

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, AUGUST 12, 2019
APPROVED

SB Members Present: Alison S. Manugian, Chair; John F. Reilly, Clerk; John R. Giger, Member; Rebecca H. Pine, Member
Member Absent: Joshua A. Degen, Vice Chair;
Also Present: Mark W. Haddad, Town Manager; Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Mr. Haddad asked for a motion to enter into Executive Session at 6pm Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(3) – “To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares” – Purpose – Fire Union Negotiations and Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(7) – To comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements.” – Purpose – Approve Executive Session Minutes of July 9, 2019.

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

The Board recessed Executive Session at 6:56pm and would continue the Executive Session at the conclusion of their Open Session.

OPEN SESSION

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Reilly said that resident Joanne Schorn made reusable grocery bags out of old t-shirts and wanted to thank her for thinking outside of the box.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad said that at their last meeting, he brought to the Board the recommendation from the Town Clerk to reappoint Sally Hensley to the Board of Registrars. He said that the Select Board was concerned that the Republican Town Committee had not submitted a nominee and the term of the current Republican Representative on the Board had expired in 2018. He said that the Board wanted to know what steps could be taken in the event that a Town Committee did not submit a nominee. To that end, Mr. Haddad offered M.G.L., c. 51, §15 which read, in part, as follows:

"...if the chairman of the town committee has not submitted such list to the selectmen or the appointing authority within forty-five days after a notification to said chairman by certified mail, the selectmen or the appointing authority shall make said appointment without reference to such a list."

Mr. Haddad said that since the Republican Town Committee had not responded with the forty-five day period, he recommended that the Select Board advertise the vacancy asking for a registered Republican to apply for the vacancy and in the meantime, he respectfully requested that the Board consider re-appointing Sally Hensley to the Board as the Democrat. Mr. Giger asked if the Chair of the Republican Committee had been notified by certified mail. Mr. Haddad said that the Town Clerk had done that. Ms. Pine said that she was in support of the recommendation.

Ms. Pine moved to direct the Town Manager to advertise the vacancy on the Board of Registrars and seek a Republican to fill that vacancy. Mr. Giger second the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Pine moved to reappoint Sally Hensley to the Board of Registrars. Mr. Giger seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Mr. Orcutt said that he also had Jack McCaffrey, the Chair of the Water Commissioners with him to discuss an issue that had crept up on them. He provided the Board with a handout. (see attached) Mr. Orcutt said that manganese

testing was something they did on a 3 year testing cycle. Mr. Orcutt said that they had been put on a one-year testing cycle because of rising levels and last fall they exceeded the health advisory. Mr. Orcutt said that manganese was a naturally occurring mineral found in soil. He said that they received a letter from DEP in January of 2019 telling them to come up with solution(s) on how to reduce the levels. Mr. Orcutt said that this was a costly endeavor adding they needed to negotiate a treatment with DEP in September. He said that they wanted to hopefully negotiate a schedule to allow them to get through the next 5 years and not add more to their debt schedule allowing them to pay off the 5 years of debt they had currently. He said that the steady rates and the health of the rate payers were at the forefront of the Board's mind.

Mr. Giger asked if this was the first time the public as hearing about this. Mr. Orcutt said that it was but that they had added information to their website earlier in the year also. He said that they also produced annual reports that listed levels and treatments adding that was also on their website. Ms. Pine asked if there was anything the homeowner could do. Mr. Orcutt said that the homeowners could install a filter system. The Board was interested in providing residents with as much information as possible as often as possible. Board members asked questions about the possible solutions being considered by the Water Department, and also about the estimated cost of \$7.5 Million. Mr. Giger asked if West Groton Water had manganese also. Mr. Orcutt said that they did not.

POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENT STAFFING PRESENTATIONS

Chief Luth reviewed the Police Department as it currently stood. He said that they hoped to fill 2 positions within the next 6 months which would bring them to full staffing for the first time in years. Chief Luth said that the Communications Department was something that was often over looked. He provided the Board with an explanation of what they were tasked to do. Chief Luth said that they had a critical need for a full-time dispatcher now. Chief Luth talked about the increase in complex calls and the fact that if there was only one dispatcher on that they had no time for meal breaks, fresh air, etc. Chief Luth explained the benefit to having 2 dispatchers per shift. Mr. Haddad asked if Dunstable was willing to increase their yearly payment to the Town to hire an additional dispatcher. Chief Luth said he had not had that conversation. Chief McCurdy said that communications officers were a critical lifeline to emergency services in town but were often forgotten. Ms. Pine said that they should be moving toward staffing the department adequately.

Chief McCurdy provided the Board with an overview of the Fire Department. He talked about recruitment efforts since 2014 including social media, mailers, and the explorer program. Chief McCurdy talked about participation requirements (trainings, osha training, % of calls you must answer, etc.). Chief McCurdy said that they needed at least 6 applicants to run an in-house recruit class or they had the option to send applicants to the Fire Academy adding they could send as few as one at a time. Chief McCurdy said that increased training requirements and societal changes had caused recruitment challenges over the years. Chief McCurdy talked about future challenges of the department such as experience lost by those longer-term department members. He said that they were 21% higher on calls than they were in 2017 to date. Chief McCurdy said that the Lost Lake Station was the hardest hit station in regards to attrition. He said that the station was important to the community which posed a challenge. Mr. Haddad and Chief McCurdy talked briefly about the West Groton station and its future. Chief McCurdy said he couldn't say enough about the call department and what they do especially in the middle of the night. Ms. Manugian asked what they could do beside talk about the department and appreciate what they do. Chief McCurdy said that continued word of mouth was something that would be most helpful to them.

Mr. Haddad said that the Chief's gave them a lot to think about going into budget season and thanked them for their time.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Pine said that they had a policy about the Select Board email address. Ms. Pine said that there were aspects that were less than ideal. She said that there were pitfalls with receiving emails and being able to respond. She said that residents she had spoken with found it odd that an email to the Board would go to the Town Manager first. Mr. Giger said that he saw a lot of negatives with eliminating the address. He said it was important to go to one place with a concern adding that things should go through a central point. He said that they should know about everything that comes into the address. Mr. Haddad said that this was not the Boards fulltime job. He said that if a concern just went to an individual board member, they may not have time to get to it right away. Mr. Haddad said that if they changed it, the ball would get dropped somehow adding he

meant no disrespect. Mr. Haddad said that he was paid to do a job and wanted to do that job. It was discussed and decided to place this on a future agenda.

ON-GOING ISSUES

B: Mr. Haddad said that he was disappointed in the slowness of the renovations at Town Hall.

C: Mr. Haddad said that he went to the CPC that night to ask for permission to apply for an out of cycle application on the Prescott Sprinkler System.

D: Mr. Haddad said that the engineer was working on the energy audit for their Green Communities Designation.

E: Mr. Haddad said that he was receiving feedback from the Finance Committee on the Major Initiative Planning Committee adding he had received one interest form so far.

I: Mr. Haddad said that the scaffolding would begin to be installed on Wednesday at the Library.

J: Mr. Haddad said that the Light Commission was only giving the Town \$180K not \$200K toward the generator at the DPW. He said that it was still a very generous offer adding there was a miscommunication between the Light Department GM and the Commissioners.

Mr. Haddad said that he had reached out to Town Counsel a couple of weeks ago to discuss improving the relationship. He said that they met last Thursday to talk and had a very productive meeting. Mr. Haddad said that he told Mr. DeRensis that if things improved, he was going to recommend that they hold off on issuing the RFP for a few more months.

LIAISON REPORTS

Mr. Giger said that the Master Plan Implementation Committee was almost done with their draft.

MINUTES

Ms. Pine moved to approve the minutes of July 29, 2019. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The Board moved to exit Open Session re-enter into Executive Session at 9:42pm.

Approved: _____
John Reilly, Clerk

_____ respectfully submitted:
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 8/26/19