

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MARCH 7, 2005
REGULAR SESSION MINUTES
“APPROVED”**

Present: George F. Dillon, Jr., Chair; Peter S. Cunningham, Vice Chair; John L. Saball, Clerk; Virginia C. Wood, Member; Robert W. Nordblom, Member; Administrative Officer Jean E. Kitchen and Kathleen Newell, Office Assistant

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

Groton Country Club RE: Lease, Budget, Audit and Appointment

Mr. Brad Durrin and Ms. Michelle Sticklor were present for this portion of the meeting.

Lease -Mr. Durrin stated that he had received the new version of the lease from their attorney earlier in the day. Mr. Nordblom stated that in his review of the lease he had suggested cleaning up the verbiage; the utilities, repair and maintenance clause, the indemnification clause and workmen’s compensation, limits of general liability, structural changes and the lessor’s right to enter the premises. Ms. Wood thanked Mr. Nordblom for his effort reviewing the lease.

Mr. Cunningham moved to renew the Lease Agreement By and Between the Town of Groton and the Groton Country Club and Recreation Authority for three years commencing January 1, 2005 and ending December 31, 2007. Seconded by Mr. Saball. Unanimous vote.

- Budget– The Board reviewed the Groton Country Club budget. Mr. Dillon noted that the indoor golf center and snack bar had decreased by 60%. Mr. Durrin explained that the Authority had operated the snack bar last year, however this year they had secured a caterer who will be paying rent. Mr. Dillon noted that there were accounting expenses this year, but not in the previous years. Mr. Durrin stated that there was an audit to be performed. Mr. Nordblom stated he had reviewed the lease for the past five years and the budget appeared to be in line. Mr. Nordblom further stated that the Authority would need to get creative in marketing.

Audit– Mr. Durrin stated that three auditing firms had presented quotes, but he would also like to look at other companies. Ms. Kitchen asked if a full or short audit would be performed. Mr. Durrin stated a full audit was needed. Mr. Nordblom stated that an audit is required by the State on a yearly basis. Mr. Durrin stated that a full audit had been performed in 2002. Mr. Durrin asked for an opportunity to review the three quotes and explore alternatives, and present the Authority’s recommendations in June.

Appointment – Ms. Valerie Spencer, Mr. Benjamin Kilgore and Mr. Edward MacMahon were present for this portion of the meeting.

Ms. Spencer reviewed a letter from the GCCA. Ms. Wood asked if there were a conflict as Mr. MacMahon was a direct abutter to the Groton Country Club Property. Ms. Kitchen suggested that Mr. MacMahon get an opinion regarding conflict of interest from the State Ethics Commission. Mr. Dillon asked who the Authority was recommending. Ms. Spencer stated that the Authority felt that Mr. MacMahon had a wealth of assets and was in close proximity to the property. Mr. Nordblom asked if Mr. MacMahon was experienced in marketing. Mr. Dillon noted that Mr. Kilgore was an experienced candidate also. Mr. Kilgore approached the Board to distribute his resume and then left the meeting. Mr. Saball expressed concern for potential conflict of interest and stated he would like to hear from each candidate. Ms. Wood suggested the Board postpone making a decision until next week. Ms. Kitchen scheduled the GCCA on March 14, 2005 at 8:30 p.m. and asked Ms. Spencer to notify the candidates.

Maria Casey and Owen Shuman RE: Charity Wine Pouring License

Ms. Maria Casey, Administrative Assistant to the Board of Selectmen and Ms. Owen Shuman, Library Director were present for this portion of the meeting.

Ms. Shuman described the event to be held at The Barn at Gibbet Hill to benefit the Library Endowment. Mr. Dillon asked Ms. Casey if all the required paperwork had been received. Ms. Casey reviewed the requirements and stated that this was a fairly new license which the ABCC had started to enforce.

Mr. Cunningham moved to approve a Charity Wine Pouring License for the Groton Public Library Endowment Events, Inc. for a wine tasting event to be held at the Gibbet Hill Grill Function Hall on Saturday, March 19, 2005 from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00

p.m. contingent upon approval from the Alcohol Beverage Control Commission. Seconded by Mr. Saball. Unanimous vote.

John Estabrook RE: Hiring of Custodian I Position

Mr. John Estabrook and Mr. Aldis Higgins were present for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. Estabrook read a letter recommending Mr. Higgins for the position of Custodian I.

Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the hiring of Aldis Higgins as Custodian I at Grade 3, Step 1, with a six-month probationary period. Seconded by Mr. Saball. Unanimous vote.

