

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
MINUTES DECEMBER 17, 2018  
APPROVED**

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

**Members 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. Nik Gualco, Conservation Administrator, made an announcement about the Commission's Open Space and Recreation Plan update. He said that they had a draft ready for the public to review. He said that it was posted on the Town's homepage adding they were looking for feedback at their public forum scheduled for January 31st at the Groton Inn.

Mr. Haddad said that this was the last meeting of the Board before the holidays. He said that at this point their next meeting was on January 7th unless something pressing came up.

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

1. Mr. Haddad said that the Greenway Committee had requested that he appoint Marina Khabituyeva to the Greenway Committee. He said that he had made the appointment and respectfully requested that the Board consider ratifying the appointment.

*Mr. Degen made a motion to ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Marina Khabituyeva through June 30, 2019. Mr. Giger seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

2. Mr. Haddad said that the reason the Memorandum of Agreement with Indian Hill came up was because of the necessity of Indian Hill to pay a sheet metal permit fee. He said that they attempted to clarify that and because it was too arduous, he was withdrawing his request on this matter.

Mr. Haddad asked the Board to schedule a discussion about the ticket tax on the agenda in January. Mr. Haddad presented the process for petitioning the Legislature for a ticket tax in Groton. Mr. Giger asked if they would have to go through this again should another venue come into town. Mr. Haddad said that the petition was location specific and would need to be amended should another venue come to town. Ms. Pine said it was an intriguing idea and thought they should definitely invite Indian Hill to the meeting when it was going to be discussed. She suggested language that said "up to 5%". Mr. Haddad said that they had to set the level at a specific percentage. Mr. Giger said that any discussion with Indian Hill needed to be done in open session. Mr. Degen said he would like to work with Mr. Haddad on this as he was the one that brought it forward adding he would like to look at other communities also. Mr. Degen said he was sorry Indian Hill had taken offense to the MOA but the fees were predicated on what they wanted to build. He said that Indian Hill asked for this and asked Mr. Haddad if the sheet metal work had been done and if the permit fee had been paid. Mr. Haddad said the fee had not been paid and was not sure how much work had been done thus far. He said he would need to check with the Building Inspector. Mr. Giger said that if work has started without the permit, a cease and desist should be issued.

3. Mr. Haddad said that at last week's meeting, the Board asked him to further investigate the issue of whether or not to increase the Health Insurance Cost Share for our Retirees. He said that the Board wanted to know the current number of retirees, how much the Town would save by shifting the percentage and whether or not current retirees could be grandfathered at one rate and if future retirees could be required to pay a different rate. Mr. Haddad said that the Town currently had 59 retirees on their health plans. He said that every five (5%) percent shift would save the Town approximately \$21,000 annually adding they could propose to Town Meeting, for its approval, a different rate for future retirees. Mr. Haddad said that it was his recommendation that the rate not be shifted for current retirees. Ms. Pine asked if there should be a motion relative to that. Ms. Manugian said that she thought the Board

was in consensus on that and didn't want a vote to hinder a future Board from making a different choice. Ms. Pine asked if there were any upcoming retirements that he was aware of. Mr. Haddad said that he was only aware of one potentially coming up in September 2019.

*Ms. Pine moved that the Board state that they would not request any change in the payment rates for retiree's health plans and would not approach the Spring Town Meeting for any changes in the rates for retirees or those retiring prior to June 30, 2019. Mr. Degen seconded the motion.*

Mr. Degen said that they had taken the cost share of the current employees and brought it down to 30% during recent negotiations. He said that the Board was stating with the motion that they didn't want to make any changes to the health insurance rates of the current retirees. He said he would like to see a change for new retirees, after June 30, 2019 brought to a 60/40 cost share split. Mr. Giger said that he wanted to see them have more discussion on that. Ms. Pine said she was not going to add that to her motion and wanted to see them discuss that more. Mr. Degen said he understood that but didn't want to see the can kicked down the road. Mr. Giger asked that it be added to the ongoing issues list.

*The motion carried unanimously.*

### **NEW WEBSITE PRESENTATION**

Mr. Michael Chiasson said that this the website he was about to introduce wasn't the final product adding they were waiting for some content to finish uploading still plus any modifications that needed to be made. He explained a timeline that he was working with the Town Manager on allowing time for community feedback of the new website. He said that they planned to go live with the new website on February 4th. Mr. Chiasson demoed the new website. The Board asked questions and provided feedback.

Ms. Manugian said that this was a great new website and even though they had provided a lot of feedback she didn't want that to take away from the work done on this. Mr. Giger said that he had provided 3 pages of thoughts on the website to the Town Manager and Mr. Chiasson and reviewed some of his comments with the Board and public.

### **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT - CONT.**

4. Mr. Haddad said that Town Counsel provided him an opinion on plowing sidewalks. He said he didn't think there was a definitive answer on whether the Town could be liable if they didn't plow the sidewalks. He said it seemed to him that they had never maintained sidewalks in subdivisions in the past and that policy should not change. Mr. Haddad said that their current Highway Snow Policy read as follows:

*Sidewalk Policy - The Town maintains the sidewalks in the town center area and the West Groton area. These are cleared as soon as time permits after the roads are plowed.*

Mr. Haddad said that he would suggest that this policy be amended by adding the following sentence to the end of the current policy: *Clearing snow and ice from other sidewalks is the responsibility of the abutting property owner. Please assist us with clearing sidewalks in a timely manner.*

He asked the Board to approve the change to the policy.

Ms. Pine suggested having a meeting with the Planning Board about how they incorporate non-plowing of sidewalks in the subdivision regulations. Mr. Giger suggested that the wording be "***please clear your abutting sidewalks in a timely manner***". Mr. Degen said that homeowners down the road would not be looking at subdivision decisions years after the project has been finalized. Ms. Manugian said that she was not comfortable approving a policy written in a Town Manager's Report and thought it should be a separate policy brought forward to them. Mr. Haddad said he would add this to their next agenda for consideration.

5. Mr. Haddad reviewed the Board's top 12 goals as rated by the individual members. Mr. Degen said he was fine with the methodology that was used. Mr. Degen strongly suggested that the major initiative goal be moved forward. Ms. Manugian suggested that any goals not finished from this current year be included and goals 12, 13, 14, 15 be combined as was intended. It was suggested that any goals people felt strong about be lobbied for at a workshop meeting. Mr. Haddad said that he would take this list and combine it with those goals not accomplished last year and rank them. Some members did not feel like the list needed to be reranked adding that everyone had a goal that was important to them that was not included in the list. Mr. Giger asked if they could agree that they would not have more than 8 goals. Ms. Manugian and Mr. Degen agreed. The Board agreed to meet on January 3rd at 7pm to discuss goals.

**ON-GOING ISSUES**

E: Mr. Haddad said that he had spoken to Mass Highway earlier that day. He said that Mass Highway had 2 days left of work to be done and would come back in the spring to loam and seed. Mr. Degen asked if Mr. Delaney could take pictures of the new curbing adding there would be a large amount of curbing replacement on an annual basis. Ms. Manugian asked for a punch list to be done also. Mr. Giger asked if they could also be asked to put up crosswalk signs across from the Middle School and Baptist Church.

K: Mr. Haddad said that he would be removing K from the list. He said that OPEB was going to be incorporated into the budget.

**MINUTES**

*Mr. Degen moved to approve the meeting minutes of December 10, 2018 as written. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Ms. Manugian adjourned the meeting at 8:43pm and wished the public a happy holiday season.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
John Giger, Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_ respectfully submitted:  
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 1/7/19