

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MINUTES OCTOBER 29, 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, Member

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

Mr. Pease called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and reviewed the agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Pease announced that Trick or Treat would be held in Groton on Wednesday, October 31st from 6-8pm.

Mr. Giger said that early voting was in progress until Friday. He added that there were two (2) ballots at the polls. Ms. Pine talked about the informational ballot mailer that was mailed out to residents on Friday.

Ms. Pine said that the annual Veteran's Day ceremony would be held on Sunday, November 11th at 11am at the Center Fire Station.

Ms. Manugian said that the new Ladder Truck had arrived adding that the department was looking forward to having it as a new tool.

Mr. Haddad said that the movie Little Women had used Groton to shoot some of its scenes, specifically Gibbet Hill and the Old Burying Ground. He said that he would be asking the Board later on to accept a \$2,500 gift from the movie company.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Ms. Marlena Gilbert said that district evaluations had been done and were on their website. She said that as part of the budget process, a business plan had been provided to maintain in house food service. She said that they were also running an RFP to outsource food services while waiting for more information on in house food service.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad said that based on the applications received from interested residents willing to serve on the Highway Department Building Committee, he had appointed Val Prest, David Manugian, Peter Myette, John Amaral and John Giger to the Committee. He asked the Board to consider ratifying these appointments.

Ms. Pine asked if David Manugian was on the Committee as a member of Finance Committee. Mr. Haddad said it was because of his experience as a DPW Director.

Ms. Pine moved to ratify the appointments of the Town Manager of Val Prest, Peter Myette, John Amaral and John Giger to the Highway Department Building Committee. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0-1 with Mr. Giger abstaining.

Ms. Pine moved to ratify the appointment of the Town Manager of David Manugian to the Highway Department Building Committee. Mr. Pease seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0-1 with Ms. Manugian abstaining.

2. Mr. Haddad said that they had a vacancy for a Senior Water Technician for the Water Department. After a search, the Water Superintendent, Tom Orcutt had requested that he appoint Michael MacEachern of Townsend to the position effective October 30, 2018. Mr. MacEachern said he was looking forward to working in Groton and had heard nothing about good things about the team in Groton.

Ms. Manugian moved to affirm the Town Manager's appointment of Michael MacEachern as Senior Water Technician effective October 30, 2018. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ON ACCESSIBILITY ISSUE CONCERNING VOTING AT THE GROTON COUNTRY CLUB

Mr. Haddad said that he had received an email about concerns with voting at the Groton Country Club and wanted to put it on the agenda for discussion. Mr. Haddad said that he and Mr. Bouchard had met that afternoon to discuss if it made sense to put two (2) precincts at the Senior Center once it was done and keep one at the Town Hall. Mr. Haddad talked about the space in the new Senior Center and how it could work. Mr. Pease asked whose jurisdiction it was to set polling locations. Mr. Bouchard said it was the Boards. Ms. Manugian asked which precincts would vote at the Senior Center. Mr. Bouchard said that they hadn't really talked about that yet. Mr. Bouchard said that his only concern was parking adding that there was less at the Senior Center than at the Country Club. Ms. Pine talked about using the school but understood why they couldn't use it any longer. Mr. Giger said that he and Ms. Manugian were on the School Committee when that decision was made, but thought the way they were doing it was the best way. Mr. Bouchard talked about the Polling Location Committee and the locations they had looked at back in 2014. Ms. Pine provided the idea of using the Lost Lake Fire Station and Prescott School as polling locations as well as the potential to use the Groton Inn, Indian Hill (once open) and the new Hindu Temple. Mr. Giger said that the Groton Inn was about ready to launch the restaurant and the parking constraints with that. Mr. Pease said it was great for them to conjecture about private places to use as a polling location and hated to impose upon them or for them to think it was required of them. Mr. Haddad said that he and the Town Clerk could work on this further. He added that after the May election, the next election wasn't until February 2020.