Annual Town Meeting Articles Initial Review

Copy of draft warrant enclosed herein.

Personnel Board – Article 4 & 5

Ms. Joan Hutchinson, Ms. Patti Modzelewski and Ms. Pamela Keith of the Personnel Board were present for this portion of the meeting.

Article 4 – Personnel Manager – Ms. Hutchinson stated that there had been a change in the by-law and the budget had been submitted and the position had been rated. Mr. Dillon stated that a lot of work had gone into this position. Mr. Dillon further stated that the need for human resources was becoming very important and the employees need the support of a personnel manager. Mr. Cunningham stated he did not believe that a private business the size of the Town of Groton would be operating without a personnel manager. Ms. Wood stated that this had been a priority for her and hoped that the article would pass at Town Meeting. Ms. Kitchen stated that the position was not just for the Town Hall employees but for all Town employees. Ms. Hutchinson stated it would be important that the Personnel Manager be housed in a private area.

Article 5 – Wage Classification

Ms. Modzelewski stated that the Personnel Board was recommending a 3% COLA based on social security 2.7%, Boston urban 2.5%, all urban 2.7% and the figures for Police and Teachers unions which were 3.5% or higher last year.

Mr. Cunningham stated he would not be in favor of a COLA at this time because the Town would not be receiving more in state aid. Mr. Cunningham noted he would be more in favor of a 2.5% salary increase. Ms. Hutchinson stated she would like to see the COLA negotiated out of the union contracts so that the COLA is spread equally to all town employees. Mr. Dillon stated he did not believe that what is in the contract is a cost of living adjustment. Ms. Keith stated that the town needed a compensation philosophy and it is difficult for by-law employees to have this discussion at Town Meeting.

Capital Planning – Article 8 & 28

Article 8 – Capital Planning

**Ms. Wood removed herself from the meeting at 8:04 p.m.

Ms. Kitchen stated that the Norris property did fall under the auspices of the Capital Planning Committee's guidelines. Ms. Kitchen reviewed the capital items, three of which were from the Fire Department. Ms. Kitchen stated that the schedule would be changed next year to give more time for review.

Article 28 – Mr. Cunningham stated there should be separate articles.

Police Chief, Fire Chief, EMS Director – Article 10

Article 10 – Public Safety Complex Parking Lot

Mr. Nordblom asked if the Planning Board or Conservation Commission had been contacted. Ms. Kitchen stated that the plan had just been received.

**Ms. Wood returned at 8:14 p.m.

Town Accountant – Article 12

Article 12 – Ms. Jenkins stated that the State had changed the reporting process and there was a need to hire an actuarial consultant to determine the actual cost of post employment benefits, and what needs to be put on the books as the estimated value that the Town will have to pay in the future.

Town Clerk – Article 13 & 14

Article 13 – Ms. Maloney stated the Town of Groton Code Book needed to be updated and there was a proposal to reformat the books to 8.5 x 11" and the link the code to the website. Mr. Cunningham asked if there was a cost to maintain the website. Ms. Maloney stated the fee was \$800.

Article 14 – Preservation of Historic Documents – Mr. Dillon asked if this would fall under the CPA. Ms. Maloney stated that she had had one volume refurbished and was easier to get the project continued once it had been started. Ms. Maloney stated that at grant had paid for the vital statistics volume, but there are 35 volumes which need attention. Ms. Wood stated that the information contained within the volumes was priceless and needed to be preserved. Mr. Saball concurred and stated that this is an appropriate year to be addressing the history of the Town and preserving the history was an important task. Mr. Cunningham asked if part of the process was to create a microfiche copy of the documents. Ms. Maloney stated that it would.

Great Pond Advisory Committee – Article 15

Dr. Eger stated that the Committee had until June 2007 to submit a plan to the DEP for the management of each pond, inventories of each pond, water quality, animals, plants, bacteria and to develop a continuous monitoring process which becomes the Town's responsibility. Mr. Dillon asked if the \$2905 was for chemical testing. Dr. Eger stated that the amount was for a consultant and to set up a continuous monitoring system.

-
-
Community Preservation Committee – Article 16

Mr. Rick Hughson stated that the article was a matter of book keeping and no funds would be spend without approval at Town Meeting, and that like an enterprise fund the fund needs to be appropriated at the beginning of the year. Ms. Wood stated that the Board of Assessors had implied there would be added costs and fees associated with the CPA and she asked if any of the costs could be covered from the fund. Mr. Hughson stated that the software could not be covered. Mr. Dillon asked when the taxpayers would realize the surcharge. Mr. Hughson stated that it would be on the FY06 bill and will be 6% on the February and May bills. Ms. Wood suggested that the CPC have a flier at Town meeting to explain the process to the residents.

