

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 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

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

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Haddad said that for the first time in Groton Fire Department History the department was 24/7 effective 6am this morning. He said that the first day was an extremely busy day for the department.

Mr. Haddad read a proclamation into the record for NVTHS's 50th anniversary and asked the Board to consider adopting the proclamation.

*Mr. Degen moved to adopt the proclamation as read. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Mr. Robertson called the Finance Committee to order at 7:05pm.

Ms. Judy Anderson announced the Community Dinners at First Parish Church would begin monthly this Friday night.

Ms. Manugian said that the policy workshop had been set for October 17th. She asked if the Board could meet at 6pm to discuss budget guidance on Monday, September 23rd.

Ms. Manugian said that she had received some calls about the helicopter that landed at the Middle School last week. She said it was a district decision and not on Town property. She said that complaints and concerns on social media was not going to get answered and suggested that people call or email them. Ms. Pine said she sent an email to the Superintendent who sent her a response.

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

1. Mr. Haddad said that the Financial Policies were reviewed by the Finance Team, sent to the Finance Committee for their input and now brought to the Select Board for their input and approval. He said that the FC signed off on it 2 weeks ago. He said that Ms. Manugian had some concerns and comments on the policy and asked if they wanted time to review them or if they wanted to approve them. Mr. Robertson said that they had changed only a little bit vs. what was submitted for their review. Mr. Degen asked that this policy be included in their workshop to review policies. Mr. Giger said he wasn't aware that this annual review was taking place. Mr. Haddad said that this review was outlined in the Charter adding he had also sent out an email to the Board a couple of weeks ago letting them know this was coming forward.

**2019 FALL TOWN MEETING WARRANT PUBLIC HEARING**

Mr. Haddad read the public hearing notice for the 2019 Fall Town Meeting warrant into the record.

*Mr. Degen moved to open the public hearing on the warrant. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Article 1 - Mr. Haddad said that a second unpaid bill had been presented that would require Town Meeting approval.

Article 2 - Mr. Haddad said that there were 2 proposed amendments (tax levy increases) to the budget. He said that the first was to add \$13K to the Town Accountant's budget to pay for additional licenses and software upgrades to their accounting software package. He said that the second was to increase the debt service budget by \$79,393 to cover the interest payment in

FY20 for the Bond Anticipation Notes on the DPW project and Library Roof. Mr. Haddad said that the impact on the tax rate was as follows:

- Town Accountant Software Upgrade - \$13,000 would add \$0.01 to the tax rate and add \$4.59 to the average tax bill.
- Debt Service Increase - \$70,393 would add \$0.04 to the tax rate and add \$18.36 to the average tax bill.

Article 3 - Mr. Haddad said that the Water Commission would be seeking \$150K to pay for engineering costs to provide solutions to the Iron and Manganese issue. He said that this would hit their surplus adding they were also looking at a possible rate increase. He said that this was a major hit potentially leading to a \$7.5M water project. Mr. Orcutt said that they had a plan and a schedule to present to DEP. He said that the project plan was 4-5 years out for construction. He said that there had to be a rate increase to help pay for this adding there was no way around it. Mr. Degen asked that there be as much notice as possible as they work through this process.

Mr. Haddad read the public hearing notice into record for Amelia Way Road Acceptance.

*Ms. Pine moved to open the hearing on Amelia Way. Mr. Giger seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

*Ms. Pine moved to continue the hearing on Amelia Way until they discussed article 16. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Mr. Haddad said that with Flo RO and budget issues coming down the pike, he didn't see how the Town could help with this. He said that at this time it was a water/rate payer issue. He said that until they understood the proposed plan, they might be replacing old debt with new debt plus a little bit. Mr. Orcutt said that the draft response went to DEP in early September adding the proposed plan could be found on their website. He said that they would receive a consent order from DEP, if they adopt that plan. Mr. Haddad said that this was ultimately DEP's decision. Ms. Manugian asked if the Select Board had any role in this. Mr. Orcutt said that it was up to the Water Commissioners. Ms. Manugian asked for a better understanding of the process. Mr. Giger said that if any portion of this was to be borne by the taxpayers, it needed to be visible by all. Mr. Orcutt said he thought they had been doing a good job of getting the information out there. Mr. Giger said that the costs needed to be put out there. Mr. Orcutt said that the costs were unknown at this time. Mr. Giger said that if the enterprise fund were to fail, it would default to the taxpayers. He said that the Board were the co-signers and needed to know everything. Mr. Degen asked if they had considered an intermunicipal agreement with Dunstable who was flush with water as a means of saving money. Mr. Orcutt said that they could look at that. Ms. Pine said that the Town may be stretched but that a small portion of the Town might be asked to fund this and thought that it was a larger conversation that needed to be had. Mr. Haddad said that they would have an idea after their meeting with DEP of what DEP was asking them to do. Ms. Manugian said she was concerned about the lack of information that the Board had and probably the public also. Mr. Orcutt said that they were working to get everything on the website that they could adding everything had to be approved by DEP.

