

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2019
APPROVED

SB Members Present: Alison S. Manugian, Chair; Joshua A. Degen, Vice Chair (via phone); 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 6:00pm and asked for a motion to enter Executive Session Pursuant to MGL c.30A, Sec 21(3) "To discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an Open Meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the Chair so declares." – Purpose – DEP Consent Order. Ms. Pine made the motion. Mr. Giger seconded the motion. Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Reilly-aye; Pine-aye; Giger-aye

BUDGET GUIDANCE – 6:30PM

The Finance Committee called to order at 6:35pm. Members Green, Whitefield, Robertson, Prest, Doody were present.

Ms. Manugian said that they needed to continue to talk about free cash and what it was used for and thought that grant funding should be included in revenue numbers. Ms. Manugian said she also thought that snow and ice should be budgeted the way it had always had been.

Mr. Robertson said that the Finance Committee talked and thought that there should be no override. He said that the very preliminary budget the Finance Team put together showed a \$500K problem. He said that they discussed one budget with no overrides adding that the estimated \$500K needed to be split equally between the Town and Schools. He said that the Finance Committee was not interested in telling the Town Manager how to get to break even. He said that \$500K was not something the Town could achieve alone.

Mr. Giger said that he saw an increase in the excise tax revenue projection and wasn't sure how that had been calculated. Mr. Haddad said that they use the 5-year average to get to that number. Mr. Giger said that he thought they had seen a down turn in people buying new cars. Mr. Haddad agreed that they had. Mr. Robertson said that most areas were subject to the world and what was going on. Mr. Robertson said that this was the year to try to be a little more aggressive with the budget. Mr. Green said that they should attempt to roll the dice and see where they ended up. Ms. Pine said that the Board talked about asking for 2 budgets. Ms. Manugian said that the Board also did not want to see a budget with an override. Mr. Giger said that he didn't want the Town to find \$500K all by themselves. Ms. Manugian said that any cut on the school side meant a proportionate cut to Dunstable. Ms. Gilbert said that in looking at their budget and their reserves it was something they could do. She said that the School Committee had also provided their budget guidance already and discussed some of their guidance. She talked about the Schools discussing funding their own capital also to take the burden off the Towns.

Mr. Haddad said that he was hearing that he needed to balance the budget without an override, work with the schools to look at the \$500K deficit and be more aggressive with revenues. Mr. Robertson said that the proposed assessment from the School Department, solely the operating budget, had to come down by \$250K and not their capital budget adding that was funded differently. Mr. Haddad said that the \$223K increase in revenue was triple what they had ever done in any given year. There was a discussion about free cash for FY2022. Mr. Haddad said that they had no way of knowing what it would be at this point adding it was too early.

Mr. Giger moved that the Select Board adopt the strategy adopted and presented by the Finance Committee. Ms. Pine seconded the motion.

Mr. Degen said he did not agree adding the Select Board had discussed wanting to see 2 budgets; a level service budget including snow and ice and one with an override. Mr. Robertson asked what the value of putting together a level service budget was adding they had that in front of them already. He said that they may be making cuts they would not be prepared for. Mr. Degen said that the Finance Committee understood it better than anyone. Mr. Haddad said he could prepare two budgets. Mr. Degen said that he wanted to see what is the budget with 2.5% budget growth. Mr. Haddad said that they were

estimating a 5.8% increase which would require an override. He said that Mr. Degen was asking for a budget that showed that and a budget that would not have a 5.8% increase.

Mr. Giger made a motion to request that the Town Manager create two budget for FY2021 with the first being a level services budget that maintained services, was aggressive on revenue forecasts and if not balanced, an override should be identified; and the second budget to be balanced without the need for an override and that the Town Manager work with the GDRSD to share in any necessary reductions to keep the budget balanced. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Degen-aye; Manugian-aye; Pine-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye

Mr. Green made the same motion. Mr. Robertson seconded the motion. Roll call: Green-aye; Robertson-aye; Doody-aye; Prest-aye; Whitefield-aye

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Haddad said that the Fire Department went to 24 hours on September 16th. He said that they needed to add 4 additional Firefighter/EMT's to fill those rolls. He said that the Fire Chief made the appointments and was present to introduce them. Chief McCurdy said that they had hired 4 great men to fill the rolls. He introduced Chris Fisher, Cody McNair, Derek Maskalenko and Wally Shaw. He said that the full-time department was going really well so far.

Ms. Manugian reviewed the agenda.