Conservation Commission – Article 17, 18 & 19

Article 17 – Mr. Peter Morrison stated that this would hopefully be the last time the Conservation Commission would asked for appropriation to the Conservation Fund. Mr. Dillon stated that there was \$338,000 in the fund and asked why the Commission could not wait until the CPA funds were appropriated. Mr. Morrison replied because the Commission did not know how much would be appropriated. Mr. Nordblom asked if there were any projects the Commission was working on which would need funding between now and the fall. Mr. Morrison stated that the Commissioners had not offered enough money on one of the projects they were interested in.

Article 18 – Swimming Docks – Ms. Wood asked if Nashoba Valley Regional Technical High School was doing something with the docks. Ms. Ganem stated that a letter had been sent to the shop teachers, but no response had been received. Mr. Dillon asked if this needed to be a capital item or a separate article. Ms. Kitchen stated that the Capital Planning Committee had questioned whether this fell under the CPA. Ms. Wood asked that Ms. Ganem contact the school again to get a definite answer. Mr. Dillon suggested contacting Mr. Kevin McKenzie, NVRTHS Representative.

Article 19 – Conservation Restriction

Ms. Ganem stated that the Suzy Shattuck property had received a conservation restriction however it was rejected by the State. Ms. Ganem stated that there was a change in the use of the land, but is does not need to go through the Chapter 97 process.

**Ms. Wood returned to the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

Other Business:

Capital Planning Appointment – Jeff Gordon

Mr. Nordblom moved to appoint Jeff Gordon to the Capital Planning Committee for the vacant unexpired two-year term to expire June 30, 2005. Seconded by Ms. Wood. Unanimous vote.

-
Declare Surplus for Auction

Ms. Wood moved to declare the following as Surplus:

From the Library: Door Slider, Window vents, Projector, Floor Pads, Sandwich Sign, Six Wooden Benches, Two Doors. From the Town Hall: Typewriters, Fans and various computer equipment recommended by the Computer Committee: From the Senior Center: 6 Monitors, 1 CPV ICannon Printer; From the Recreation Department: (1909) Upright Piano by Henry SG Lindeman of New York (Serial # 33359); From the Highway Department: 1965 Chevrolet P108997; 1990 GMC Vin# 1GDJK34K01E528426 (junk); 1994 Ford Explorer Vin# 1FM0084X2R0086997 (junk); 2 Misc. Generators BA6901500004; USAF 611919AVC0004 (from Civil Defense and Town of Ayer); Caterpillar 463E Scraper. Seconded by Mr. Saball. Unanimous vote.

Trails Committee RE: Wallace Road Land

Ms. Wood moved to authorize the Trails Committee to construct an access trail on a parcel of land on Wallace Road (Assessor's Map 213/Parcel 67). Seconded by Nordblom. Unanimous vote.

-
Amend Motion for Acceptance for Street Index Map

Ms. Wood moved to adopt the Street Map as prepared by Applied Geographics, Inc. (dated February 2005) as the Street Index Map for the Town of Groton with the following conditions noted on the map:

"The streets shown on this map are those which physically exist and appear to have general usage;" and

"The adoption of this Map, and the Map itself, is for representative purposes only; it is not intended, and is not to be construed, as proof of the legal existence of the streets shown on the map as public ways, nor as an acceptance of any obligation on the part of the Town of Groton to maintain the streets shown on the Map;" and

"Street Frontage requirements for the development of property are contained in Section 218-22 of the Groton Code."
Seconded by Mr. Cunningham. Unanimous vote.

-
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REPORT

Ms. Kitchen reviewed the following:

- Bay Communications, LLC was seeking an extension on the lease agreement due to construction delays. Ms. Wood asked for a copy of the lease agreement.

SELECTMEN LIAISON UPDATE

Mr. Saball stated he had attended the Heart Safe Community presentation and that there would be signage, which had been provided by the State, declaring Groton as a Heart Safe community.

Ms. Wood stated she had attended an Eagle Scout ceremony for four young men who had completed various community projects.

Mr. Dillon stated he had attended a Legislators breakfast, which had discussed 40B legislation and lottery capping.

Mr. Nordblom moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Wood. Unanimous vote.

Approved: _____
John L. Saball, Clerk

respectfully submitted,
Kathleen Newell
Office Assistant

Enclosure (1): Draft Warrant (April 25, 2005)

Date Approved: May 16, 2005