

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MINUTES OCTOBER 16, 2018
APPROVED**

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

Member Absent: Joshua A. Degen, Member

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.

Mr. Pease was remote until 8:08pm.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Pine reminded people about the rules around placement of campaign signs.

Mr. Haddad said that there were two elections taking place on November 6th. Mr. Haddad asked any that was interested in serving as an Election Worker to see the Town Clerk.

Mr. Haddad read a statement into the record regarding Mr. Degen's concussion and his absence because of that.

Mr. Haddad said that a longtime member of the Zoning Board of Appeals, Bob Cadle, passed away the week before. Mr. Haddad read a proclamation into the record for Mr. Cadle.

Mr. Haddad said that he would be presenting the Board with the Ballot Information Packet at their meeting next week. He handed them a copy in advance to review it.

Mr. Haddad said that they needed to file an emergency procurement disclosure in the Goods and Services Bulletin for the work done at Fitch's Bridge in order to close the loop on the issues regarding the emergency repairs.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Ms. Sartini made a comment about work that the Groton Garden Club had done at the Fire Station.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to consider approving a Common Victualler License for Forge & Vine located at 126 Main Street hours of operation daily 4pm to 1am.

Ms. Pine made the motion. Mr. Giger seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Giger-aye; Pease-aye

2. Mr. Haddad said that one of the goals of the Select Board was to create a tracking mechanism to determine/implement the various recommendations of the Matrix Audit. He said that Select Board Member Giger developed a spreadsheet for this purpose and he (Mr. Haddad) filled in the various recommendations and whether or not it was accepted or rejected and, if accepted, how it would be implemented. Mr. Haddad said he thought this spreadsheet would help them keep track of the recommendations moving forward. Ms. Manugian asked why the recommendation to track programming at the Senior Center was rejected. Mr. Haddad said that the Director felt that this was being tracked already based on the needs assessment that was done in 2015 and was due to be done again soon. Ms. Pine said she thought that a needs assessment was different than tracking programs and found that confusing. Mr. Haddad said he could bring this back for further discussion.
3. Mr. Haddad said that another goal of the Board was to create a Capital Planning Committee. He said that he had provided the Board with a proposed Charge of the Committee for their review and consideration. He said that the Finance Committee had reviewed the Charge and had offered some comments, specifically that they would like

clarity on whether the Board and Town Manager felt it was appropriate for this advisory committee to also act as the permanent standing building committee. He said that they were also concerned that this group of five (5) people may not have the capacity to deal with monitoring all the capital assets in Town while also helping to develop and drive new capital construction projects. Some felt that if the committee were expanded, it would allow for sub-committees which may help compartmentalize the workload. Mr. Haddad said he would like to see this committee stay as more of a planning committee and not a standing building committee. Ms. Pine said that she understood that this was the Town Manager's committee but still thought that the Select Board should have input on the committee members.

Mr. Haddad read a statement into the record from Mr. Degen.

I have reviewed the charge for the committee and overall it is fine. This new committee has a very important charge. Many of the initiatives that they will review involve major expenditures of taxpayer dollars. As the chief elected board in the town, we have the responsibility to appoint the most highly qualified individuals to evaluate each proposed project. It is imperative that our Board and not the Town Manager appoint this board. Virtually all proposed projects will originate from the Town Manager regardless of who holds this position now or in the future. If the Select Board appoints those individuals it will serve as an appropriate check and balance for the taxpayers. Fellow board members please strongly consider this and if possible, I request one of you to make a motion to this effect in my absence.

Josh Degen

Mr. Haddad said that the Select Board has to ratify any appointments that the Town Manager made anyway and left it up to the Board. Ms. Pine said she didn't think it should be a permanent building committee. Mr. Giger said he didn't think this was ready for prime time. He said that they didn't have a clear understanding of what capital constituted. He said there seem to be a lot of focus on business and thought it was impossible for them to really to get down to the nitty gritty of this without a complete understanding. He said he thought they had some homework to do. Ms. Manugian said that the Finance Committee was also confused about the draft also based on the meeting she attended. Ms. Manugian said she thought it would be beneficial for them to have some sort of a standing building committee so all building projects were reviewed and processed in the same way. Ms. Pine said that this committee was intended to have some oversight of all their real estate holdings and major improvement of those. Mr. Pease said that he agreed that there needed to be a definition of capital. He said that his reason for seeing this move forward was to be able to plan for larger capital expenditures.

Mr. Jack Petropoulos said he thought this committee should be accountable to the elected officials as they would be brought forward to town meeting for a vote. Mr. Greg Sheldon said that he saw this more as a facilities committee.

Mr. Haddad said he would bring this back to a future meeting.

