

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES AUGUST 13, 2007
APPROVED**

Present: George Dillon, Jr., Chairman; Joshua A. Degen, Vice Chairman; Stuart Schulman, Clerk; Peter Cunningham; Mihran Keoseian

Also Present: Jeff Ritter, Interim Administrative Officer; April Iannacone, Office Assistant

Mr. Dillon called the regular meeting of the Board to Order at 7:00 p.m. and reviewed the agenda for the public.

Groton Country Club & Recreation Authority Interview & Appointment for two vacancies – Brian Kiley & David Hopper

Mr. Dillon began the discussion by thanking both Howard Hersey and Valerie Spencer for their many years of service on the Country Club & Recreation Authority. He informed the Board of Selectmen (BOS) that both candidates had been recommended by the Country Club Authority and then asked if there were any comments or questions. Mr. Cunningham asked the candidates if they were aware of the talks of the recreation center & improvements to the Country Club and what their feelings were on the plans. Mr. Hopper responded that if the funding can be found and the new rec. center can happen that it will be a good thing to help improve the Country Club and he supports the idea. Mr. Kiley responded that he was not as familiar with the planned renovation because he has only been to a few meetings as a visitor. He thinks it is a great opportunity and would like to get more involved to see what's going and what can be done. Mr. Degen thanked both candidates for their interest in participating on the Country Club Authority. He felt that as actual users of the club they can bring good insight and input.

Mr. Degen moved to appoint Brian Kiley to the Groton Country Club & Recreation Authority for the three year term to expire June 30, 2010. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

Mr. Degen moved to appoint David Hopper to the Groton Country Club & Recreation Authority for the unexpired three year term, term to expire June 30, 2009. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

Sustainable Community Study Committee Interviews & Appointments

Mike Roberts addressed the Board to give them an update on the first meeting of the Committee, the candidates who attended and have shown interest as well as the direction in which they plan to go from here. There were 12 people including him who were interested in being appointed to the committee. At the first meeting of the committee each member was given a task to spend time on the internet to learn the language and different aspects of sustainability. At their next meeting which will be held on Monday the 20th each person will then review their specific findings so that the whole group is up to speed on all of the language. They will then be contacting other communities that have already been practicing sustainable activities so that they can get information on how they are using or practicing these activities. Mr. Keoseian asked if on the flip side of sustainability there were any benchmarks to use for other communities who are not practicing sustainability. Mike responded that he does not know the metrics of the communities not practicing sustainability, but informed Mr. Keoseian and the Board that there was a pole developed in Canada which is a self examination as to where the community already stands in the area of sustainability. Mr. Keoseian then asked if this information was available online somewhere. Mike responded that it could be found on the site for the International Institute for Sustainability Development. Once on the site you would go to sustainable communities and then download the inventory document for free. This study will be used to determine where Groton already stands. He feels that the town will be in good shape but the inventory document will tell them where things could be done better. Mr. Schulman asked if Mike could give a specific example of something he felt we are doing well. The only thing Mike could say for certain was that we are good at recycling. He is sure there are other areas but he is not aware of what they are yet. Mike then closed by informing the Board that he felt that there was a good mix of people who were all excited about serving however he did not have anyone who represented the agricultural community or any community based organizations.

Mr. Degen moved to appoint Carl Canner, Chris Christie, Alvin Collins, Chase Duffy, Richard Hewitt, Monica Hinojos, Leo Laverdure, Ed O'Rourke, Ed Perkins, Michael Roberts, Fran Stanley and Haynes Turkle to the Sustainable Community Study Committee for the one year term to expire June 30, 2008. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

Appointment of Bill Shute as Town of Groton NIMS Coordinator

Mr. Ritter informed the Board that NIMS stood for National Incident Management Services. He felt it best for Bill Shute to

hold this position to act as a liaison between the town and State and Federal Agencies since he is part of the Emergency Management Committee. Also he is probably the most knowledgeable in this area.

Mr. Degen moved to appoint Bill Shute as NIMS coordinator for the one year term to expire June 30, 2008. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

Board Goals and Objectives Approval

Mr. Dillon reviewed the Eight Goals for the BOS that were discussed and created during the work session in June. The first goal was to analyze whether the current Town Government Structure should change. The Blue Ribbon Governance Committee has been working on this and will be bringing this to the Fall Special Town Meeting (STM). The second goal is to encourage businesses to locate in Groton in accordance with the town's Master Plan. The third goal is the implementation of the Station Avenue Directions Advisory Committee to develop a plan of action for the proposed multi-use zoning overlay district which will be presented at the Fall STM. The fourth goal is to implement the Affordable Housing Plan. The fifth goal, to analyze the consolidation of the Water and Sewer Departments, would be held off because should a change in town governance take place the Town Manager will come in and look at the organizational structure and reorganize as necessary.

