

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
JANUARY 3, 2006
REGULAR SESSION
“APPROVED”**

Present: George F. Dillon, Jr., Chair; John L. Saball, Vice Chair; Robert W. Nordblom, Clerk; Peter S. Cunningham, Member; Maria Casey, Administrative Assistant; and Kathleen Newell, Office Assistant.

Absent: Mihran Keoseian, Member

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

School Committee Vacancy/Appointment

Mr. Paul Funch; Ms. Alberta Erickson; Dr. Alan Genovese, School Superintendent and School Committee members Mr. Chuck McKinney, Ms. Karen Lofgren, Ms. Cynthia Barrett, Mr. Paul Fitzgerald; Ms. Michelle Collette; Ms. Ellen Hargraves and State Representative Robert Hargraves were present for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. Dillon reviewed the procedure for the meeting, stating that each candidate would be given an opportunity to make an opening statement after which the Board of Selectmen and School Committee members would ask questions. Then either a member of the Board or Committee would nominate one or both of the candidates to the ballot and a paper vote would be conducted, followed by a verbal indication of each members vote.

Mr. Funch reviewed his background and desire to serve on the School Committee stating that he was open-minded, committed, and possessed quantitative analytical skills.

Ms. Erickson reviewed her background and stated that she felt she would offer a perspective from the senior community which until now had not had a voice in the school. Ms. Erickson further stated she would like to see another meeting added to the agenda to address parental issues

Mr. McKinney thanked both candidates and asked what strengths each would bring to the School Committee. Ms. Erickson stated that she had life experience and an open mind. Mr. Funch stated that he had a fair bit of budget experience, experience on other committees, and quantitative analytical skills. Mr. Dillon stated that the Town was fortunate to have two very qualified candidates. He noted the time commitment required of the position and asked what each candidate's intentions were in the May election. Both candidates indicated they would run for School Committee in May.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked what would be the number one accomplishment each candidate would hope to achieve. Ms. Erickson replied text books and community involvement. Mr. Funch stated he wanted to be as strong an advocate as possible and he would feel gratified if they could get the budget to where the investments are paying off and to make sure that we are adequately funding to maintain the quality in each area.

Mr. Saball asked what each candidates approach would be to the budget. Ms. Erickson stated that she would need to learn more about it but the teachers' salaries and health insurance are biggies; and it seems that there is little funding left for the core education. Ms. Erickson further stated that the end result may be an override and she would like to see an override for specific areas i.e. textbooks. Mr. Funch stated that he had enjoyed the budget process that Dr. Genovese had conducted and an override would be a last resort to maintain the quality of education that is desired.

Ms. Barrett commented on the recent turnover rate of the committee members and asked each candidate about their commitment. Ms. Erickson stated that the School Committee would be her first priority. Mr. Funch stated it would also be his priority. Mr. Funch also stated that he would like to make the process as efficient as possible and possibly avoid some of the need for additional sub-committees.

Mr. Nordblom asked how each candidate would process problems and what steps they would use to fix a problem. Mr. Funch stated he would try to determine what the underlying factor was and use analysis to bring that out and if there is no single solution, find as many as possible. Ms. Erickson replied that the School Committee was a cooperative group situation, with many ideas and she has the ability to accommodate different personalities and styles.

Mr. Cunningham asked what each candidate thought was the strength of the School District. Ms. Erickson stated that the Superintendent and School Committee along with good representation. Ms. Erickson further stated that the academic scores were doing well and the most important asset was the teachers who are doing the best for our children. Mr. Funch stated that Groton has the lowest per person expenditures in the state and are doing good with the resources, plus a committed group of parents and grandparents who volunteer; GDEF; a good educational program as well as a well run sports program. Mr. Funch stated that he did take exception to Ms. Erickson's comment about MCAS improvement, as that was not the case in the lower grades and was something we should be concerned about.

Mr. McKinney moved to nominate Alberta Erickson and Paul Funch as candidate(s) to the School Committee. Seconded by Mr. Saball. Unanimous vote.

Ms. Casey distributed ballots to the Board and School Committee members and then tallied the votes as follows: 6-Erickson; 2 - Funch. Mr. Dillon asked each member to reveal their vote. The results are as follows: Mr. Saball – Funch; Mr. Dillon - Erickson; Mr. Cunningham – Erickson; Mr. Nordblom – Erickson; Mr. McKinney – Funch; Ms. Barrett – Erickson; Ms. Lofgren – Erickson; Mr. Fitzgerald – Erickson.

