

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, AUGUST 26, 2019
APPROVED

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

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

Mr. Haddad asked for a motion to enter into Executive Session 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.

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

Mr. Haddad asked the Board to exit Executive Session at 6:39pm and adjourn to Open Session beginning at 7pm.

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

REGULAR SESSION

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Haddad said he would like to take items 6 and 7 out of order.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad said that the Complete Streets Committee had a vacancy and asked that Ray Capes be appointed. Mr. Giger said that Ray Capes had been an elected member of the Planning Board and highly recommended him.

Mr. Giger made a motion to appoint Ray Capes to the Complete Streets Committee through June 30, 2020. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Mr. Haddad said that the Board met in Executive Session to discuss changes to the Fire contract relative to moving the department toward 24/7 coverage on September 16th. Mr. Haddad said that they made a few administrative changes with one item affecting the budget. He said that the way they paid holiday pay would change from 12 hours at time and one half which it is now to 24 hours at time and one half. He said that this impact was about \$8K which had been budgeted for and would cover them for the 18 months remaining in the contract period. He said that the Captain's position became vacant recently adding that the 2 union employees eligible to apply choose not to apply. He said that they went to the Union and asked them to give up some of the duties of the Captain to develop a new position of Deputy Fire Chief. He said that the salary would be between \$100K-105K. He said that this would not have an impact to the budget adding that the Captain averaged \$106K with overtime.

Mr. Haddad asked for 2 motions; one to ratify the contract and one to agree to the side letter creating the position of Deputy Chief.

Ms. Pine moved to approve the amendments to the agreement between the Town of Groton and the IAFF, Local 4879 for the contract period of July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2021. Mr. Degen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Pine moved to approve the side letter to create the position of Deputy Fire Chief. Mr. Giger seconded the motion. Ms. Pine said that the negotiations went smoothly adding this was a big step for the Town. The motion carried unanimously.

ON-GOING ISSUES

A: Mr. Haddad said that the Senior Center was still on target for October 22nd and was happy with the way things were going.

B: Mr. Haddad said that things had progressed quite rapidly since their last meeting with the Town Hall renovations. He said that they were working today very diligently to get ready for painting tomorrow. He said that they completed all the wall board and plastering downstairs. He said that he was hoping to be able to move everyone in sometime next week. Ms. Manugian asked for a financial update once all renovations were done.

7:15PM – GD SCHOOL COMMITTEE VACANCY

Ms. Gilbert called the meeting of the School Committee to order at 7:15pm. Groton School Committee Members Ms. Gilbert, Mr. Kubick, and Mr. LeBlanc were present.

Mr. Haddad said that there was a vacancy on the School Committee. Mr. Haddad said that the appointment would be through the May election at which time there would be a 2-year term remaining. Ms. Gilbert said that Ms. Anne Doble could not be there that evening but that her email expressing interest in serving had been very detailed with her background. She said that Mr. Peter Cronin had served on the SC when they went through the audits. Ms. Gilbert said that having someone with prior experience was in their best interest. Mr. Giger asked if Mr. Cronin would have time to dedicate to the School Committee adding that he had chosen not to run for reelection this past spring. Mr. Cronin said that things had changed in his work situation adding he would have time. Mr. Degen asked why Mr. Cronin had decided to put his name in after not seeking reelection in May. Mr. Cronin said that his work travel time had changed which would allow him the time he needed to dedicate to the School Committee. Ms. Pine said that having experience was always valuable but that they had just elected a brand-new member in May adding that the other applicant would be new also. She said that Ms. Doble had a wealth of knowledge coming to the table. She said that bringing new people in was a good thing. Mr. Kubick said that there was only 9 months until the May election which was not a lot of time to get up to speed. He said it took him personally 12 months to do that. Ms. Manugian said that the experience was what they needed for the interim.

Mr. Kubick moved to appoint Peter Cronin to the vacancy on the GDRSC. Mr. Giger seconded the motion. Roll Call: Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye; Pine-no; Degen-aye; LeBlanc-aye; Gilbert-aye; Kubick-aye. The motion carried 7-1.

