

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MINUTES SEPTEMBER 4, 2018
APPROVED**

BOS Members Present: Barry A. Pease; Chair; Alison S. Manugian, Vice Chair; John R. Giger, Clerk; Rebecca H. Pine, Member

Members Absent: Joshua A. Degen

Also Present: Mark W. Haddad, Town Manager; Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Ms. Manugian called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and reviewed the agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Giger reminded folks that the Fall Town Meeting would take place on Monday, October 1, 2018.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Ms. Ellen Baxendale asked the Town Manager how his work in Dunstable was going and if the Board noticed any issues with him doing both. Ms. Giger and Ms. Manugian said that everything was going smoothly.

Town Manager's Report

1. Mr. Haddad said that the Conservation Commission had received 2 small property donations; one off of Throne Hill Road and one off of Lowell Road. Ms. Pine asked if these were the ones voted on at Town Meeting. Mr. Haddad said that they were and asked the Board to sign off on the donations.
2. Mr. Haddad said that the Groton Exchange had changed hands and had been purchased by Haffner's Energy Group. He said that they were requesting a Common Victualler License as well as a Fuel Storage Permit. He asked the Board to consider approving their request through the end of the calendar year. There was a brief discussion about the hours of operation on the Common Victualler license. Mr. Haddad said that he assumed it was about the same hours as the previous owner was open.

Ms. Pine moved that they approve and issue the Common Victualler License to HEG Groton of 318 Main Street effective September 5, 2018 through December 31, 2018. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Pine moved that they approve the underground fuel storage permit to HEG, Inc. of Lawrence, MA for 318 Main Street through March 31, 2019. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Mr. Haddad said that the Chair asked that he set aside time on the Agenda for the Board to discuss and provide input to the Master Plan Implementation Committee. The Committee was established by the Groton Planning Board in December of 2017 to help assess the Town's progress in achieving the goals identified in the 2011 Master Plan. They were reaching out to the Board for their input as to what goals and tasks had been achieved, was in progress or why it was not achieved. The feedback would help the Planning Board as they began to think about and plan for the Town's next Master Plan. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to take that action that night.

Ms. Manugian said she wasn't entirely clear what was being asked of them. Mr. Giger said that the Committee was trying to find out where they were at with all the recommendations listed in the Master Plan.

- a. Designation of Municipal Representative for Development of Chosen Community Garden Site: Ms. Pine said that she heard a Planning Board member, Annika Nilsson-Ripps say something about using conservation land for a community garden and thought the Groton Garden Club might be interested in helping move this along. She said that the Historical Society a few years ago also showed interest in community gardening as it was something that was done during WWII. She said she was not sure this should be something that came before the Board to make it happen.

- b. Consider Groton's Capital Improvement Plan and All Relevant Land Use: Ms. Pine said that they do have a capital plan and was unsure if they were just to remind the Committee that this was happening. Mr. Giger said that maybe they should respond back that they were considering these things. Ms. Manugian agreed.
- c. ED – Establish a Liaison for Local Groton Businesses: Mr. Giger said he thought their liaison for this was the Economic Development Committee (EDC). Ms. Manugian said that the EDC works with the Groton Board of trade also. Ms. Manugian was the Board's representative on the EDC. Mr. Giger said it sounded as though they were set with representatives.
- d. Institute Buy Local Initiatives: Ms. Pine said that there was a banner that reminded people to buy local. Mr. Haddad said that every time there was a break in banners, that banner would go up.
- e. Galvanize Support for Local Agriculture/CSA Programs: Ms. Pine said that they support the Farmers Market at Williams Barn. Some of the others are supported indirectly through the help of the Agricultural Commission. Mr. Haddad said that the most recent bylaw update for the Agricultural Commission at the Spring Town Meeting actually strengthened the authority of the Commission. He said he thought that they had advanced this based on that. Ms. Manugian said that the school lunch program offers local produce as its available.
- f. Develop a Comprehensive Long-Range Capital Improvement Plan That Addresses Urgent Repairs/ADA upgrades: Mr. Haddad said that money was appropriated at the Spring Town Meeting to update the ADA Transition Plan and had taken steps to improve their buildings.

Ms. Pine talked about having Groton adopted as a Green Community. A meeting was scheduled for September 24th. Ms. Pine talked about the reuse of historic town owned properties. She said that they were doing that with Prescott School. She said that there was a recommendation to strengthen the demo delay bylaw adding that was on the Fall Town Meeting Warrant for discussion. She added that there was also a recommendation to educate the community about economic development adding they were slated to hear a presentation on September 24th. She said there was also a recommendation to assess all vacant buildings.

Mr. Pease arrived at 7:20pm.