The sixth goal goes along with the acquisition of property on Lost Lake near the dam given by TABCOM, is to evaluate the Wastewater Project for Lost Lake and West Groton which has been ongoing and is continuing to be looked at. The seventh goal will also be put on hold for the town manager to look into. The goal would create a Town Collector such that one person would be responsible for the collection of all fees in order to decrease the amount of cash paid into town. The last goal has also been ongoing which is to resolve the yearly funding question regarding the Fire Hydrant Fees. Mr. Dillon then informed the public that a copy of the goals will be available in the Selectmen's Office should anyone wish to obtain one. Mr. Degen stated that he felt that the document was consistent with what was discussed in the work sessions and he was ok with it.

Mr. Degen moved to accept and approve the Board of Selectmen FY08 Goals and Objectives dated June 4, 2007. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

Contract Approval for MMA Consulting Group (Assessment Center) & NFC Global, LLC.

Mr. Dillon stated that the MMA Consulting Group would be conducting the Police Chief Assessment Center for all 5 Police Chief Candidates and then NFC Global would be conducting background investigations on the 3 finalists. Mr. Cunningham stated that he felt that the information from the Assessment Center would be useful to the Board and helpful in making the decision.

Mr. Degen moved to approve and authorize the Chairman to sign the Contracts between the Town of Groton and both MMA Consulting Group & NFC Global, LLC. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

Warrant for Congressional Election on September 4th

Mr. Dillon informed the public that the Warrant was actually for the State Primary and that the Election will be held on the first Tuesday in November. He also informed the public of the date and time, and that the position being voted on was for the Representative in Congress Fifth District.

Mr. Degen moved to sign the State Election Warrant for Tuesday, September 4, 2007. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

Nomination of George Moore for Animal Inspector

Mr. Dillon informed the public that the BOS would be nominating George for the position as Animal Inspector however the Mass. Department of Agricultural Resources actually makes the appointment. George will be replacing John Greenhalgh who has held the position for approximately 3 years. Mr. Cunningham felt it important to explain to the public what the Animal Inspector does since the position is not well known. The Animal Inspector is a different position from the Dog Officer. The Animal Inspector handles quarantines in bite cases, completes the Barn Book Survey which is sent yearly to the state, as well as inspecting cattle coming into the town from another state or country. This person needs to know their way around a barn yard and possess good record keeping skills.

Mr. Degen moved to nominate George Moore as the Animal Inspector for the term to expire April 30, 2008. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

Review Community Preservation Committee (CPC) Applications

Mr. Dillon announced that there would be a meeting of the CPC on August 21 at Legion Hall at 7:30 p.m. to discuss all of the applications that were presented to the CPC. There were a total of 13 applications requesting a total amount of \$508,000. Mr. Degen confirmed that the Board had taken a position on a few of the applications thus far. Mr. Dillon announced that the Board had seen and reviewed the applications for the Affordable Housing Plan, Conservation Fund, Squannacook River Rail Trail, Squannacook Hall, Williams Barn and Nashua Road. Mr. Degen then stated that the application for the archaeological survey for Surrenden Farm was consistent with the original plan and needed to be done in order for the next stage to continue. Mr. Dillon then stated that the Board did not have enough information to comment on the last 3 applications for the Florence Roche School Project Playground, Cow Pond Field Expansion and the Tennis Court Renovation. Mr. Degen then questioned what would happen if the requests for funds exceeds the amount of money that is in the CPA fund. He also noted that if the fund were depleted there would not be anything left for the future. Mr. Dillon replied that the CPC would have to transfer money from unallocated reserves to allocated reserves. He also stated that it was up to the CPC to decide if they wanted to establish and maintain certain reserve levels. Mr. Keoseian stated that he was concerned about the amount of CPC requests for surveys and feasibility studies rather than actual projects. He questioned whether the affordable housing application was to implement or do another study. Mr. Ritter responded that the funding was to do an inventory and categorize sites that could be used for affordable housing and then hire a consultant to set up development rather than developers. Mr. Degen stated that the state approved affordable housing plan cannot move forward without some feasibility studies and this is the next step. Mr. Dillon stated that Mr. Keoseian's comments were well taken and did make sense. He also stated that the request for Nashua Road was also to set up a plan more than just feasibility. He then ended by again stating that anyone looking for further information was welcome to attend the meeting at Legion Hall.