Ms. Judy Anderson said that the handicap parking signage at the Country Club were small adding they maybe needed large signs that direct people. Ms. Gilbert said that she agreed with Mr. Giger adding that voting at the schools would be a bad idea. Ms. Ellen Baxendale asked if it was a possibility to use a golf cart to transport people. Mr. Haddad said that they would have to look into the liability of that.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT - CONT.

3. Mr. Haddad read the following memo and asked the Board to reconsider appointing a Capital Planning Committee.

After Tuesday's Select Board Meeting, I thought long and hard about the proposed Capital Planning Committee and am writing to you today to ask you to reconsider the necessity of creating such a Committee, or at a minimum, delaying its establishment for a number of years. I have several reasons for making this recommendation. Please consider the following:

1. *The stated purpose of the Committee is to assist the Select Board, Finance Committee and Town Manager in long range planning for major building projects and updating the five year capital plan.*
2. *There was a Capital Budget Committee previously. It was abolished upon adoption of the Charter and removed from the Town Bylaws.*
3. *Section 6.6 of the revised Groton Charter states that:*

"The town manager shall annually submit a capital improvement plan to the select board and the finance committee not later than December 31. The plan shall include: (i) a clear, concise and general summary of its contents; (ii) a list of all capital improvements proposed to be undertaken during the ensuing 5 years along with supporting information as to the need for each capital improvement; (iii) cost estimates, methods of financing and recommended time schedules for each improvement; and (iv) the estimated annual cost of operating and maintaining each facility and piece of major equipment involved. The information in the plan shall be revised annually by the town manager with regard to the capital improvements still pending or in the process of being acquired, improved or constructed."

For the last ten years as Town Manager, pursuant to the Groton Charter, the Department Heads and I have developed a very good Capital Plan to replace the Town's equipment and plan for major capital building expenditures. This plan is funded each year through the Capital Stabilization Fund, Free Cash or General Obligation Bonds. This plan is reviewed each year by the Select Board and Finance Committee and ultimately funded by Town Meeting. The Department Heads play a very important role in the establishment of the Capital Plan. They know their equipment and what needs to be replaced. I have the utmost confidence in their ability to continue to assist me in updating the Plan. I am not sure what a Capital Planning Advisory Committee will add to this process. I believe the Select Board and Finance Committee have done a very good job reviewing the Plan and approving its presentation to Town Meeting. Both Boards are uniquely qualified to continue to review and approve the Plan.

4. *In the past five years, the Town has approved funding for a Fire Station and Senior Center. These buildings were part of the five year Capital Plan and approved accordingly. Building Committees were established for each of these projects. Expertise related to the buildings was sought out for these Committees. While some can argue that individuals appointed to these Committees may have been in favor of the projects, leading to higher building costs, the opposite happened. They did a very good job assisting the Town Manager in overseeing both projects, from design to construction oversight in a very cost effective manner.*

