

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MINUTES SEPTEMBER 24, 2018
APPROVED**

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

Member Absent: Barry A. Pease, Chair

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. Haddad said that this was the first meeting in the newly renovated meeting room. He explained the room and its layout. He said that a lot of effort went into this room and that we tried to make it as interactive as possible. Ms. Pine asked if the Board was consulted about the table. She said that the room was a little more lavish than they needed and wouldn't have approved this scale of lavishness. Mr. Degen asked what the cost of the table was. Mr. Haddad said \$6K.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Ms. Gilbert announced the sudden passing of a 5th grade teacher at the Middle School.

Ms. Gilbert said that they cut down on their buses to increase ridership but in doing that they needed to look at sidewalks in some areas of town.

Mr. Degen said that he had watched last week's meeting and the discussion regarding Fitch's Bridge. He said that his firm, Earthscape, was invited by Mr. Delaney to do an emergency repair. He said that the project was awarded to his firm by Mr. Delaney to which he (Degen) filed a disclosure. He said that his original proposal was \$9K but after getting in there the work was 50% more. He said that Mr. Delaney had approved the increase beforehand adding that the price was for twice as much work.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad said that the Affordable Housing Trust had recommended that Colleen Neff be appointed to fill the vacancy on the Trust adding it was a two-year term to expire on June 30, 2020. He asked the Board to consider making that appointment. Ms. Pine said she was happy to have Colleen apply to be appointed adding she came with great experience having been a member before.

Ms. Pine moved to appoint Colleen Neff to the Affordable Housing Trust term to expire June 30, 2020. Mr. Giger seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Mr. Haddad said that Town Meeting would be held on Monday, October 1, 2018 beginning at 7pm. He said that the Special Town Meeting required a quorum of 156 registered voters. There were a few articles the Board needed to take positions on still.

- Articles 4, 5, 6: Ms. Manugian was opposed due to the process around free cash.
- Article 7: Mr. Degen was in favor

Mr. Kevin Lindemer reviewed a map for his property at 227 Boston Road and the property lines. He said they were hoping this would be supported at Town Meeting. Ms. Manugian said she appreciated him bringing this to their attention. She said some of her concern was in looking up the parcel on the GIS map as the wetlands were different. Mr. Lindemer said that they had the wetlands flagged when they wanted to widen their driveway. Mr. Degen said he shared similar concerns as Ms. Manugian. He said that the concerns he had were alleviated after sitting down with Mr. Lindemer to review the topo map and delineation map. Ms. Pine asked if any unused bedroom capacity would go back to the town. Ms. Manugian said that once capacity was granted they were allowed to use it and could not be restricted at that point. Ms. Manugian said she needed to review the information prior to taking a position.

Articles 14, 15: Mr. Degen did not support. Mr. Degen said that he would like to be known as a Selectman as long as he was on the Board. He said they had been a town for 350 years and known as Selectmen since then. He did not think they should be known as Select Board Members. Ms. Pine said that this was only going to be what they were known as in print adding they could be referred to as what they would like. Mr. Degen asked to be at town meeting and for an opinion from Town Counsel as it related to the Charter.

Article 19: The Planning Board was holding their public hearing on Thursday night. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to hold off on taking a position.

Article 2: Special Town Meeting: Ms. Pine said that this was where the funding for the 2 additional firefighters was. She acknowledged that they were in more dire need of firefighters now that the Chief was injured. She asked about the possibility of hiring temp personnel. Mr. Haddad said that the Chief didn't think that was a viable option. Ms. Manugian said that a temporary firefighter would still require a budget appropriation. Ms. Pine said that part of the shortage was for a paternity leave and sick leave. Mr. Haddad said that the paternity leave firefighter was back but the injured firefighter was still out. She said she recognized the need and would support it but she was unhappy about the process. She said that they had hired a consultant to come up with a strategic plan but that the presentation made no mention of needing additional people. She said that the Committee hadn't been given time to complete their work and wished they had planned for things better. Mr. Giger cautioned them using the term fulltime fire department. He said that the department wasn't looking for 24/7 coverage but rather coverage to provide for shifts from 6am-8pm. Mr. Degen said that this need wasn't also just because of new residential development but commercial development also as they needed coverage too. He said they needed to be able to protect businesses like Shaw's and Indian hill as well as residential homes. He said the call department model wasn't as effective as it once was due to people traveling longer distances for work and agreed that fulltime did not mean 24/7. He said this request wasn't a knee jerk reaction but something they had been looking at for at least 10 years adding he fully supported this. Ms. Pine said that the study done didn't mention anything about needing more fulltime personnel. Mr. Giger said that if they wanted to look at this as 24/7/365 it would still be a combination of career and call members. He said that there had been and remained a need to increase the call staff adding the Chief had been working hard to recruit additional folks. He mentioned a letter they received earlier that day from the Call Department voicing their support of the Chief and all his efforts.