Ms. Pine thanked the Groton Business Association for another wonderful Grotonfest.

Ms. Manugian reminded the Board that they were scheduled for training on October 23rd.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Russ Burke called the Planning Board to order.

Mr. Haddad said that there was a vacancy on the Planning Board and that they had received one applicant. He said that the Planning Board met and interviewed Ms. Lorayne Black. He said that this appointment would be to the next election at which time it would be a 2-year seat on the ballot. Ms. Black said that she had been a resident for many years and was a landscape architect. She said she thought she brought an interesting view to the Planning Board and was excited for the potential opportunity. Ms. Pine said that they had seen Ms. Black's talents in areas around town. Mr. Burke said that the Planning Board met with her adding her reputation preceded her and thought she would bring a valuable perspective to the Board. Mr. Giger said that she was a good team player and could not think of a better choice.

Ms. Pine moved that they appoint Lorayne Black with a term to expire at the May 2020 spring election. Mr. Giger seconded the motion. Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Giger-aye; Pine-aye; Reilly-aye; Bonnet-aye Wilson-aye; Nilsson-Ripps-aye; Burke-aye

2. Mr. Haddad said that the Warrant for the 2019 Fall Town Meeting went to print last week and was to be delivered to all residents on Saturday, October 5th. He said that prior to the issuance of the Warrant, he received a memorandum from the Fire Chief informing him that eleven (11) individuals had applied to be on the Call Fire Department. He said that this was the largest recruit class since 2002 which had the potential to cost approximately \$66,000 to train and outfit them. He said that since the Board was not scheduled to meet on September 30th, he informed the Board and Finance Committee that he had to finalize his Report to the Town Meeting and would be recommending in his report that that this funding would come from unexpended tax capacity. He said that the Finance Committee met and decided that this funding should come Free Cash instead of taxation. Mr. Haddad said that he was very concerned with this recommendation as it would leave Free Cash at a dangerously low level. He said that based on this recommendation, he said that he and the Finance Team met with Finance Committee Chair Bud Robertson to review all proposed funding for Town Meeting to determine if there was a better way to address funding the Recruit Class while maintaining a better Free Cash Balance. Mr. Haddad said that he was recommending that they reduce the amount of upfront funding for the recruit class to \$37,741, and that this amount come from Free Cash. Mr.

Haddad said that the remaining amount needed (\$28,259) could be addressed later in the year by either a reserve fund transfer or line item transfer. Mr. Haddad said that he was also recommending that the funding for the Assessors' Cyclical Inspections come from Taxation instead of Free Cash since this would be a recurring budgetary expense and should be in the tax rate to be consistent with their Financial Policies. Mr. Haddad reviewed an updated chart and suggested funding recommendations for Town Meeting. Mr. Haddad said that should everything pass as now proposed, they would have a balance of \$493,826 in Free Cash.

Mr. Haddad asked the Board to open the public hearing for the Mockingbird Hill Road Layout at 7:30pm and continue it to the end of the Town Manager's report and proceeded to read the notice into the record.

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

Mr. Robertson said that this plan was what the Finance Committee had discussed and thought this met their objective. Mr. Degen said that he had talked to Mr. Haddad about the use of free cash for the call firefighters. He said that this was a good problem to have and wanted to see the money come from free cash. He said that he wanted to see the cyclical inspections of \$21K come from free cash and not taxation adding he didn't like to add to taxation in the fall. Mr. Haddad said that the financial policies had been to fund it from taxation if it wasn't a one-time item. He said that this was a recurring cost. Ms. Manugian asked what was one time vs. recurring costs for the Fire Department. Mr. Haddad said that they really didn't know adding he could get 11 new firefighters again next year.

Mr. Haddad asked the Board to vote to authorize the motion for article 2 as proposed and asked them to vote to support cyclical inceptions though taxation.

Mr. Giger moved to withdraw the plan to take \$21K out of free cash and instead take it out of taxation. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Pine-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye

Mr. Prest moved to withdraw the plan to take \$21K out of free cash and instead take it out of taxation. Mr. Whitefield seconded the motion. Roll Call: Robertson-aye; Prest-aye; Doody-aye; Whitefield-aye (Mr. Green was not present for this vote)

Mr. Giger moved to take \$37,741 out of free cash as opposed to taxation. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Pine-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-recused

Mr. Prest moved to take \$37,741 out of free cash as opposed to taxation. Mr. Whitefield seconded the motion. Roll Call: Robertson-aye; Prest-aye; Doody-aye; Whitefield-aye (Mr. Green was not present for this vote)

Mr. Degen left the meeting at 7:40pm.