5. *The following is a summary of the status of our current buildings:*
- a. *Town Hall. Renovated in 1999, this Building has been very well maintained and a capital improvement plan, established by our DPW Director has been well implemented. We recently updated and repaired the slate roof, installed a new HVAC system, annually maintain the boiler, repointed the building three years ago, etc.*
 - b. *Police Station – Constructed in 1989, this Building has undergone various improvements and renovations over the last four years, including a new roof and siding, repairs to the HVAC system and interior improvements to the electrical system. The parking lot was reconstructed and repaved last year. We are currently undertaking improvements to the Dispatch Center with \$120,000 appropriated thus far, with another \$60,000 scheduled for next year.*
 - c. *Lost Lake Fire Station. Constructed in 2004, this building is in excellent shape and is maintained by both the Fire Department and DPW Building Maintenance Division.*
 - d. *Center Fire Station – Constructed in 2014, this building is in excellent shape and is well maintained by both the Fire Department and DPW Building Maintenance Division.*
 - e. *West Groton Fire Station. Currently unoccupied and scheduled for some sort of disposition. No longer needed by our Fire Department.*
 - f. *Senior Center – Currently under construction.*
 - g. *Groton Public Library – Renovated in 1999, this building has undergone several repairs in the last few years. Interior improvements for space needs have been addressed. Improvements to exterior retaining walls and walkways have been completed in the last two years. The parking lot is slated to be repaved and lights in the parking lot are scheduled to be replaced in the next two years. A building envelope study was conducted last year, leading to the recommendation to replace the roof. An architect has been hired and Town Meeting approved funding to design and put the project out to bid. More importantly, this building is under the control of the Library Trustees. They make all decisions relative to this building (subject to funding by the Town in most cases) and I am not sure what role a Capital Planning Committee will play in the oversight of the Building.*
 - h. *Highway Garage. Constructed in 1989, this facility is in desperate need of improvements. To that end, Town Meeting appropriated funding to design and bid a new/renovated facility. A Building Committee will be appointed in the next few weeks to assist the Town Manager in the implementation of this project.*
 - i. *Legion Hall. Maintained by our DPW, this building underwent a renovation of the first floor in 2012 when the floor collapsed. The heating system was updated at that time as well. Building is in relatively good shape and is scheduled to be repointed in the next two years.*
 - j. *Fair Grounds. Leased and maintained by a third party. No Town funds used to maintain these facilities.*
 - k. *Williams Barn. Overseen by the Conservation Commission. Recently had the foundation repaired. Building is in relatively good shape.*
 - l. *Fields. Maintained by our Park Commission and Highway Department. Improvements not paid for by the Town (either through the Capital Stabilization Fund or CPA Funds) are paid for by the user groups.*
6. *I believe Prescott School needs to be addressed separately. Currently, that building is leased to the Friends of Prescott who cover all utility expenses. The Town pays the insurance and maintains the exterior, including landscaping and snow removal. The Friends of Prescott has successfully secured CPA Funds to make various improvements to the building. The Select Board is considering appointing a Prescott Development Committee to help determine the future of the building. A Capital Planning Committee would be redundant should this Committee be established.*
7. *The Regional School Committee is currently reviewing the future of the Florence Roche Elementary School. I believe that any decision made by the School Committee will need to be approved by the Groton Select Board since we own the building. Should they decide to abandon the building, the Town will have limited options with the building since it abuts the Middle School. This decision will need to be made by the Select Board in conjunction with the School Committee.*

Based on all of this, I believe we have a very good Capital Plan in place. We have addressed almost every one of our building needs and I would ask you to reconsider the need for this Committee. I would be more than happy to discuss this in more detail with the Select Board and Finance Committee if you deem appropriate. Thank you for your consideration.

Mark

Ms. Manugian said she felt that having a committee was important at this point adding that the perception around the issue was more important than the reality. She said she would look to a committee to resolve what was capital vs what was operating. Mr. Pease said it sounded like an advisory committee rather than a planning committee. Ms. Pine said she was in favor of having a committee for the same reasons but more so philosophically how they run government in town. She said that citizen involvement in the decision making around large capital expenses was what the town wanted and what she wanted. She said they would make better decisions with more people involved. Mr. Giger said he still didn't understand what they considered capital items. He said that they were struggling because they put a name on something (a committee) before they knew what they really wanted it to do. He thought they needed to come up with a list of tasks before they could name a committee. He said that capital planning needed to be looking out 10 years not just five. Mr. Pease said he was concerned that if they kept only looking out five years they didn't have the ability to think about items that needed to be replaced further out there. He said he would like to understand if other buildings would be able to use CPA funds and not just Prescott and prioritize that. He said he thought there were a lot of questions and agreed with Mr. Giger. Ms. Pine added that she didn't think it was a wise decision for the Town to give up their Capital Planning Committee to the Town Manager years ago.

4. *Ms. Pine moved that they accept the gift of \$2,500 from the movie company to the Old Burying Ground Committee. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

On-Going Issues

E. Mr. Giger said that the sidewalks were creeping along very slowly. Mr. Haddad said he would check with Mr. Delaney for an update.

F. Ms. Gilbert provided a brief update on the MSBA and Flo Ro project.

Mr. Pease adjourned the meeting at 8:05pm.

Approved: _____
John Giger, Clerk

_____ respectfully submitted:
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 11/26/18