State of the Town

Mr. Ritter addressed the Board to see if they wanted to pursue the concept of the State of the Town Meeting that he proposed for September 24, 2007. The meeting would be an hour long discussion on what is realistic and unrealistic in spending money for the next Fiscal Year (FY). It will also give all Boards, Committees, Commissions and Employees a forecast of what the next Fiscal Year (FY) will look like. Mr. Dillon stated that he believed that the idea was a good one however he felt that there was a concern of timing. He felt that a meeting like this would be best held in the later part of November for many reasons. Valerie Jenkins, the Town Accountant, would be on vacation on the date that Mr. Ritter had suggested and would be unable to attend and her recap sheets will not be complete. The FY 07 Books would be closed but free cash would not be certified. If done in November then the Fall STM results would be available for a better understanding of what would be coming up. Lastly, the Town Treasurer should be available to report on the Debt Status/Capacity. Mr. Keoseian felt that the idea was a good one if the issue of timing could be worked out. He has seen this done before and feels that once it is established as a regular practice it is a really great method or process for heads to use as benchmarks and a set point for what might be coming down the road. The timing issue should be worked out so all information is as current as possible. Mr. Degen also agreed that this should be conducted after STM. There are a few warrants on the STM that if approved would have major financial costs involved in implementing them such as the Town Manager and Station Ave. Therefore, knowing all information from the meeting would be more helpful this year than doing this before it. Mr. Dillon stated that it shouldn't be a surprise to anyone that the state of the town finances is getting tight. Mr. Cunningham responded that the town was doing well at trying to conserve costs and help stop them from rising. Mr. Dillon noted that health insurance costs have been rising, energy costs are not rising but have remained high and there are decreasing chapter 70 funds for schools. Last year cuts were made that were unusual for a town to make which included not hiring and decreasing hours as well as reduced municipal budgets. Also the town gave approximately 71 percent of new revenues to the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District which was well above the previous contributions of 55%. Mr. Dillon also stated that new growth was down significantly and there was nothing to say that it would go up. There are increasing costs and decreasing revenues. Mr. Cunningham supported conducting this state of the town meeting but added that it would only be successful if everyone can get involved.

Surplus Equipment Declaration Request from the Police Department

Mr. Dillon asked what would be done with the equipment once it is declared surplus. Mr. Ritter responded that The Police Department would ask other departments if they had a need for any of it. If there is no need then the property will go into the Surplus Property Auction next year.

Mr. Degen moved to declare the attached list of equipment which includes an Avant Electro-Quad II Photo ID Camera, Model E-4000, Serial #901223 and a Smith Corona XD 4900 Word Processing Typewriter from the Police Department as Surplus Property. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

REPORT OF THE INTERIM ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Mr. Ritter stated that he need to know as soon as possible which of the Selectmen would be attending the CPC Public Hearing on the 21st so that he could post if a majority of the Board would be attending. The Finance Committee would be

reviewing the applications on August 28th. The Assessment Center is being conducted on time and on budget and we are all set for the new Police Chief to start as of October 1st. On Wednesday August 29th at 4:00 a joint meeting of the Police Chief Search Committee and the BOS would be held for the Search Committee to give the Board their input and information on each candidate. They will then conduct an Executive Session Meeting to discuss the Assessment Center findings. Mr. Ritter also requested that as part of the August 27th agenda the Board set a date for the Special Town Meeting. Dates are being reviewed around the end of October, possibly the 22nd. He will check with others on the agenda and preliminary article list. He had a meeting with Hugh McLaughlin regarding Special Town Meeting Warrant Article. Mr. Ritter also informed the Board that he will be out for the day on September 17th for Jury Duty. On the September 17th Agenda there will be a joint meeting with the Planning Board regarding an appointment. Lastly, the Chicopee School received notification from the Massachusetts Historical Commission regarding a hearing on September 12th in Dorchester at 1:00 p.m. for consideration to become listed as a historic building. Mr. Ritter felt that someone from the Historical Commission of the BOS should probably attend.

SELECTMEN LIAISON REPORTS

Mr. Degen announced that a working meeting took place with a representative of the Hicks Corporation regarding the Jenkins Road potential affordable housing project. The plan calls for 3 Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) units and the Board is trying to get one more bedroom in the house for affordable housing to more closely meet the affordable housing requirements that were voted on at Town Meeting. There will be a meeting with the DMR and Chris Pude from the Housing Authority within the next week or two.

Mr. Dillon informed the public that the Selectmen, with the exception of Mihran, attended the Senator Panagiotakos cookout on Wednesday.

Mr. Schulman informed the Board that the Zoning Board of Appeals met regarding the GroLex property on Chicopee Row and instructed the Building Inspector that trucking would not be allowed at that site however welding and other operations would be.

Mr. Cunningham announced that the Blue Ribbon Governance Committee had met again and have created a final working draft of the Charter. A copy will be available on the website for the public to view and another website will be created for public input and comments. A meeting with department heads has been set for Wed. August 22 at 9:00 a.m. There will be 23 impacted elected committees and they will be going over the changes that will affect them.

OTHER BUSINESS CONTINUED

Mr. Degen moved to approve the minutes of July 30, 2007 as amended. Mr. Schulman seconded. Voted 4 in favor (F.D., J.D., S.S., P.C.) and 1 abstained (M.K.).

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Degen moved to adjourn at 7:55 p.m. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

Approved: _____

Stuart Schulman, Clerk

Office Assistant

_____ respectfully submitted,

April Iannacone

Date Approved: *August 27, 2007*