Article 3: Mr. Haddad said that he provided the Board with the motions and who would be making the motions at town meeting. He said that they would be \$81K under the levy limit should everything pass at town meeting. Ms. Pine asked about her presentation on the marijuana article. Mr. Giger said that they needed to be careful in how this gets presented. He said that it wasn't up to them to mix their personal feelings about it with the facts and should just speak to the content of the article.

Mr. Haddad said that if Town Meeting passed this article by a 2/3rds vote, they would be required to go to the ballot. He said they were required to give the Town Clerk 35 days notice to hold a special election which they were planning on having on November 6 if this passed at town meeting. He said that in speaking to Town Counsel earlier that day, Town Counsel had recommended that the Board consider approving the ballot question wording that night and provide it to the Town Clerk so he could get a jump start on holding a special election. Mr. Haddad said that if an amendment was made at town meeting and significant enough of an amendment, they wouldn't be able to hold a special election on November 6th because of the time to draft a new ballot question. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to consider calling for the special election and issue the proposed draft question to the Town Clerk. Mr. Degen said that he understood wanting to make this easier for the Town Clerk but he didn't want to make it look like they were approving the wording ahead of time. He suggested they wait and allow the Town Meeting to vote first. Mr. Haddad said he understood but said that the proposed ballot question wording was what was before the Town Meeting. Mr. Giger said he thought they should view this as the start point for a meeting after the Town Meeting ends. Mr. Haddad said that Town Counsel recommended this and that he agreed to bring it forward. He was fine with the Board's decision to hold off until the conclusion of Town Meeting.

3. Mr. Haddad said that The Finance Committee had requested development of a spreadsheet/plan that showed how they would incorporate the Highway Garage Project (estimated to be \$3.9 million) and the Library Roof Project (estimated to be \$1.2 million) into the debt schedule. He said that these figures were what they would consider "worse case" scenarios. He said they hoped that both projects would come in under original projections. Mr. Haddad said that they were recommending that both projects be excluded from Proposition 2½. He said that in order to figure out how to finance these projects and limit the impact to the taxpayers and residents the Finance Team reached out to the Town's financial advisors from UniBank, Clark Rowell and Kristy Genga. Mr. Haddad said that based on their review and advice from Mr. Rowell and Ms. Genga, they were recommending that the Town permanently finance the Senior Center in November of this year. They would need to raise \$102,552 on the recap to pay the interest in Fiscal Year 2019. While we ordinarily have Town Meeting appropriate debt service, there is no requirement that it be done this way. He said that this new plan would require permanently financing the Senior Center project a year earlier, thus requiring the interest payment in FY 2019. This interest payment would be excluded from Proposition 2½ and raise the estimated tax rate in FY 2019 from \$18.99 to \$19.05 and cost the average tax payer \$25. He noted that the Senior Center project had already been excluded from Proposition 2½.

Mr. Haddad said they would be asking Town Meeting for design/bid funding at the Fall Town Meeting for the Highway Garage and Library Roof Project as already planned. He said it was their intention to come back to the 2019 Spring Town Meeting for funding and the 2019 Town Election for a Debt Exclusion. He said that should both pass, they would permanently finance both projects in August, 2019, with an interest payment due in FY 2020 and first principal payment in FY 2021. The Senior Center would also have its first principal payment in FY 2020.