3. Mr. Haddad said that there was a vacancy on the Board of Registrars adding that Mr. Paul Martell was present as the only interested candidate. He said that Mr. Bouchard was here to support the appointment. Mr. Martell said that he had been a 26-year resident and a registered republican for longer than 40 years. Mr. Giger thanked him for volunteering.

Mr. Reilly moved to appoint Mr. Paul Martell to the Board of Registrars term through June 30, 2021. Mr. Giger seconded the motion. Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Pine-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye

4. *Ms. Pine moved to approve a one-day beer and wine license for First Parish Church for Liverpool Night on Saturday, October 12, 2019 from 7:00pm-10:00pm. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Pine-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye*

MOCKINGBIRD HILL ROAD - ROAD LAYOUT

Mr. Haddad explained the road layout before them. Mr. Collins reviewed some documents he had provided the Town. The Board had no questions about the layout.

Ms. Pine moved to close the public hearing. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Pine-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye

Mr. Giger moved to accept Mockingbird Hill Road as a town way. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Pine-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Mr. Haddad said that the COA received a \$1,000 donation on Friday from the Groton Women's Club to be used for Women in Need. He asked the Board to accept the gift and establish the fund for this purpose.

Ms. Pine made the motion to accept the gift and establish a gift fund. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Pine-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye

2. Mr. Haddad said that the Mass Fish and Game would like to purchase land on Pepperell Road and turn it over to NEFF. He said that Nik Gualco, Conservation Administrator, issued an email as to why the Board should support this. He reviewed a map of abutting land and said that the loss in taxation would be about \$9K. Ms. Sartini asked if there would be trails that would be accessible to the public. Mr. Tada said that he couldn't speak for NEFF but that they had always been open to trail access. He said that there was an easement that was in the works which would connect properties. Ms. Pine said that she would endorse sending a letter of support and should include the first, third and fourth points contained in Mr. Gualco's letter. Ms. Manugian said that she was struggling with this and thought they needed to think about how long they wanted to continue to support conservation land. Ms. Pine said that they weren't being asked to spend any money and thought that conservation value and public access being paid for by their state tax money was in their best interest. Mr. Giger said that they should get an updated list of priority land and potential tax loss from the Conservation Commission.

Ms. Pine moved to authorize the Town Manager to send a letter of support for the purchase arrangement of this property that involves both NEFF and Mass Department of Fish and Game. Mr. Giger seconded the motion. Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Pine-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye

3. Mr. Haddad provided the Board with hard copies and a thumb drive of all their policies in advance of their workshop on October 17th.

ON-GOING ISSUES

A: Mr. Haddad said that the punch list would be finalized tomorrow with the COA moving in on October 22nd. He said that the open house was on November 2nd at 1pm.

B: Mr. Haddad said that the Town Hall renovations were done and would like to remove this from the list. Ms. Pine said that she liked how the Assessors' Office had come out as the person who was opposed to it.

C: Mr. Haddad said that the RFP was out on the Sprinkler System for Prescott School with bids due next Wednesday.

D: Mr. Haddad said he would schedule another meeting to continue the manganese discussion with the Water Department.

F: Mr. Haddad said that the State had extended the Green Communities application deadline again to November adding they would be ready to go.

G: This would be removed.

H: Mr. Haddad said that he and Mr. Bouchard had spoken to Representative Harrington who said this would hopefully be voted prior to Town Meeting.

J: Mr. Haddad said he sent them an update email last week on the Florence Roche project. He said that they hired Studio G and were in the process of negotiating a contract with them. He said that this would start the project in earnest.

K: Mr. Haddad said that the asbestos was done on the Library roof and were proceeding with the install of the roof.

L: Mr. Haddad said he was ecstatic with the way in which the Highway Garage was moving forward.

LIAISON REPORTS

Ms. Pine said they had sent to the BOH a proposal on the ban on polystyrene containers. She said that the BOH was in support of this. She said that they should put this on the Spring Town Meeting warrant. Mr. Haddad said that they could obtain some sample bylaws.

MINUTES

Ms. Pine pointed out a small error in the minutes.

Ms. Pine moved to approve the meeting minutes of September 23, 2019 as amended. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Pine-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17pm.

Approved: _____
John Reilly, Clerk

_____ respectfully submitted:
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 10/28/19