Article 4 - Mr. Haddad said that this article would most likely be withdrawn at Town Meeting.

Article 5 - Mr. Haddad said that the current balance in the Capital Stabilization Fund was \$171,958. He said that their Financial Policies stated that the Capital Stabilization Fund should be 1.5% of the Town's Operating Budget (\$39,811,627), or \$597,175. He said that in order to reach this level, it would require a minimum appropriation of \$425,217. Mr. Haddad said that the proposed Capital Plan for FY 2021 currently called for \$901,240 in proposed requests. He said that during the budget process the original request list would be reduced to around \$500,000. He said that given the fact that they leave approximately \$200,000 in this fund annually, they would be requesting a transfer of \$500,000 from Free Cash to fund the FY 2021 Capital Budget. Mr. Manugian asked if these were items that were listed in the 5-year plan. Mr. Haddad said that they were.

Article 6 - Mr. Haddad said that the current balance in the Stabilization Fund was \$1,988,036. He said that their Financial Policies stated that the Stabilization Fund should be 5% of the Town's Operating Budget (\$39,811,627), or \$1,990,582. Mr.

Haddad said that this would require a minimum appropriation of \$2,546 from Free Cash. He said that depending on the interest earned over the next two months, they may not need an appropriation to satisfy the Financial Policies.

Article 7 - Mr. Haddad said that the current balance in this fund was \$214,160. He said that the Fiscal Year 2021 District Capital Plan would require the Town to pay \$475,000 for its share of the Plan. He said that it would require an appropriation of \$261,000 from Free Cash to cover the Town's expense in FY 2021. Mr. Degen asked for a copy of the District's \$475K in requests.

Article 8 - Mr. Haddad said that the anticipated cost of this lighted crossing signage in front of the Middle School was \$15,000. He said that this funding would come from Free Cash. Ms. Pine asked if there was any intent to ask the schools to pitch in for this. Mr. Haddad said that it was on the road and was not the school's responsibility.

Article 9 - Mr. Haddad said that this Article was a place holder in the event that additional funding was needed for the installation of the Sprinkler System at the Prescott School. He said that they were anticipating that bids would be due the week before Town Meeting on October 16th. Ms. Manugian said that because they didn't have a long-term final plan for the building, she thought this was premature.

Article 10 - The total amount being requested under this Article was \$21,600 for cyclical inspections. He said that the Select Board and the Finance Committee needed to provide direction as to whether or not to increase the Assessors' Budget by the cyclical inspection amount, or fund it annually out of Free Cash. Mr. Robertson said he thought this should be in the budget adding it would be an annual budget item. Mr. Degen said that they should use free cash and then build it into the budget next year. Ms. Manugian said that she thought this could be found within the current FY budget. Ms. Pine said she thought it made sense to put it in the operating budget.

Article 11 - Mr. Haddad said that the Town would like to hire a consultant to assist the Town in determining a funding strategy to cover the expenses required to comply with the Town's MS4 Permit. Mr. Haddad said that the proposed cost to retain these services was \$15,000 and that it would come from Free Cash. He said it was anticipated that the annual expense for compliance could be anywhere from \$250,000 to \$500,000 annually. Mr. Haddad said that the purpose of hiring a consultant was to determine the best way to cover this expense on an annual basis. He said that once the strategy was determined, they planned to return to the Spring Town Meeting in 2020 for approval. Ms. Pine said that this was a good thing and they needed to do it but asked why they needed a consultant. Mr. Haddad said that a consultant was needed to help them figure out how to pay for this permit annually. Mr. Delaney said that they had always kept up with the permitting in house but with the changes in the permit, they were at a point where they needed assistance. Ms. Pine asked if the Stormwater Committee would still be involved. Mr. Haddad said that they would.