4. Mr. Haddad said that another goal of the Board was the establishment of an OPEB Funding Policy. He said that he and the Finance Team had developed a policy for the Board's review and consideration. He said that this policy had also been reviewed by the Finance Committee and they had offered some recommendations and revised the policy accordingly. Ms. Pine asked what they had been doing about OPEB. Mr. Haddad said that they had been covering the cost of the retiree's insurance to get it started. He said that they also had started to pay down the liability by appropriating \$100K toward it every year. Mr. Haddad said that they would also be adding an additional \$4,166 in the budget for new employees moving forward yearly to fund their liability and not add to the overall liability. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to consider approving the Policy as presented subject to review by the Actuarial. Ms. Manugian said she also thought OPEB should be spelled out as a separate line item in the budget. Mr. Giger said it was a good document and thought it was ready for primetime. Ms. Manugian asked if they could hold off on this for a week until they put something in there stating it would be a separate line item. Mr. Haddad said that this would be reviewed annually, that there were a few technicalities to work out as far as voting on this as a line item at Town Meeting and was concerned that he had a meeting with Wall Street coming up that he wanted to have this for.

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the Policy as presented subject to review by the Actuarial. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion.

There was a brief discussion about holding off a week on this so that Mr. Haddad could look into the budget line item question. Mr. Haddad said that he wasn't sure he would be able to get an answer that quickly. He said that they could always go back and amend the policy once there was an answer.

Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Giger-aye; Pease-aye

5. Mr. Haddad said that they had created the Prescott Oversight Committee to assist the Board and the Lessee of the Prescott School. Now that the lease has been signed and the Friends of Prescott are up and running in the building, he no longer felt that this Committee was needed or necessary. Mr. Haddad said that the lease was pretty simple on what the Friends needed to do. Mr. Haddad said that he wanted to bring the Committee forward for the Board to discuss. Ms. Manugian said that she agreed with Mr. Haddad and thought the Board could review the business plan according to the lease. Ms. Pine said she disagreed adding she thought they needed a committee, maybe not this one though. She said that this was a new venture for the Town and thought it was in the best interest of both the Town and Friends to work together. She said she would like to broaden this with a larger group to say there were all in this together. She said she would like to have a steering committee to build what they are doing and not have it all fall on the Town Manager. Mr. Giger said he looked at the Charge and felt that that the terms of the lease needed to be met. He said that meeting those terms were up to the Friends and not the Town. He said that they were a non-profit and that they needed to be responsible for their sustainability.

Mr. Pease arrived to the meeting at 8:08pm.

Ms. Pine said that they should brainstorm more about what such a committee would look like based on the lease. Ms. Jennings said that the Friends of Prescott Board voted that such a committee not be eliminated. She said that they envisioned being able to communicate with such a committee on a regular basis and thought that a Select Board member should be on that committee. Mr. Greg Sheldon said that the Prescott Building Committee had recommended that a committee be formed to help oversee the lease adding this was all part of their vision plan. Mr. Sheldon thought that a development committee was necessary.

Mr. Giger said that he would not support tax payer money being spent on a non-profit organization's business efforts unless it was approved by the voters at the Town Meeting. Ms. Pine asked where Mr. Giger heard that taxpayer funds were being used. Mr. Giger said that he could read between the lines. Mr. Giger said that the Town has not said "go create X there". He said that a non-profit came forward and said they wanted to something there but that the Town had not had input on that. Mr. Robertson said that he, Mr. Haddad and Ms. Manugian had worked on the lease with the Friends and assumed the three of them would continue to be the liaisons between the Friends and the Town. He said that more than three people was not necessary. He said that a development committee was necessary for just that building and could potentially report back to something like a capital planning committee should one be organized.

Mr. Pease said that he wanted to see what a business plan looked like before he made any decisions on this. He said that the business plan may dictate what kind of committee is formed. Mr. Pease said that he was also worried that there was tax bill vs. policy issues that were being discussed thus interfering in the day to day operations and in violation of that Charter. Ms. Manugian thought the idea of waiting for a business plan made sense.

Mr. Petropoulos said that the Town Meeting voted to not sell the building but to keep it as a community center. Ms. Jennings said they did not care what the committee was called, they wanted to see one to increase and continue communication between the Friends and the Town. Mr. Giger disagreed with Mr. Petropoulos's observations of the vote at Town Meeting. Mr. Pease cautioned them to think they could know what happened.

Ms. Manugian asked if they wanted to form a committee or let the three individuals who worked on the lease continue to work with the Friends. Mr. Pease said he thought the three (Town Manager, Bud Robertson and Alison Manugian) should just continue. Mr. Haddad said that what ever happened with Prescott would need to come back to the Board anyway. Mr. Giger said that the duration of the committee could be tied to the length of the lease. Ms. Pine said that they could also continue that term for the current "pilot" year and didn't think it needed to be formalized.