Mr. Saball moved to appoint Alberta Erickson as School Committee member, term to expire upon the next Annual Town Election in 2006.

Water Department Vacancy/Appointment

Water Commissioners Mr. Chris Kelley, Mr. Mike Brady; Water Superintendent Mr. Tom Orcutt and Candidates Mr. Gary Hoglund and Mr. Lawrence Guilmartin were present for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. Guilmartin stated that he had run in the election for the position last May and has experience in the water industry; having served as the past chair of the Water Association Education Committee. Mr. Guilmartin stated that there were many challenges ahead for the Water Department, one of which would be to keep the rates under control.

Mr. Hoglund stated that he was offering his time and skills, although he does not have water experience, he is a professional in engineering and computer security. Mr. Hoglund reviewed his past history of membership on various town boards/committees and stated that it was important to have a well managed Water Department.

Mr. Cunningham asked each candidate what their perspective was on merging the Water and Sewer Departments. Mr. Hoglund stated that he would want to analyze and review the facts and economic package before making a recommendation. Mr. Guilmartin stated that he would want to look very carefully before making a decision.

Mr. Kelley stated that there was no official job description, and asked each candidate what they thought the job should be as well as their opinion of the enterprise fund. Mr. Guilmartin stated that the thought the enterprise fund was good and there was a lot of maintenance keeping up the distribution lines which require the department to be solvent and bringing in the revenue needed. With regard to the job description, Mr. Guilmartin stated that he would look at the position as overseer and giving expertise on how to budget money and different aspects i.e. maintenance and preventive maintenance. Mr. Hoglund stated that he was not familiar with the laws, but was a quick study and he was a fan of the enterprise fund.

Mr. Nordblom asked if each candidate would be running for the position in the spring election. Both candidates affirmed.

Mr. Brady asked each candidate what they viewed as the biggest challenge for the department. Mr. Guilmartin stated the he felt the Water Management Act was the biggest challenge and it would take some creative measures both in maintenance and efficient measures to keep costs down. Mr. Hoglund stated that protection of water sources and management of cost, quality and future sources are the biggest challenge.

Mr. Saball thanked each candidate for their interest and asked how each candidate felt about the meetings being televised. Mr. Guilmartin stated that it would be hard at first but he would have no problem with it. Mr. Hoglund stated that he thought it was a great thing letting the public see what transpires at the meetings.

Mr. Dillon asked Mr. Guilmartin if he had done business with the Water Department in the course of his profession. Mr. Guilmartin stated that he had done business and has a software program that the department is currently using. Mr. Hoglund stated that he had no conflicts and represented the rate payers.

Mr. Saball moved to nominate Lawrence Guilmartin and Gary Hoglund as candidate(s) for Water Commissioner. Seconded by Mr. Cunningham. Unanimous vote.

Ms. Casey distributed the ballots and tallied the results as follows: 4-Hoglund; 2 Guilmartin. Mr. Dillon asked that each member speak to their vote. The results are as follows: Mr. Kelley- Guilmartin; Mr. Brady – Guilmartin; Mr. Dillon – Hoglund; Mr. Saball – Hoglund; Mr. Nordblom – Hoglund; Mr. Cunningham – Hoglund.

Mr. Saball moved to appoint Gary Hoglund as Water Commissioner, term to expire upon the next Annual Town Election in 2006. Seconded by Mr. Cunningham. Unanimous vote.

Don Black, Parks Commissioner and Fire Chief Joseph Bosselait RE: Bonfire Permit for January 7, 2006

Chief Bosselait stated that they had had a Christmas tree burning last year as part of the 350th Celebration. Chief Bosselait stated that there had been a lot of positive feedback from the townspeople and interest in continuing the tradition. Chief Bosselait stated that the Board had two options either to issue the bonfire permit which would use up their one allowable permit or he had the ability to bulk burn trees between December 26 and January 7. Mr. Dillon asked if the members of the Board agreed. The Board concurred that the Chief would bulk burn the trees. Chief Bosselait stated that the Hose Company would be picking up trees for a \$5.00 donation which will go to the Scholarship Fund. Mr. Dillon offered sincere thanks for a job well done on the 350th Anniversary Celebration.

Chief of Police Robert Mulhern RE: Hiring of Dispatcher

Chief Robert Mulhern and Mr. Warren Gibson were present for this portion of the meeting.

Chief Mulhern reviewed Mr. Gibson's qualifications and requested that Mr. Gibson be hired at Step 3 as allowed per the contract for experience and training.

