

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MARCH 13, 2006
REGULAR SESSION MINUTES
“APPROVED”**

Present: George F. Dillon, Jr., Chair; John L. Saball, Vice Chair (arrived at 6:49 p.m.); Robert W. Nordblom, Clerk; Peter S. Cunningham, Member; Mihran Keoseian, Member; Jean E. Kitchen, Administrative Assistant; and Kathleen Newell, Office Assistant

The meeting was called to order at 6:45 p.m.

Public Hearing – Community Development Block Grant Program (cont.)

Attendance sheet enclosed herein.

Mr. Cunningham moved to reopen the public hearing at 6:45 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Nordblom. 4 in favor, 1 absent (Saball).

Mr. Glenn Eaton of MRPC was present. Mr. Eaton stated the Board would need to prioritize in a public session. Mr. Eaton also distributed a form and support letters to send to the Department heads.

Mr. Dillon queried the audience. Ms. Collette stated that she and Ms. Kitchen had worked to prioritize areas, taking into consideration on-going projects such as Station Avenue redevelopment, Recreation, the Open Space and Master Plans to make a prioritized list (enclosed herein). Ms. Collette stated that this program was a good opportunity to help homeowners make meaningful improvements to their homes.

Mr. Nordblom moved to close the hearing at 6:50 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Cunningham. Unanimous vote.

Mr. Cunningham moved to go ahead with the priority list for the Community Development Block Grant. Seconded by Mr. Saball. Unanimous vote.

Valerie Jenkins, Town Accountant and Christine Collins, Treasurer Collector RE: Quarterly Update

Ms. Collins reviewed the Treasurer/Tax Collector Report (enclosed herein).

Ms. Jenkins reviewed the Accountant Report (enclosed herein). Ms. Jenkins stated that there were three and one-half months left in the fiscal year and some departments are feeling the pinch, largely in part to escalating fuel and utility costs. Ms. Jenkins noted that there was a small reserve fund this year and there will be more requests for transfers if the utilities cannot be controlled. Ms. Jenkins stated that there are some past warrant articles which still have money attached to them that has not been expended. Mr. Cunningham asked if there was a list of the articles. Ms. Jenkins stated that Ms. Kitchen would be discussing them with the Department Heads at their next meeting on Wednesday. Ms. Jenkins stated that the FY05 audit had been completed and she had seen a draft and sent some questions back to the auditors.

Mr. Keoseian asked if there were any areas of concern. Ms. Jenkins noted that departments that are using gasoline and heating big buildings need to keep a handle on the rising costs. Ms. Jenkins noted that she is at the end of the chain and when she sees a problem it is already over the edge.

Mr. Cunningham asked Ms. Jenkins if the Recreation Gift Fund could be used as a potential source of funding for the continuation of the website. Ms. Jenkins stated that the Board was the owner of the fund by default and she would suggest freezing the gift fund until it was determined what the fund is needed for in the future.

Chief Robert Mulhern RE: Appointment - Office Assistant

Mr. Saball moved to approve the hiring of Kathy Newell to the position of Police Department Office Assistant/Clerk, effective March 20, 2006 at Grade 4, Step 4. Seconded by Mr. Nordblom. Unanimous vote.

Open Special Town Meeting

Mr. Saball moved to open the Special Town Meeting Warrant and close it on Thursday, March 16, 2006 at 12:00 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Nordblom. Unanimous vote.

Cable Committee RE: Production Technician Position

Mr. Gabe Nucci and Ms. Dorothy Davis were present for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. Nucci stated that the position of Production Technician had been reviewed and rated by the Personnel Board and it would be funded by the subscribers. Mr. Nucci reviewed the job description and hours for the position.

Mr. Saball moved to allow the Cable Committee to advertise the position of Production Technician. Seconded by Mr. Nordblom. Unanimous vote.

Annual Town Meeting Articles Initial Review (continued from 3/6/2006)

Community Preservation Committee

Mr. Rick Hughson was present for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. Hughson noted that there had been some questions regarding the percentages which had been reviewed the previous week. Mr. Dillon reviewed the breakdown of CPA funds ▪ \$46,000 Operating Expenses ▪ \$92,000 Open Space ▪ \$92,000 Community Housing ▪ \$92,000 Historic Resource Reserve.

Mr. Cunningham asked what the \$46,000 for operating expenses would be used for. Mr. Hughson stated that the Committee had designated 5% for operating expenses and had used only \$500 primarily for public notification and minor office supplies. Mr. Dillon noted that at the end of the year the remaining operating expense budget reverted to the C.P.C. general budget.

Groton Country Club Budget

Mr. Brad Durrin and Ms. Valerie Spencer were present for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. Durrin reviewed the budget and the need for golf cart replacement.

Mr. Cunningham stated that there had been a proposal that the Country Club assume the operation of Sargisson Beach from the Conservation Commission. Mr. Durrin stated that it would be discussed at a meeting on the following day. Mr. Cunningham suggested that a decision be forthcoming as it is a time sensitive matter. Ms. Kitchen noted that the YMCA had expressed an interest in running the program.

