

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
JANUARY 23, 2006
REGULAR SESSION
“APPROVED”**

Present: George F. Dillon, Jr., Chair; John L. Saball, Vice Chair; Robert W. Nordblom, Clerk (arrived at 7:08); Peter S. Cunningham, Member; Mihran Keoseian, Member; Administrative Officer Jean E. Kitchen; and Kathleen Newell, Office Assistant.

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m.

Conservation Commission RE: Acceptance of Land – Amelia Way

Ms. Barbara Ganem was present for this portion of the meeting.

Ms. Ganem stated that the Conservation Commission had accepted the gift of land from Progress Construction. Discussion ensued relative to the location of the property and history. Ms. Kitchen asked if once the acceptance had been signed it would be sent to Town Counsel for recording. Ms. Ganem stated she had hoped the donor's attorney would do that.

Mr. Saball moved to accept a certain parcel of land containing 274,191 +/- square feet from Quintin Tigs, Trustee of Townsend Road Realty Trust, shown as "Parcel 'A' Open Space' on a plan entitled "Definitive Plan, Bertozzi Farm Estates in Groton, Massachusetts," said plan prepared for Ralph Bertozzi, and Pauline Grady, Scale 1" -80', dated June 25, 2001, Revised September 10, 2001, October 5, 2001 and January 16, 2002, by Hannigan Engineering, Inc., Civil Engineers and Surveyors, 8 Monument Square, Leominster, Massachusetts, which Plan is recorded at Middlesex County Registry of Deeds Southern District on September 23, 2002, as Plan No. 1010 of 2002, Book 36482, Page 248. Seconded by Mr. Cunningham. 4 in favor, 1 absent (Nordblom).

BUDGETS

Patti Modzelewski RE: Personnel

Ms. Patti Modzelewski and Ms. Linda DeCiccio-Fanning were present for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. Dillon (referencing an inaccurate quote in the newspaper) stated that he would withhold support until all budgets were presented.

Ms. Modzelewski stated that the Personnel Board was requesting a part-time Personnel Manager position for 30 hours per week; and the classification had been approved at Town Meeting, but the funding had not been approved. Mr. Keoseian stated that the Personnel Manager was one of the goals of the Board of Selectmen and it would be presented to the Finance Committee.

Ms. Modzelewski stated that there was a definite need for a constant presence in Town Hall; she referenced the contracts and stated that there was a tremendous liability and the department heads had no one to go to for personnel issues.

Computer Committee

Mr. Steve Webber was present for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. Dillon noted that the consulting had increased. Mr. Webber stated that they were trying to augment the need for more IT expertise and they would like to ask for consulting or a full time employee. Mr. Webber noted that last year the computer budget was cut \$10,000 and they are trying to restore it.

Kevin McKenzie RE: Nashoba Valley Technical High School

Mr. Kevin McKenzie was present for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. McKenzie noted that the budget was very preliminary and the figures given are estimates. He reviewed the following:

- Budget Summaries
- Increase in utilities
- Budget Scenarios - Worst Case – minimum contribution - \$497,000 with 10% increase in everything; Better Case - \$472,000 with 6.5% increase.

- 31 of the 415 district students are from Groton.
- Potential revenue from sponsors on signs and childhood center
- Management Breakfast meeting for the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee is upcoming

Mr. Keoseian asked for a breakdown of where the grants monies go as the numbers get firmer. Ms. Kitchen asked if they could receive the budgets prior to the breakfast meeting.

Police & Communications

Due to a death in Chief Mulhern's family this agenda item was tabled until the following week. The Board expressed its condolences.

Town Accountant & Benefits Manager

Ms. Valerie Jenkins was present for this portion of the meeting.

Ms. Jenkins reviewed the Town Accountant budget stating that it was straightforward, with no salary or wage increases and increases in specific consulting services.

Ms. Jenkins reviewed the health insurance as follows:

- Added .05% for unemployment
- Every percent the cost increases equals \$9,000 to 11,000 and every 5% gained is somewhere between \$32,000 and 37,000.
- Increase expected up to 13%

Planning Board & Earth Removal

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

Ms. Collette stated that the Planning Board budget was level funded and in the Earth Removal budget she had requested an increase from \$69 to \$150 to attend the Storm Water Management Committee meetings.