Mr. Haddad reviewed a proposed debt exclusion spreadsheet for the Senior Center, Highway Garage and Library Roof. Mr. Degen asked why they wouldn't do short term bonding for the Senior Center and one long bond for the other two. Mr. Haddad said that they were trying to smooth the impact to the tax payer. He said that they would be looking at a major increase if they did it that way. Mr. Degen asked what they were carrying. Mr. Haddad said \$3.9M and \$1.2M. He said that this was assuming a 5% interest rate but thought it would come in around 3.4%. Ms. Manugian said that her concerns remained ie: renovations needed for the Prescott School, needs of the GD School District, etc. She said there was nothing wrong mathematically with this but didn't think they were looking at priorities over the next couple of years. Mr. Haddad said that Flo Ro and the fields would also be an impact to Dunstable adding he didn't know what the cost for the fields upgrades was yet. He said that Prescott School plans were for 2022 when Surrenden Farm was paid off. Mr. Degen said that they could also be looking at an override situation for an additional 2 firefighters not to mention any police staffing needs. Mr. Haddad said that in looking at a 5-year projection they would need 200K beginning in 2022 to cover the budget needs. Mr. Giger said that the Capital Planning Committee needed to be looked at and brought forward to study these types of things.

4. Mr. Haddad said that they received a letter from the Dunstable Board of Selectmen asking for additional time from him. Mr. Degen asked about how many hours per week he had been working. Mr. Haddad said he had been averaging about 10 hours per week and might need to increase it to about 15 during the budget season. Ms. Pine said that she had asked for some data at their meeting last week specifically on how much actual time had been spent. Mr. Haddad said that he had spent about 10 hours per week on Dunstable business since he started. Ms. Manugian said she didn't think they as a Board they could ask for that information especially since he the Town Manager was using his own personal and vacation time along with his own time outside of Groton. Mr. Haddad asked if the Board felt that his work in Groton had diminished or hurt his ability to work in Groton. Ms. Manugian said she did not feel that Mr. Haddad working in Dunstable was a detriment. Ms. Pine said she was opposed to this from the beginning but didn't think it was possible to quantify a loss to Groton. She asked if there had been any benefit in working in Dunstable for Groton. Mr. Haddad said there had been a couple of things.

Ms. Manugian asked for a motion to extend the Town Manager to Dunstable through December 31, 2018.

Mr. Degen made the motion. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion.

Mr. Degen said that during the budget process this would be helpful but that he was concerned about vacation time and personal time and Mr. Haddad's health. Mr. Haddad said that if he felt as though it was impacting him he would stop. He said he wanted nothing more than to stay in Groton and liked Groton. Mr. Giger said that the Town could terminate this at any time as per the agreement signed in July adding that the extension may only be extended for one time for 60 calendar days adding that December 31, 2018 didn't work.

Mr. Degen amended his motion to say through November 30, 2018. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-1 with Ms. Pine against.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Pine said that there was a controversial issue in Pepperell concerning a landfill and wasn't aware if they should be doing anything about it. Mr. Haddad said that this had a major impact on Dunstable but that Groton didn't have a direct traffic impact. He said he would ask the Conservation Administrator to keep an eye on this adding DEP was in favor of this project. Ms. Manugian asked if this could be added to their agenda under on-going issues. Mr. Degen asked them to ask Pepperell to come in and speak to them about it.

ON-GOING ISSUES

A: Mr. Haddad said that things were going nicely. He said that the steel shop drawings were approved that day and that their Clerk of the Works was a godsend adding he truly was the eyes and ears of the project.

Ms. Pine asked about Prescott School and if there was an update on a meeting with the Fire Marshall. Mr. Haddad said that the Fire Chief was working on getting them out here.

MINUTES

Mr. Degen made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of August 27, 2018. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Manugian moved to approve the meeting minutes of September 4, 2018. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0-1 with Mr. Degen abstaining.

Ms. Pine moved to approve the meeting minutes of September 10, 2018. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0-1 with Mr. Degen abstaining.

LIAISON REPORTS

Mr. Giger said that as the Master Plan Implementation Committee Liaison he had taken their responses and sent them to the Committee as their written response.

Mr. Degen said that the Sargisson Beach Fall Cleanup was planned for October 7th at 8am and put a call out for volunteers.

Ms. Manugian adjourned the meeting at 8:38pm.

Approved: _____
John Giger, Clerk

_____ respectfully submitted,
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 10/16/18