Mr. Dillon addressed the warrant article petitioning the Legislature to change the name by removing Recreation Authority from the Groton Country Club. Mr. Durrin stated that it had been voted on in 1999. Ms. Kitchen stated there was a need to repeat the process.

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Capital Planning – Highway

Mr. Tom Delaney was present for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. Delaney stated that he wanted to replace a 25 year old dump truck. Mr. Dillon noted that it had been recommended by the Capital Planning Committee.

Sewer Department

Mr. Jim Gmeiner was present for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. Gmeiner stated that the number in the draft warrant had changed. Ms. Kitchen stated that she would change the wording to state “a sum of money” in the article and note the actual amount in the summary of the article.

Medicare

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

Ms. Jenkins stated that some employees qualify for federally funded Medicare and by adopting a local initiative it would require eligible employees to sign up for Medicare. Ms. Jenkins stated that under Section 18, the Town could incur a penalty for Medicare B eligible employees of 10% for each year the employee does not sign up. Ms. Jenkins stated that the Town should be proactive and adopt the initiative now.

Historical Commission

Mr. Al Collins, Mr. Richard Dabrowski and Ms. Shirley Wishart were present for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. Collins stated that the Town of Groton is full of history and the proposed demolition delay bylaw would provide a window of opportunity to protect the property while possible alternatives to demolition are sought. Mr. Keoseian asked how the Historical Commission would help the seller during the period of time the demolition delay bylaw was in effect. Mr. Collins stated that by having the bylaw on the books, buyers would be prompted to look at options to

demolition. Mr. Cunningham asked if an owner would be able to pre-qualify their home. Mr. Collins affirmed.

Conservation Commission

Mr. Evan Owen and Ms. Barbara Ganem were present for this portion of the meeting.

Ms. Ganem stated that the article would remove parcels from the tax possession and dedicate to the town under the care and custody of the Conservation Commission. Mr. Katz stated that the Commission would meet the following evening and the encroachment article may be pulled.

Sign By-Law

Mr. John MacLeod, Ms. Janine Doucette and Mr. Joe Bassett were present for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. MacLeod stated that he had resigned from the Sign Committee. He stated that the Sign Committee had not met in several months due to a lack of a quorum and therefore did not have anything for the sign bylaw. Mr. MacLeod stated that Attorney Bob Collins had drafted a bylaw but he had been hired by Shaw's. Mr. Bassett asked if a member of the Select Board could sit on the Committee. Mr. Dillon stated that there had been a house-keeping concern which needed to be addressed.

Ms Doucette stated that she would be willing along with Mr. Andy Fields to act as consultants to the Sign Committee for enforcement and recommendations. Ms. Kitchen stated that there were sign applications which need to be acted upon. Ms. Doucette stated that they could review the applications and make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen for action.

Ms. Kitchen stated that she would vet the proposed by-law proposed by Attorney Collins through Town Counsel.

Ms. Doucette stated that she and Mr. Bassett would be meeting the following evening and asked if a member of the Board could attend. Mr. Nordblom volunteered.

Mr. Damon Irby volunteered to serve on the Sign Committee on a temporary basis.

Mr. Cunningham moved to appoint Damon Irby to the Sign Committee for the unexpired term to expire June 30, 2006. Seconded by Mr. Nordblom. Unanimous vote.

Petition RE: Drainage Easement

Mr. Damon Irby was present for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. Irby distributed a reworded handout to the Board. Mr. Irby reviewed the easement and the property attributes.

Lawrence Academy RE: Application of Pesticides for Other than Aesthetic Purposes

Mr. Saball moved to authorize the Lawrence Academy to use and apply pesticide for other than aesthetic purposes on the campus. Seconded by Mr. Nordblom. Unanimous vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

Housing Authority RE: Use of Town Counsel

Ms. Kitchen stated that she had not received any information from Town Counsel.

Mr. Cunningham stated that this matter was in reference to the Sandy Pond units the Housing Authority is trying to purchase and they have incurred legal expenses. Ms. Jenkins stated that she does have concerns regarding the expenditure of monies

SELECTMEN LIAISON REPORT

Mr. Cunningham stated that he had previously raised the idea of having the legislative members in to talk in general regarding the current business on Beacon Hill, especially the budget. There was a consensus of the Board to send an invitation letter.

Mr. Dillon and Mr. Keoseian had attended the Nashoba Valley Regional Technical High School budget meeting. The budget is certified and both Groton and Townsend had showed a decrease in attendance and realized a lower assessment. These tow Towns and Shirley each have a reduced student enrolment vs. the previous year.

Mr. Saball moved to enter into Executive Session in accordance with MGL Chapter 39, Section 23B, for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to contract negotiations for Personal Contracts for the Fire Chief, Police Chief, Administrative Officer, and Town Accountant and will not reconvene in Open Session. Roll Call Vote: Dillon – yes; Saball – yes; Nordblom – yes; Cunningham – yes; Keoseian – yes.

Approved: _____
Robert W. Nordblom, Clerk

respectfully *submitted*,
Kathleen Newell
Office Assistant

Enclosures (4) Public Hearing Attendance Sheet, Public Hearing Checklist, Treasurers Quarterly Report, Accountant’s Quarterly Report
Date Approved: April 3, 2006