Library Trustees

Ms. Owen Shuman, Mr. Brian Mullins and Ms. Jane Allen were present for this portion of the meeting.

Ms. Shuman reviewed the budget as follows:

- Wages are down slightly
- Energy costs have increased
- 16% of budget is required to be used for the purchase of books
- Library qualifies for "e-rate" and there has been a \$1300-1500 savings on phone bills
- Library needs to be open 40 hours to the public to qualify for state funds

Building Department

Mr. Michael Tusino was present for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. Tusino reviewed the Building Budget as follows: proposing line increase of \$400 for gas expense and \$200 for purchase of filing cabinets. Mr. Dillon questioned the tracking of the revenue. Mr. Tusino stated that they were way ahead with commercial construction. Mr. Dillon noted that in the first six months of 06 was more than the entire previous year.

Mr. Tusino reviewed the Gas & Plumbing Budget and Electrical Budget as follows:

- Proposing to add to wages/salary to cover fees paid, the inspectors are paid \$24/inpection and are paid from fees, but commercial inspections require more trips.
- Proposing \$2500 increase in Electrical due to higher activity than Gas & Plumbing

Mr. Webber noted that the Gas/Plumbing Inspector can only be paid \$16,000 per Town Meeting vote.

Board of Health & Solid Waste

Mr. Bob Hanninen; Mr. Bruce Dubey; and Ms. Tessa David were present for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. Hanninen reviewed the budget as follows:

- Wages are under negotiation
- Nursing Service and Nashoba Health Boards are increasing (the first increase since 2001)

- Landfill monitoring is level-funded
- Engineering – same
- Herbert Lipton – same (\$6500)

Landfill Budget

Mr. Dubey reviewed the budget as follows:

- Small increase in wages.
- There will be revenue from baling newspaper and tin cans, revenue will offset the cost of the new machine.
- Increase in fuel costs

Ms. Kitchen noted that there was an increase in the phone line item and asked Mr. Dubey to check and see if he was part of the Verizon contract.

Board of Assessors

Mr. Hugh McLaughlin, Ms. Sylvia Sangiolo, Mr. Eddie Kopec and Ms. Rena Swezey were present for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. McLaughlin distributed corrected versions of the budget. Mr. McLaughlin read a memo from the Department of Revenue regarding efficient management.

Mr. McLaughlin stated that the Board of Assessors was looking for guidance because they need to get the job done but question whether it can be done in house or outsourced. Mr. McLaughlin stated that there was a need to send people into the field and they want to increase the hours of the part-time employee and train her to do the field inspections and all building permits. Mr. McLaughlin stated that there was a need for people to be in simultaneous positions and there is an increase in time spent educating residents about the CPA.

Administrative Officer and Board of Selectmen

Ms. Kitchen reviewed the budgets as follows:

Board of Selectmen

- Increase in mileage
- Level-funded engineering
- Municipal Hearing Officer was added to both the BOS and AO budgets to see which it should be under. Municipal Hearing Officer is from new legislature as an intermediate step for disputes. Mr. Dillon thought it should be taken out of both budgets. Mr. Keoseian suggested putting it under Administrative Officer budget and reducing to \$500 as a place holder with the possibility of regionalizing.

Administrative Officer

- Level funded
- Increase in dues and memberships (MMA is increasing)
- Travel & Conferences – increased mileage
- Decrease in legal advertisement

Streetlights – rates increased 22%

Insurance & Bonding

- New law for firefighters to provide an annuity or \$500,000, increases \$14,000 in insurance policy
- Increase in workers compensation
- General package up 2.5%; added 3% for claims
- Increase in deductible

Postage & Office Assistant

- Increase in rate and are required by the Government to go to a digital meter

Other Business

Website Request

Mr. Saball moved to grant permission to the publishers of the Groton Guide to use only Town material from the Town's website and it is necessary to gain permission to use photos and/or outside links to websites. Seconded by Mr. Cunningham. Unanimous vote.

Mr. Saball moved to adjourn at 9:40 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Cunningham. Unanimous vote.

Approved: _____
Robert W. Nordblom, Clerk

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen Newell
Office Assistant

Date Approved: March 6, 2006