6. Mr. Haddad said that the Select Board and Finance Committee were scheduled to meet with the Town Manager and Finance Team on October 22nd to provide Budget Guidance for Fiscal Year 2020. The Select Board had requested enough time prior to this meeting to review the data to make an informed decision. Mr. Haddad said that he had met with the Finance Team to develop some preliminary figures. Mr. Haddad provided the Board with some preliminary estimates in revenue. Mr. Haddad said that they were anticipating a deficit of \$248,666 and called to their attention a couple of important facts:
 1. An increase in enrollment of Groton students at Nashoba Tech.
 2. A 5.33% increase in the GDRSD budget would take up 82.3% of our anticipated new revenues, while they are 58% of our Budget. When you add in Nashoba Tech, School Spending would take up 90% of our anticipated new revenues. This is not sustainable.
 3. The current municipal budget is \$15,804,656. The proposed anticipated increase in the budget (taking into consideration the savings in County Retirement) is \$379,673 or 2.4%. If you don't give the municipal budget credit for the savings in County Retirement, the increase is \$488,319, or an increase of 3.1%.

He said he was anticipating budget increases of \$1,557,155 to include 2 new firefighters, salary increases, etc. He said he looked forward to discussing this with the Board and Finance Committee next week.

7. Mr. Haddad said that now that Town Meeting had approved the design and bid funding for the Highway Garage, he wanted to update the Board on what action they were taking to implement the project. He said he had advertised for an Architect and Owners Project Manager to comply with procurement laws. Proposals were due on October 24th. He said he also advertised for residents to serve on the Building Committee for the project. He said he hoped to have a proposed committee for Select Board ratification within the next two weeks. Once the Architect, OPM and Committee was in place, they would get started on the design of the project.
8. Mr. Haddad said that Select Board Members Pine, Giger and I had been working with the Land Use Director Takashi Tada and GELD General Manager Kevin Kelley to determine whether or not it made sense to have Groton become a Green Community. He said that they had researched the process and met with Kelly Brown, the Regional Coordinator, for Green Communities. Ms. Brown provided them with a PowerPoint presentation on the process, which he had provided the Board. Mr. Haddad reviewed the steps necessary to become a green community including the biggest issue, the Stretch Code. He said that the Stretch Code did not include renovations, only new construction which was an important change. Mr. Haddad said that they would receive an initial grant of \$125K-135K upon designation. The up to \$225K for programs after that. Ms. Pine said that Town Meeting needed to vote to adopt the Stretch Code prior to doing anything else but that once that was done, everything else could happen rather quickly. She didn't think they needed a committee at this point. Mr. Haddad said that the Board needed to understand what the Stretch Code was prior to anything. Ms. Manugian said that she thought they needed a committee to look at this and make a recommendation. Mr. Pease said he would like to see a committee appointed to research this. Mr. Haddad asked Mr. Giger and Ms. Pine to sit with him over the next few days to look at the makeup of the committee.
9. Mr. Haddad said he wanted to call to the Board's attention the commitment Groton School had made to the Town of Groton. Not only had they constructed a new sidewalk for both their students and the general public's safety, they continued to make a financial contribution to the Town. Last year, Groton School committed an additional PILOT payment of \$20,000 to help offset the cost of the second School Resources Officer. Not only have they provided that funding, they have increased their annual PILOT from \$113,000 in FY 2018 to \$125,000 in FY 2019.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Manugian said that they had adopted a Community Compact where grant money was available to help make the Town aware of and work toward best practices. She said that there was more work and other areas that could be worked on as priorities. She said he goal was to bring this to everyone's attention and see if this was something they wanted to pursue further. Mr. Pease said that some of these were very close to what they do. He said they needed to look at dollar value vs. time spent. Ms. Pine said she was not prepared to vote to do something with these. Ms. Manugian said she thought they were ignoring an opportunity to work with a consultant on best practices. She thought they should pick two or three to focus on. Mr. Pease suggested focusing on housing and economic development. Ms. Manugian suggested something around IT and transparency. Mr. Haddad said that he would like time to review the areas again before commenting. This would be brought back to a future meeting for further discussion.

A motion was made to approve the Groton School Sidewalk Order of Taking. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

ON-GOING ISSUES

J: Ms. Pine suggested asking the Police Chief to attend a meeting to discuss his thoughts on staffing needs as he saw it so far. After a brief discussion:

Mr. Giger made a motion to remove a Task Force to Consider Adding Additional Police Officers from the On-Going Issues list. Ms. Pine seconded the motion.

Ms. Manugian said she was reluctant to remove it at this time but was okay renaming it. Mr. Pease concurred adding they needed to allow Chief Luth at least 6 months to be in the job and assess the department. Mr. Haddad said that he was in the process of reviewing department goals and thought Chief Luth was doing a good job with his goals.

The motion carried 3-1 with Ms. Manugian opposed.

The Board decided to start their meeting at 6:30pm on Monday, October 22nd.

LIAISON REPORTS

Ms. Pine said that she met with the Non-Profit Council on Friday adding they had a good discussion.

MINUTES

Ms. Manugian moved to approve the meeting minutes of September 17, 2018 and September 24, 2018. Ms. Pine seconded the motion.

Mr. Pease adjourned the meeting at 9:45pm.

Approved: _____
John Giger, Clerk

_____ respectfully submitted:
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 11/5/18