made it past the first review.

Mr. Dillon stated he and Mr. Saball had attended the Volunteers breakfast and expressed thanks to the volunteers in the community.

Mr. Saball stated the Fire Chief had organized an emergency drill over the past weekend with EMS, Police, and short wave radio groups at the Groton School. Mr. Saball stated a lot of planning and development had gone into the mock disaster.

Mr. Cunningham moved to adjourn at 10:00 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Nordblom. Unanimous vote.

Approved: _____
John L. Saball, Clerk

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen Newell
Office Assistant

Date Approved: November 15, 2004

Attachment (1): STM 2nd Draft Warrant Articles