Article 12 - Mr. Haddad said that this Bylaw would ban the use of Single Use Plastic Bags by all commercial establishments in Groton effective July 1, 2020. Mr. Prest asked if this included bags for deli meats and cheeses. The Board said it did not.

Article 13 - Mr. Haddad said that this Article authorized the Conservation Commission to apply for a Land Program Grant to offset the cost of acquiring this parcel. He said that the land in question was a 42-acre parcel with frontage on Martins Pond Road. Mr. Haddad said that the cost to acquire this property was \$400,000, with an anticipated Grant Reimbursement (if approved) of approximately \$243,000. Mr. Haddad said that the Select Board had asked where this parcel falls on the Commission's priority list adding that according to Conservation Administrator Nik Gualco, there were four levels of priority ranking for parcels with this parcel rated as a priority 2, which is defined as "land of high value for protection because the parcels contain important natural resources or are suitable for other municipal uses." Mr. Haddad said that it was his understanding that the Commission had not undergone the process yet of updating the list so this ranking of #2 was at least 18 years old. He said that this parcel would likely score higher if it were previously divided as the Commission has done with this purchase because the ranking of #2 factors in that a house, driveway, and septic are included with the property. Mr. Easom said that there would be 2 parcels with frontage on Martins Pond Road. Mr. Degen said that this would make one lot a hammerhead lot. Mr. Tada said that the hammerhead lot had been created by special permit but was not sure it had been recorded yet. Mr. Easom provided a brief explanation of the connectivity this parcel would provide to other

conservation land. Ms. Manugian said that she was concerned they were relying on an 18-year-old priority list. Mr. Easom said that he wasn't sure it hadn't been updated in 18 years but more so that it hadn't changed in 18 years.

Article 14 - Mr. Haddad said that this Article would allow the DPW Director to collect fees from municipalities who utilize the new glass pulverizing plant at the transfer station, and then expend those fees for the purpose of general up-keep and maintenance on that equipment. He said that a spending limitation of \$10,000 annually was suggested for this account, and that expenses would be managed by the DPW Director.

Article 15 - Ms. Kathy Shelp said that this Article would allow the Council on Aging to collect fees from individuals who utilize the new fitness equipment at the Center, and then expend those fees for the purpose of general up-keep and maintenance on that equipment. She said that there was a \$6K service agreement that needed to be paid annually out of this. Mr. Haddad asked what the annual membership fee would be. Ms. Shelp said that surrounding towns charged anywhere from \$65-125. She said that they were looking at \$35 annually. Ms. Pine said that this wasn't a new idea adding classes had been happening at the Senior Center for a small fee. She said she thought it was a good idea. Mr. Reilly said he thought it was a win-win adding it would help seniors stay healthy for a nominal fee. Mr. Giger asked Ms. Shelp to think about how to charge out of town residents. Mr. Degen said that he supported this adding that he suggested they had a waiver of liability signed. Ms. Shelp said that they had a form to sign, that they might need physician's permission and a training on the equipment.

Mr. Haddad said that they would be looking at punch list work at the Senior Center on September 25th with a ribbon cutting on November 2nd at 1pm followed by an open house until 4pm. He said it was going to be a beautiful center for the taxpayers.

Ms. Manugian said she had a philosophical issue with this adding she thought it would discourage people from using the equipment. Ms. Shelp said that anyone that couldn't afford the membership could see the Outreach Coordinator confidentially for assistance.

*Mr. Degen moved to reopen the public hearing on the road layout for Amelia Way. Ms. Pine seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

Article 16 - Mr. Haddad said that there were 6 lots on this Amelia Way adding that the road was built to plan specs. He said that the Town Engineer, Planning Board and Tom Delaney had signed off on the road and layout acceptance. Mr. Degen said that this was an older subdivision adding that the binder course had been done a long time ago. Mr. Delaney said that they had to rip it up and repave it once before. He said that the road was in good shape.

*Ms. Pine moved to close the public hearing. Mr. Giger seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Mr. Haddad asked that Board to accept the road layout and recommend that the 2019 Fall Town Meeting accept the road.