Mr. Saball moved to approve the hire of Warren Gibson to the position of Dispatcher at Step 3, effective January 4, 2006. Seconded by Mr. Nordblom. 4 in favor, 1 absent (Keoseian).

Attorney Collins RE: Whitaker Lane Conservation Restriction

Ms. Barbara Ganem, Conservation Administrator and Michelle Collette, Planning Administrator were present for this portion of the meeting.

Ms. Ganem stated that the restriction had been reviewed by Town Counsel Shirin Everett. Mr. Dillon stated that he had had several questions which Attorney Collins had answered. Mr. Nordblom stated that he also was satisfied. Ms. Collette stated that the property had a long and involved history and the proposed restriction was part of the subdivision's open space plan.

Mr. Saball moved to accept the Deed of Conservation Restriction for premises owned by American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts located in the Town of Groton, Massachusetts, situated on Gay Road and Whitaker Lane, comprised of approximately 34.87 acres, bounded and described as set forth in Exhibit A of the Deed of Conservation Restriction (dated January 3, 2006) which are described in a deed to the Grantor recorded in Book 19157, Page 45, to the Town of Groton to be administered by the Groton Conservation Commission. Seconded by Mr. Nordblom. 4 in favor, 1 absent (Keoseian).

OTHER BUSINESS

Consensus RE: Drainage Easement for Sawtell Drive

Ms. Michelle Collette was present for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. Dillon reviewed the request of Mr. Irby relative to the request for exemption from the drainage easement to construct an in-ground pool. Ms. Collette stated that the plan shape of the pool easement seemed peculiar and suggested that Mr. Irby consult the engineer before it finalized and request more room around the actual pool for patio and required fencing. Ms. Casey stated that the Board would be giving him permission to start some preliminary work at his own risk. Mr. Saball asked if it would preclude Mr. Irby needing to have a warrant at Town Meeting. Ms. Casey stated that the draft letter could be revised to include a contingency upon receipt of a warrant article for Annual Town Meeting and a revised plot plan. Mr. Saball stated that he would not agree. Mr. Dillon, Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Nordblom concurred that Mr. Irby could proceed at his own risk.

Pay-As-You Throw Agreement – Shaw's Supermarket

Mr. Saball moved to authorize the Chair to sign the agreement between the Town of Groton and Shaw's Supermarket dated

December 27, 2005. Seconded by Mr. Nordblom. Unanimous vote.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REPORT

Ms. Casey stated that the RFP's for Fitch's Bridge had been opened the previous Friday and the Friends of Fitch's Bridge had evaluated the non-price proposals and would like to come before the Board the following Monday. Mr. Dillon asked when the interviews would be taking place. Ms. Casey stated on January 9, 2006 at 2:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Mr. Saball moved to approve the Regular Session Minutes of December 5, 2005, as amended. Seconded by Mr. Nordblom. 3 in favor, 1 abstention, 1 absent (Keoseian).

The Regular Session Minutes of December 22, 2005 had been tabled due to a lack of quorum.

Mr. Saball moved to approve the Executive Session Minutes (Session 1) of November 21, 2005, as amended. Seconded by Mr. Nordblom. 4 in favor, 1 absent (Keoseian)

Mr. Saball moved to approve the Executive Session Minutes (Session 2) of November 21, 2005, as amended. Seconded by Mr. Nordblom. 4 in favor, 1 absent (Keoseian).

Mr. Saball moved to approve the Executive Session Minutes (Session 1) of December 19, 2005, as amended. Seconded by Mr. Nordblom. 3 in favor, 1 abstention, 1 absent (Keoseian).

Mr. Saball moved to approve the Executive Session Minutes (Session 2) of December 19, 2005. Seconded by Mr. Nordblom. 3 in favor, 1 abstention, 1 absent (Keoseian).

Mr. Saball moved to approve the Executive Session Minutes (Session 3) of December 19, 2005, as amended. Seconded by Mr. Nordblom. 3 in favor, 1 abstention, 1 absent (Keoseian).

Mr. Saball moved to enter into Executive Session in accordance with MGL Chapter 39, Section 23B, for the purpose of considering the purchase, exchange, taking, lease, or value of real property if such discussion may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position and will not reconvene in Open Session. Seconded by Mr. Nordblom. Roll Call Vote: Dillon - yes; Nordblom - yes; Cunningham - yes; Wood - yes; Nordblom - yes.

Approved: _____
Robert W. Nordblom, Clerk

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen Newell
Office Assistant

Date Approved: March 27, 2006