- 4. Mr. Haddad said that he provided the Board with the FY18 4th quarter financial review. He said that estimated receipts had exceeded all their estimates. He said they were in good shape financially. Mr. Haddad said that the Town Accountant was estimating that free cash would come in at around \$2.2M and thought they had a good year financially. Ms. Manugian asked when they expected to have their free cash certified. Ms. Dufresne said that they would have it within the next week or two. Mr. Robertson said that this was a great set of numbers and cash flows. He said that he hoped everyone understood that \$600-\$800K were one-time large events. He said that approximately \$1.4 of that would be right where the Town was averaging in previous years. Ms. Marlana Gilbert asked what percentage of the free cash was revenue that came in higher than anticipated and what percentage was the expenses that were turned back. Mr. Haddad said that licenses and permits was up over 200%, fees were up 112%, penalties and interest was up 271% (tax title liens) and department expenses averaged spending at 98-99% with the exception of the Conservation Commission who only spent 93% of their budget due to a change in management who is making less than the person that left. Mr. Haddad said that he supported Mr. Robertson in that there was a lot of one-time revenue items. Ms. Gilbert said that student enrollment was netting an average of 25 students per year just as predicted. She said they had some new homes coming down the pike and wondered if new homes were forecasted. Mr. Haddad said that they look at a revolving 5-year history which had been pretty accurate. He said that things like Indian Hill was not something that could be forecasted.
- 5. Mr. Haddad reviewed the Board's goals as part of the quarterly update. Ms. Pine said she thought that they should send the Department Heads their goals so that they can review them and maybe align their goals. Mr. Haddad said that the Board would then need to discuss their goals in October so that the Department Heads can review them prior to setting their own goals during evaluation time in October. Mr. Giger said it was an opportunity for the department to review their own goal thinking and share them with the Board. He said they were the best prepared people to offer suggestions. Mr. Haddad said that he could ask the Department Heads to start to formulate their goals and bring them back to the Board to discuss and set in November. Ms. Manugian said that it would make

more sense to not try to align their previous years goals but focus on doing that moving forward. Mr. Pease said he didn't think it was possible for any department to follow their goals. He said he had often questioned the validity of doing this and didn't think that it was best for 5 elected members to debate goals for the departments. He said that the exercise Ms. Manugian went through proved that point. Mr. Pease said that this would allow them to support the work of the departments rather than the departments doing their bidding. This goal would be removed.

Mr. Haddad said that the Board had met with all departments except for the Police due to a change in management, on their individual audits and was in the process of compiling all the information which he planned to bring back to the Board after Town Meeting.

Mr. Haddad reviewed the goal of continuing a strong working relationship with the School Committee. Ms. Pine said that the School Committee had held a summit in mid-September last year and asked if they were continuing that. Ms. Gilbert said that she would like to do a summit but wanted to get a couple more School Committee meetings in before they do that.

Mr. Haddad asked if he could post a Select Board meeting for after Town Meeting to call for the election if the marijuana article passed Town Meeting. Mr. Pease said that they should meet regardless.

Mr. Haddad said he had an update on Prescott. He said that when they changed the use of the building from use E (educational) to B (business), the Town lost any grandfathering with respect to educational use. He said that one of the proposed tenants was the Groton Community School which could be a problem going back to E. He said that he had turned this over to the State Building Officials and State Fire Marshall to make that determination. He said he would keep the Board posted. He said that this goal was completed as far as he was concerned.

Mr. Haddad said that they accomplished about 75% of the performance incentive goal with only 2 unions left with it being added to the base. They would revisit this goal at the expiration of the most recent approved contracts.

Mr. Haddad said that he would be working with the Affordable Housing Trust on a proposed senior housing project around the Groton Country Club. He said the project was in its infancy and that they would need to do a bit more studying to see if it was even possible. He said he needed to meet with the Trust to review this and would keep the Board updated.

Mr. Haddad reviewed the goals of the Town Manager.

6. Mr. Haddad said he wanted to review the warrant and ask the Board for their positions.

Special Town Meeting Warrant

- a. Article 1: Unan Support
- b. Article 2: Mr. Haddad reviewed the Town Manager's Report that would be printed in the warrant. He said it provided the voters with an update on the budget and any monetary items. He said that the estimated tax rate was \$18.99 based on the updated budget. Ms. Pine asked if this was the only opportunity for people to vote on the new firefighters being proposed. Mr. Haddad said that it was adding there would be a presentation made at Town Meeting also. Mr. Pease said that he understood they didn't want to fund things out of free cash but didn't think it was significant enough to not use free cash. He said it was the same thing, just different buckets. Mr. Haddad said he didn't like using free cash to fund recurring operating expenses. Mr. Pease said he was not prepared to take a position on this article. Mr. Giger and Ms. Manugian supported this article. Mr. Pease and Ms. Pine were at Town Meeting.
- c. Article 3: Ms. Pine said that this was brought forward because it was what the voters wanted. She said that she thought they would be okay with taking no position on this and allow the voters to decide. Mr. Giger said he could support this article adding it didn't mean he wanted people to hog wild with marijuana. He said they needed to decide on a final position and limit their exposure. Ms. Manugian said she did not support this adding she didn't have concerns with what was passed earlier. Mr. Pease said it was bad policy to restrict things based on a majority vote. He said he would be voting against this adding it was a shame

they were restricting so much. Ms. Pine said she was in favor of this and would probably speak as an individual about this at Town Meeting.