*Ms. Pine moved to accept the layout of Amelia Way as approved by the Planning Board and DPW Director and recommend acceptance at Fall Town Meeting 2019. Mr. Degen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Article 17 - Mr. Haddad said that the Select Board needed to conduct a public hearing to accept the layout of Mockingbird Hill Road pending approval by the Planning Board and DPW Director. He said that the public hearing would be advertised for October 7th adding that the Planning Board would discuss it at their meeting on September 25th. He said that once the layout was accepted, Town Meeting could formally adopt the Road as a Town Way.

Mr. Haddad said that if every Article passed as proposed, the total amount of Free Cash appropriated would be \$826,796. He said that the remaining Free Cash Balance would be approximately \$513,200.

Mr. Haddad asked the Board to close the public hearing on the warrant. Mr. Degen said that they should keep it open for one more week. The Board was okay with that.

*Mr. Degen moved to continue the public hearing to Monday, September 23rd at 7:15pm. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

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

2. *Ms. Pine moved to ratify the appointment of the Town Manager of Donald Koski as Country Club Pro Shop Staff. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms. Manugian said that they had a lot of discussions on the potential release of the packet already. Mr. Giger said that he had an idea adding he supported making this information available. He said he didn't want to see them overwhelm the resources they had. (See attached handout). Mr. Giger said that he did not support updating it on the website as it was changed. He said he thought it addressed what people were looking for but at a manageable approach. Mr. Degen thanked Mr. Giger for his thoughts. He said that the public not seeing the packet hadn't occurred to him. He said that he understood this was more cumbersome, but didn't think it was more work than what was being performed now. Ms. Pine said she was grateful for what Mr. Giger did and thought they needed to do this.

*Ms. Pine moved to adopt as outlined in Mr. Giger's handout that they adopt the practice of posting the meeting packets on the Town's website in advance of the meeting. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion.*

Mr. Alan Hoch said he was grateful to hear the support for this adding he thought the transparency was better for the Town. He said he thought there should be some way of alerting the public of changes to the packet. Mr. Jack Petropoulos said he was grateful this was brought back up. He asked that updates be made after the meeting also. Mr. Degen said that as soon as policies and procedures were updated, they were added to the website already and asked why it would need to be attached to the minutes. Mr. Petropoulos said he didn't care how they were attached. Mr. Degen said that the minutes were an accurate record, but asked if a draft was amended, it could be referenced in their minutes. Mr. Giger suggested that they limit what they were going to do in this first step and explore other possibilities. Mr. Giger said that they would unfold this for the October 7th meeting. Mr. Haddad said that they would post the first one this Friday, September 20th. Mr. Degen asked if this should be turned into a policy. It was decided to do that.

*The motion carried unanimously.*

### **ON-GOING ISSUES**

B: Mr. Haddad said that everyone had been moved back into Town hall. He said that the trailers would be removed on Friday. Mr. Haddad said that the cost was \$8,900 for the kitchen and Assessors Office. He said that the hardwood floors needed to be done in the hallways adding that because of the staging and everything the Town employees had endured, he wanted to close Town Hall on Friday to get this done. Mr. Haddad said that salary employees would get paid regardless of the hours they work adding that it would cost the hourly employees \$1,200. He said he hoped they would be done in the next 2 weeks. Mr. Degen asked if they could ask the Insurance company to cover lost wages.

E: Mr. Haddad said that the energy audit would start tomorrow with Town Hall, Legion Hall and Williams Barn for their Green Communities initiative.

F: Mr. Haddad said that the MIPC would be on the agenda next week.

I: Mr. Haddad said that he would be in Boston tomorrow at the MSBA regarding Florence Roche.

J: Mr. Haddad said that they were removing the asbestos on the Library Roof beginning this week.

K: Mr. Haddad said that the Highway Garage project was moving along.

It was asked that the MS4 permit be added to the on-going issues list.

### **LIAISON REPORTS**

Ms. Pine said that the Non-Profit Council was meeting on Friday morning.

Mr. Degen said he wanted to thank the Masalehdan's for providing and cooking food for the 9/11 First Responders Lunch.

Mr. Giger provided an update on the Master Plan.

Ms. Pine said that she was in the process of working with the BOH Chair on discussing recyclable take out containers.

Ms. Manugian adjourned the meeting at 9:15pm.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
John Reilly, Clerk

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

Date Approved: 09/23/19