The SC adjourned at 7:24pm.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT - CONT.

3. Mr. Haddad said that the Tri-Board had met that morning to discuss projections for FY21. Mr. Haddad said that new growth was now at \$27M adding that the original estimate was \$20M. He said that the additional growth came in because of the full measure and list that was done. He said that they picked up a lot of growth doing this. Mr. Haddad reviewed some additional actual revenue that had come in since the budget estimates were developed. Mr. Haddad said that because the full measure and list had been done, he wanted to increase the overlay by \$50K to account for the anticipated increase in abatement requests. Mr. Degen asked what the 5-year average. Mr. Haddad said that it had been \$130K adding that the reserve was getting low and was in jeopardy of not getting their tax rate certified if it got to low. He said that they were looking at \$260K in surplus that could be used toward the anticipated deficit in FY21. He said that they still thought the tax rate would be \$18.59 at this point which was no increase year over year.

Mr. Haddad said that the FY19 actuals was \$734,778 over anticipated budgeted amounts. Mr. Haddad said that motor vehicle excise came in \$243,522 over what they anticipated. He said that they were seeing a downturn in the number of new car sales for the first time in 5 years. He said that the meals tax came in higher than what they anticipated adding they increased the FY20 amount to \$200K. He reviewed other increases that contributed to the \$737K difference in budgeted to actuals. Mr. Hartnett said that with regard to investment income he received a better investment rate in FY19 which led to an additional \$10K. He said that they increased that estimate in FY20.

Mr. Hartnett said that they went with a new firm for their trust funds and received gains that were built up and received a \$39K infusion of a realized gain which would not occur again.

Mr. Haddad said that the Tri-Board wanted to see where unspent appropriations went. He said that \$482K of the \$1,040,455 was encumbered to be spent after June 30, 2019. Mr. Haddad reviewed the significant turn backs over \$20K adding any unspent money would go back to the general fund. Mr. Haddad reviewed the free cash number historically and how that was spent. Mr. Haddad reviewed the potential override situations.

Mr. Giger asked if the School Committee was providing the Town their equivalent of the same information. Mr. Haddad said that they had not yet adding they had a new business manager. Mr. Giger asked that they ask for the same information from the School Committee. Mr. Degen agreed with Mr. Giger.

4. Mr. Haddad said that he was not going to spend a lot of time going over the FY19 4th quarter financials adding he had just done that. He said that they were in a good financial position going into FY20.
5. Mr. Haddad said that the Board had made some achievable goals this year and thought they were working hard on them and provided some updates. Mr. Haddad said that the Major Initiative Committee had received 11 interested individuals. The Board would discuss this at their meeting on September 16th or 23rd. Mr. Haddad said that he and Ms. Manugian would be meeting on Friday to review the policies Town Counsel commented on. Ms. Pine said that there was a demand for over 55 housing in this town and hoped that they found a way to increase that. Mr. Degen said that the developer of Boynton Meadows had stalled efforts to create affordable housing in Groton. Mr. Haddad said that they completed the final goal, IT Data Management subject to Town Meeting approval.
6. Mr. Jennings from the Friends of Prescott reviewed a spreadsheet they developed to show budget vs. actuals through July 2019 and anticipated projected through August 2020 for the Prescott School. Ms. Jennings said that the end of their FY was August 31st. The budgeted vs. actual was \$91,880 vs. \$91,000. Mr. Haddad said that the Friends did exactly what they said they were going to do in year one. He said that his concern was the long-term rentals being secured which Ms. Jennings said that they had tenants committed. Mr. Robertson said that the Friends did not anticipate having to touch their reserve in year 2. Mr. Haddad said he saw no reason that this trend would not continue in year 2. Mr. Degen said that the couple of pitfalls and gains had worked themselves out. Mr. Haddad thanked Bruce and Mary for opening their books as required by the lease.

