

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES MARCH 15, 2010
APPROVED**

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

Also Present: Mark W. Haddad, Town Manager; Patrice Garvin, Executive Assistant

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

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad reported on the recent flood. Mr. Haddad stated that he, Chief Palma and DPW Director Tom Delaney investigated the roads affected by the flood. Mr. Haddad reported that Broadmeadow, Hill Road and Parts of Route 119 were closed. There was some concern regarding Rivercourt Residences and the need to evacuate. Mr. Haddad reported that Rivercourt Residences was currently stable.
2. Mr. Haddad reported that the upstairs relocation was completed over the weekend and through a cooperative effort from employees it was successful.
3. Mr. Haddad reminded the Board that there will be a joint meeting with the Finance Committee on Tuesday, March 16th to continue the review of the FY11 Town Operating Budget. The discussion will focus on the Groton-Dunstable Regional School Committee seeking an override of 2.34 million (1.814 million for Groton) to balance their FY11 budget. Mr. Haddad also informed the Board that the Legislature has decided against issuing an early Local Aid Resolution. It is being recommended that communities anticipate a 5% reduction in Chapter 70 and Unrestricted Local Aid.
4. EMT Commendations- Chief Joe Bosselait acknowledged and thanked- the following EMT's for their outstanding efforts and going above and beyond their normal call of duty.
 - Daniel Coelho
 - James Crocker
 - Susan Daly
 - David Dubey
 - Tyler Shute
5. Mr. Haddad explained that the Personnel Board has recommended no Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for by-law employees, based on their review of the Social Security Administration's annual cost adjustment (0%). Mr. Haddad proposed in his budget a 2% COLA for by-law employees in FY11. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to reject the Personnel Board's recommendation and support a 2% COLA for By-Law employees in FY11. Mr. Degen stressed the need for fiscal responsibility, and that the recommendation from the Personnel Board should be discussed. Mr. Cunningham noted other factors, not just the social security adjustments, being used in the past to determine COLA. Mr. Cunningham stated that it was creating inequity to have bylaw employees not receive a COLA, while union employees representing 80% of the Towns employees would receive a COLA. Mr. Haddad agreed that it created inequity between union and non union employees, and added that the Department Heads already volunteered to increase their health care cost share from 80-20 split to a 75-25 split. Mr. Degen stated that the private sector was not receiving raises, and that the Town asked the schools to go back to their unions to renegotiate. Mr. Dillon stated that the Town should look into adopting a guideline for COLA for the future and reminded the Board that some employees receive an automatic 3% step in their first four years.

6. Mr. Haddad distributed the latest draft of the Spring and Special Town Meeting Warrant. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to pay attention to the Groton Electric Light Article. The Article is for GELD purchase property on Station Ave. The commissioners believe that purchasing the parcels would allow them to construct the best facility. The purpose of the article is to authorize the Board of Selectmen to acquire two parcels of land on behalf of the Electric Light Department. Ms. Eliot commented that any future project on Station Ave should comply with the overlay district regulations. Mr. Dillon did not see why this would not be followed and encouraged the garage to be relocated.
7. Mr. Haddad reported that Town Counsel will be holding office hours on March 17th from 3:00pm to 6:00pm.
8. Mr. Haddad requested direction from the Board as to whether the Lost Lake Sewer Committee and the West Groton Sewer Committee should be joined into one committee. Mr. Degen stated that there were some commonalities between the committees, and that quorum requirements has been an issue in the past. Mr. Schulman did not support merging the two committees because they each are dealing with two separate problems. Mr. Dillon agreed that each committee was dealing with separate issues and if they merged, one could detract from the other.
Mr. Degen moved to include the Lost Lake and West Groton Sewer Committees merging article on the warrant. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. Motion defeated 3 no and 2 yes Mr. Degen and Ms Eliot in favor.

REVIEW FY 2011 PROPOSED TOWN OPERATING BUDGET

Mr. Haddad discussed the further cuts to the budget, as well as the Department Heads voluntarily increasing their health care cost share from 80/20 to 75/25. Mr. Haddad stated that total Levy limit was \$24,853, 714, and with the cuts proposed the Town was \$174k under the Levy limit. Mr. Haddad further explained that based on the 174k residents would pay and additional \$60.00 on the average 400k home tax bill, as opposed to \$104 in Mr. Haddad's original budget presented on December 31st.

A discussion regarding a 2% COLA for non union employees ensued. Mr. Haddad stated that the total impact of a zero COLA for non union employees needed to be calculated and reported back to the Board.

Mr. Dillon referenced individual line items that he wanted clarification on. Mr. Dillon asked for clarification on the following line items: 1260; 1520; 1320; 1340; 2061- 2080- 2000; 2220; 5000; 5001; 1380; 5040; 3000; 5060; 9000. Mr. Haddad addressed Mr. Dillon's questions.

Mr. Schulman asked how the latest revised budget fit into the five year projection. Mr. Haddad stated that if the Town maintains spending, stays under the Levy limit, and the winter is good then the Town would be in good shape. Mr. Haddad commented on the Board of Health \$2500 line item and stated it was not overtime but straight time to cover meetings. The minutes taking for meetings was still needed after the consolidations.

Mr. Cunningham stated that he was in favor of leaving the COLA as is, and that moving forward the Town was in a good position because three unions will be up for renegotiation. Mr. Schulman was in favor of keeping the COLA at 2% and questioned arbitrarily tying it to this year's Social Security. Mr. Degen praised the employees of the town but felt that the non union employees had to be first and relief to the taxpayer was needed.

Mr. Haddad stated that on March 31st a final override decision will be made. The School committee voted a 1.8 million dollar override and that Dunstable has not finalized their assessment. Mr. Haddad distributed a five year

forecast sheet considering a 1.8 million override. Mr. Haddad showed a need for an override each year but noted a 1.8 override was the worst case scenario.

LIAISON REPORTS

Mr. Dillon attended the school budget presentation meeting. Mr. Dillon commented that the Town Report was completed. Mr. Schulman reported his recent participation in the Groton Reads program by reading a book to Florence Roche students. Mr. Degen commented on the improvements to the Country Club and that he will be volunteering his services to improve the grounds. Mr. Cunningham commented on the upcoming election and the need for people to fill the vacancies.

MINUTES

Ms. Eliot moved to approve the February 1, 2010 regular meeting minutes. Mr. Dillon seconded the motion. Motion unanimously carried.

Ms. Eliot moved to approve the February 8, 2010 regular meeting minutes. Mr. Dillon seconded the motion. Motion carried (4-0-1 Mr. Schulman abstaining).

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Dillon moved to adjourn at 8:55pm. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned.

Approved: _____
Anna Eliot, Clerk

_____ respectfully submitted,
Patrice Garvin
Executive Assistant to the Town Manager

Date Approved: 4-5-2010