Mr. Haddad asked the Board to vote to issue the October 1, 2018 Special Town Meeting Warrant.

Ms. Manugian made the motion. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Fall Town Meeting Warrant

- a. Article 1: Mr. Haddad said there were 8 unpaid bills totaling \$1,300. Unan Support
- b. Article 2: Unan Support
- c. Article 3: Unan Support
- d. Article 4: \$509K needed in that account to reach their goal. He asked the Board to support \$550K out of free cash based on projected capital needs. Mr. Pease asked for some additional information.
- e. Article 5: Unan Support
- f. Article 6: Mr. Pease asked if their 5-year capital budget had been finalized. Ms. Gilbert asked the Board to consider adding some additional capital money into the fund to address some needs of theirs. She said that Mike Knight would be sending it. Ms. Manugian said she needed to see the most recent version of the school and town's capital budgets were. Mr. Haddad said that he needed to get the schools but that the Town's capital budget was on the Town's website. Ms. Pine said she would support \$450K. Mr. Haddad said that there was already \$80K in their fund.
- g. Article 7: Ms. Manugian asked if the highway garage was in their capital plan. Mr. Haddad said that it was. Ms. Manugian said she could not take a position until she saw their capital plan. Mr. Pease said he was in support of this. He said he trusted the field survey that was performed. He said that the Town would get to vote on the final construction of this. Mr. Giger was in support of this. Ms. Pine said she kept wondering why the number was so much larger. She said she supported the need for the study but wanted to see them shave the costs.
- h. Article 8: Ms. Manugian was at Town Meeting. The other were in support.
- i. Article 10: Unan Support
- j. Mr. Haddad reviewed the balance of free cash if all articles passed that required free cash for funding. Mr. Haddad recommended that the Board take Article 9 off the warrant and not propose offsetting the tax rate. He said he wanted to leave a healthy balance in free cash for items coming up next year. Mr. Robertson agreed. Ms. Pine asked if the Town received meals tax from caterers coming into town. Mr. Haddad said he was not sure. Ms. Dufresne said that she would need to check with the State on that. Mr. Giger supported removing it from the warrant.

Ms. Pine moved to remove article 9 from the Fall Town Meeting Warrant. Mr. Giger seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-1 with Mr. Pease against.

- k. Article 11: Mr. Haddad asked the Board to defer to Town Meeting as they await for an opinion from Town Counsel. Ms. Manugian asked why they couldn't delay this until the spring. Mr. Haddad said that the Sewer Commission had the right to bring this forward. Mr. Giger and Ms. Manugian were opposed. Mr. Pease and Ms. Pine were at Town Meeting.
- l. Article 12: Unan Support
- m. Article 13: Unan Support
- n. Article 14: Unan Support
- o. Article 15: Unan Support
- p. Article 16: Unan Support
- q. Article 17: Ms. Manugian opposed, Mr. Pease was at Town Meeting, Mr. Giger and Ms. Pine supported this.
- r. Article 18: Deferred until Town Meeting
- s. Article 19: Deferred until Town Meeting
- t. Article 20: Deferred until Town Meeting.

Mr. Haddad asked the Board to vote to issue the October 1, 2018 Fall Town Meeting Warrant.

Ms. Pine made the motion. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

ON-GOING ISSUES

- A. Mr. Haddad said that the Senior Center was looking great and going very well.
- B. This will be removed.
- H. Sidewalk installation was going well.
- J. Ms. Marlena Gilbert said they submitted their documentation by August 31st to the MSBA and they should hear by December if they will be reimbursed for the study.

Mr. Giger asked about timing for the plan to get the sidewalks done and the lights up on Main Street for the Complete Streets grant.

LIAISON REPORTS

Ms. Manugian said that the EDC recommended that Chris Furcolo be added to the Committee.

MINUTES

Ms. Manugian moved to approve the minutes of August 20, 2018. Ms. Pine said she had one correction at the top of page 4. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0-1 with Mr. Pease abstaining.

Mr. Pease adjourned the meeting at 8:40pm.

Approved: _____
John Giger, Clerk

_____ respectfully *submitted*,
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 9/24/18