Mr. Haddad said that Mr. Easom had taken over as the project manager on the sprinkler system project for Prescott School. He said Mr. Easom was preparing to obtain quotes for design. He said that they would have a bid opening date in October for the sprinkler system adding this would potentially be an out of cycle application with the CPC.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Degen said that he had been approached by a few residents about wanting additional background information on the topics being discussed at Select Board meetings. He said that he agreed at the time when the Board discussed this a few months ago to not release the packet in advance adding he had changed his mind and saw no reason to not publish the whole packet not including executive session in advance of the meeting. He said that he and Mr. Haddad had discussed this adding that Mr. Haddad had made good points with how the material often changes prior to a meeting. Mr. Degen said he rethought this again and had come around again adding that he thought that someone could request information or attend one of their meetings. Ms. Pine said that she did not feel the same way. Mr. Haddad cited a couple of instances recently in which major changes had been made to the packets prior to the meeting. Ms. Pine said she didn't think they were being transparent and thought there were ways to do this. Mr. Giger said that he was concerned that when they start putting the packet on the website, they needed to freeze it at the point it was published. He said it concerned him they that were not getting the best information possible out there. Mr. Giger said he was always happy to get a call requesting something was in the packet adding it allowed him to have a conversation with that person about the topic. Ms. Manugian said that the packet was not intended to be a standalone document. She said that people would potentially miss out on the discussion surrounding it. Ms. Pine said that she was concerned that the documents were not being saved. Ms. Dunbar said that the documents were saved on their Google drive and on the Town's server and was not sure what Ms. Pine meant by the documents were not being

saved. Mr. Haddad said that he thought they were transparent and had done a good job. He said that this would be an added burden that there wasn't always enough time for because of meetings, etc.

Mr. Easom explained a program he was familiar with in which documents could be pushed out to subscribers. Mr. DeRensis said that the public records law allowed for 10 days to produce documents. He said it did not require them to produce the packet online. Ms. Manugian said that she wasn't sure what the problem was they would be addressing. Ms. Jennings said that many people she would guess didn't know there was a packet in advance of the meeting. Ms. Sartini said that she had great cooperation from the office to obtain information upon request.

Ms. Manugian said that the use of selectboard@townofgroton.org was shared with them via the Town Manager or Executive Assistant. Ms. Manugian said that she had no current concerns with how this was handled. Mr. Degen said that 98-99% of information coming in was something the Town Manager could or should handle. Ms. Pine said that some people may want to contact them individually and not copy the Town Manager. Mr. Degen suggested adding language if someone wanted to email the Chair, they could directly. Ms. Manugian said that a note could be added that individual contact addresses could be found below. Ms. Manugian said again that she wasn't sure what problem they were addressing.

Ms. Manugian said that she drafted a letter to send to the Water Commission about the manganese levels they received an update on at their last meeting. She said that they valued their update and wanted to help in any way they could.

Mr. Degen moved to that they send the letter to the Water Commissioners as drafted by the Chair. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Mr. Giger asked that they add something asking them to show financial impacts moving forward mapping to the rate payers and tax payers. Mr. Robertson said that those costs may not be known.

Mr. Degen amended his motion to include language as suggested by Mr. Giger. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

ON-GOING ISSUES - CONT.

H: Mr. Haddad said that they received 8 applicants for the Flo Ro project.

J: Mr. Haddad said that the DPW project was moving right along.

L: Ms. Pine said that she had been aware of a number of ways voting happens differently with appointments. She said she had done some research and had an article that showed other ways they may conduct their voting. She said she wasn't recommending any changes at this time but wanted to allow them to read the articles and cited cumulative voting as a possible option.

MINUTES

Ms. Pine moved to approve the meeting minutes of August 12, 2019 as amended. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-0-1 with Mr. Degen abstaining.

The meeting adjourned at 9:26pm.

Approved: _____
John Reilly, Clerk

_____ respectfully submitted:
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 9/9/19