

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES AUGUST 4, 2008
APPROVED**

Present: Joshua A. Degen, Chairman; Anna Eliot, Clerk; Peter Cunningham; George Dillon, Jr.

Absent: Stuart Schulman, Vice Chairman

Also Present: Jeff Ritter, Interim Administrative Officer; Patrice Garvin, Administrative Assistant

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

POLICE GIFT TO PURCHASE EQUIPMENT

Chief Palma stated that he has received an anonymous gift to purchase a used vehicle, which includes insurance, inspection and maintenance at no cost to the town.

Mr. Cunningham moved to accept a gift of \$7,000 on behalf of the Groton Police Department for the sole purpose of purchasing, equipping, maintaining and any other related expenses used for a 2005 Crown Victoria as an unmarked cruiser. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. Motion carried (4-0)

BOARD OF ASSESSORS JOINT WITH BOARD OF SELECTMEN INTERVIEWS

Mr. Boles called the meeting with the Board of Assessors and Board of Selectmen to order.

Christopher Murphy- Mr. Murphy explained that he ran for Assessor in the past election and gave a brief background on his experience and qualifications. Mr. Murphy stated that he was a tax consultant and knew the Assessment process. Mr. Cunningham asked given the recent controversy in the Assessors office how would he of handled it differently. Mr. Murphy stated that given the lack of sales activity in Groton it makes the assessment harder to pinpoint. Mr. Murphy suggested keeping a log of sales over a longer period of time to help with trend data.

Mr. Dillon asked about the residents who request abatements year after year. Mr. Murphy stated that there would always be disgruntled tax payers but he would work towards minimizing conflict. Mr. Dillon suggested that there was a need to explain why the abatements are denied. Mr. Murphy agreed that there needed to be an educational component between the Assessors and the tax payer. Mr. Murphy stated that he would seek election in May 2009 if appointed.

Jenifer Evans- Ms. Evans gave a brief background and stated that she has strong math and statistical skills. Ms. Evans explained how she would approach being an Assessor and noted that she had no formal background in Assessing. Ms. Evans explained that she has read the MGL laws pertaining to Assessment as well as attending the course offered through the state. Ms. Evans added that she worked well with others and would help to smooth things over.

Mr. Cunningham asked given the recent events in the Assessors office how she would have handled things differently. Ms. Evans stated that she would have shown residents where they fit in home values in Town in relation to their neighbor. Ms. Evans stated that it was the job of the Assessors to catch any mistakes made by VISION and not to blame the taxpayers. Ms. Evans stated that she would run in the May 2009 election if appointed. Mr. Dillon asked about residents who request abatements year after year. Ms. Evans agreed with Mr. Murphy that some residents would just return year after year but that she would work to keep abatements down because it only hurts the town. Mr. Degen asked if Ms. Evans could fit in with the Assessors. Ms. Evans stated that she felt that differences could be overcome and a good working relationship could occur.

Mr. Degen asked Ms. Swezey if given the conflict of interest laws if she would recuse herself from the Vote. Ms. Swezey saw no conflict and stated that she planned on voting. Mr. Degen stated that he had an opinion from legal counsel stating that Ms. Swezey needed to submit her intension to vote to the Clerks office. Mr. Degen asked if Ms. Swezey has submitted a letter to the Clerks office. Ms. Swezey stated that she was not informed a letter was needed. Ms. Eliot stated that the issue of a letter was not mentioned until the selectmen's meeting was called, therefore Ms. Swezey should not be held to the stipulation. After discussion Ms. Swezey would submit the letter to the Clerk's office the following morning and would cast a vote.

Ms. Eliot moved to nominate Chris Murphy to fill the unexpired term of Hugh McLaughlin or until the 2009 municipal election. Ms. Cunningham seconded the nomination.

Mr. Cunningham moved to nominate Jenifer Evans to fill the unexpired term of Hugh McLaughlin or until the 2009 municipal election. Mr. Boles seconded the nomination.

Ballot vote called- Josh Degen-Jenifer Evans; Anna Eliot-Chris Murphy; Peter Cunningham- Jenifer Evans; Fran Dillon-Jenifer Evans; Garret Boles- Jenifer Evans; Rena Swezey-Chris Murphy.

*Jennifer Evans-4 votes
Christopher Murphy 2 votes*

CHANGE OF MANAGER, GROTON COUNTRY CLUB

Mr. Cunningham moved to Change the Manager of the Groton Country Club Authority's on Premise Liquor License for the Function Hall & Snack Bar/Lounge from Michelle Sticklor to Rod Van Guilder. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. Motion carried (4-0).

LOST LAKE SEWER COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT

Carol Quinn gave a brief history and why she would be a good fit to the committee. Ms. Quinn hoped to speak to someone at Woodward & Curran. Mr. Ritter stated that speaking with someone could be arranged and that the committee is charged with reporting their findings to Town Meeting. Mr. Cunningham noted that no funds were available. Mr. Dillon suggested asked the West Groton Sewer Committee their thoughts and the possibility of sharing resources.

Thomas Doyle stated that he had been a resident for over 25 year and wanted to help the lakes region. Mr. Doyle gave a brief description of his background.

Mr. Cunningham moved to appoint Carol Quinn and Thomas Doyle to the Lost Lake Sewer Committee for a three-year term to expire June 30, 2009. Mr. Dillon seconded the motion. Motion carried (4-0).

SAFETY MANUAL

Mr. Ritter explained that the manual was still under review and would receive credits from MIIA.

MUNICIPAL INTERN

Mr. Ritter explained the idea for a Municipal Intern. Mr. Ritter stated that the announcement could be forwarded to the Groton School, Lawrence Academy, Regional School District and Nashoba Tech.

THINK TANK COMMITTEE

The Board decided to forward the information to FinCom and then appoint someone by the next meeting.

TRAILS COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Cunningham moved to reappoint Edward Bretschneider and John Lynch to the Trails Committee for a one-year term to expire June 30, 2009. Mr. Dillon seconded the motion. Motion carried (4-0).

VOUNTARY DEFERRED COMPENSATION PLAN

Mr. Degen explained to the Board what this item was and how employees could access the benefit. There is no cost to the Town.

Mr. Dillon moved to allow Town employees to participate in the voluntary deferred compensation plan offered by Nationwide Investments and Great Western investments with the understanding there will not be any cost to the Town of Groton. Further, to authorize Christine Collins, Treasurer/Collector to sign all related documents. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. Motion carried (4-0).

INTERIM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS

Mr. Ritter reported that a meeting was held with Mr. DeNormandie, owner of the escaped cattle. Mr. DeNormandie was asked to reimburse the Town of all the expenses incurred to capture the cattle. Mr. DeNormandie was also preparing an operational plan for the facility and provides it to the Town by the end of the week. No reimbursement or plan has been received.

Mr. Ritter reported that Martha Campbell cited an increase in the senior center participation by 522 visits. Mr. Ritter reported that the Commonwealth’s Capital Bond bill that has been sent to the Governor for approval is a \$390,000 additional appropriation to complete phase II of the Squannacook River Repair and restoration of the project. Mr. Ritter reported that a charge for the Economic Development Committee was being created and would be presented to the Board at its next meeting. Mr. Ritter thanked Ms. Garvin and Ms. Iannacone for their work in saving money in cell phone usage.

SELECTMAN LIAISON REPORTS

Mr. Degen gave the board an update on the Town manager search and that by September 16th the committee will give the Board 3-5 names for review.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the April 22, 2008 regular meeting minutes. Mr. Dillon seconded the motion. Motion carried (3-0-1)

Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the July 7, 2008 regular meeting minutes. Mr. Dillon seconded the motion. Motion carried (4-0).

Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the July 21, 2008 regular meeting minutes. Mr. Dillon seconded the motion. Motion carried (4-0)

Mr. Cunningham moved to approve and release the Executive Session minutes of February 25, 2008. Mr. Dillon seconded the motion. Motion carried (3-0-1)

Mr. Cunningham moved to approve but no release the Executive Session minutes of July 7, 2008. Mr. Dillon seconded the motion. Motion carried (4-0).

ADJOURN

Mr. Cunningham moved to adjourn at 9:00 p.m. Ms. Eliot seconded. Meeting adjourned.

Approved: _____
Anna Eliot, Clerk

_____ respectfully submitted,
Patrice Garvin
Administrative Assistant

Date Approved: 8-18-08