

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 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 regular meeting to order at 7:00pm adding they had just completed a work session. She then reviewed the agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Reilly thanked the first responders and the Highway Department for their hard work during the storm last weekend.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad said that Reserve Officer Casey O'Connor had really proven herself as an Officer with the department over the last year. He said that the department had a vacancy adding that Chief Luth had recommended to him that she be appointed to the vacancy. He said that they were getting Officer O'Connor into the academy in January and asked the Board to ratify his appointment.

Ms. Pine made the motion to appoint Casey O'Connor as a Patrolman effective January 3, 2020. Mr. Degen seconded the motion. Ms. Pine said it was wonderful that they had diverse candidates. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Mr. Haddad said that they had a vacancy in the Land Use Department. He said that after interviewing 9 individuals, Kara Cruikshank rose to the top. He explained her qualifications and asked for her appointment to be ratified.

Mr. Giger moved to ratify the appointment of Kara Cruikshank to the Land Use Administrative Assistant position effective December 30, 2019. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Mr. Haddad said that they had a vacancy in the DPW due to a retirement. He said that Mr. Delaney and Mr. Conley interviewed candidates and brought Christopher Greathead forward for appointment. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to ratify his appointment.

Mr. Reilly made the motion to ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Christopher Greathead effective December 16, 2019. Mr. Giger seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Pine asked if they could be notified when there was a vacancy. Mr. Haddad said that he always notified the Board when a department head position was vacated but not staff level employees but he could let the Board know if they wished.

4. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to consider appointing Thomas and Lynda Pistorino to the Commission on Accessibility at the recommendation of the ADA Coordinator.

Ms. Pine made the motion to appoint Thomas and Lynda Pistorino to the Commission on Accessibility through June 30, 2020. Mr. Degen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Mr. Haddad said that the CPC interviewed 2 applicants looking to fill the at-large-seat that was vacant by the passing of one of its members. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to appoint Carolyn Perkins to the CPC term to expire June 30, 2021 at the recommendation of the CPC.

Ms. Pine made the motion to appoint Carolyn Perkins to the CPC term to end June 30, 2021. Mr. Degen seconded the motion.

TAX CLASSIFICATION HEARING

Mr. Degen moved to re-open the tax classification hearing and postpone the discussion until the conclusion of the current discussion. Mr. Giger seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT - CONT.

Ms. Gilbert said that this was the Select Board appointment and asked the Board to consider her statements. *See attached statement made by Ms. Gilbert as the second candidate that was considered.*

Ms. Eliot said that she was a minority vote on the CPC. She said that she voted for Ms. Gilbert based on the diversity should would bring to the CPC. Ms. Manugian said that they would typically turn to the Committee for their recommendation. Mr. Degen asked how long it had been since Ms. Perkins had been on the CPC. Ms. Perkins said that when she resigned from the Planning Board, she had to give up her seat on the CPC. She said she enjoyed working with the committee, working on the projects and what the CPA did. Ms. Perkins agreed that there was something to be said about diversity. Mr. Degen asked the candidates if they were an advocate for keeping the surcharge at 3%, reducing it or eliminating it once Surrenden Farm was paid off. Ms. Perkins said that she liked the projects that the CPA was able to provide the Town. She said that it was valuable because of the state match to keep it at 3%. Ms. Gilbert said that the voters should decide adding that she was always in favor of receiving free money. She said that they needed to look at the operation budget and decide on whether to keep the CPA active. She said that the school piece was a huge missing part on this committee. Ms. Gilbert said that if they had an override next year which was supported by the tax payers then she would support keeping the CPA, if not, she would not keep it.

Mr. Haddad reminded the Board of the motion on the table.

The Board voted 3 in favor and 2 opposed. (Manugian and Reilly opposed)

TAX CLASSIFICATION HEARING

Present was Jonathan Greeno, Don Black and Garrett Boles.

Mr. Boles began with an explanation on how they arrived at the levy limit and how exclude debt was figured into the calculations above and beyond the levy limit. He said that they needed to raise \$33,732,200 in taxes. Mr. Boles said that Groton's tax base was 94% residential. He explained what potentially shifting the tax percentages to the commercial tax payers would mean to the residential tax base. Mr. Haddad said that if they were to shift the 1.5 CIP to the commercial tax base, they would be lowering the average residential tax bill by \$261 per year. Mr. Boles agreed with Mr. Haddad.

Mr. Haddad recommended adopting a residential factor of 1 and set both tax rates at \$17.38 with a tax levy at \$33,723,200.

Ms. Pine made a motion to recommended adopting a residential factor of 1 and set both tax rates at \$17.38 with a tax levy at \$33,723,200. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

ANNUAL LICENSES

Mr. Haddad read the licenses on Page 1 (see attached) and asked the Board to approve them as presented.

Ms. Manugian made the motion. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Haddad read the licenses on Page 2 (see attached) and asked the Board to approve them as presented.

Mr. Degen made the motion. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Haddad asked the Board to approve a common victualler license for AL Prime.

Ms. Pine made the motion. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-1 with Mr. Degen opposed.

Mr. Haddad read the remaining licenses on Page 3 (see attached) and asked the Board to approve them as presented.

Ms. Pine made the motion. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT – CONT.

6. Mr. Haddad said that he was in the process of developing the Town's Fiscal Year 2021 Capital Plan as required by the Charter. He said that the amount of the requests exceeded the available funds in the Town's Capital Stabilization Fund. Mr. Haddad said that in an effort to try to address some of the items, he was recommending that the Town change the way it was financing the new Fire Truck purchased last year. He said that they had previously recommended that the Town use the State House Note program to finance the Fire Truck over five years. This equated to a \$140,000 annual payment, with this amount coming from the Capital Stabilization Fund. He said that they were planning on going out to the Bond Market in February, 2020 to permanently finance the DPW Building and Library Roof projects. Mr. Haddad said that he would like to include the Fire Truck in the Bond Issue and pay off the truck over twenty years, instead of five. He said that this would reduce the annual payment to approximately \$28,000 and be paid out of the Town's Debt Service Budget. He said that they had retired some debt and this could be added to the budget in FY 2021 without increasing the Budget. Mr. Haddad said that in order to permanently finance the Fire Truck and pay it back over 20 years, he needed the Select Board to vote that the useful life of the Truck was at least 20 years adding that they ordinarily keep a Fire Truck for 20 to 25 years.

Mr. Giger moved to declare the life of the new fire truck authorized at the Spring 2019 Town Meeting be declared as a useful life of greater than 20 years. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion.

Mr. Haddad said it would cost approximately \$65K more to extend it over 20 years. Mr. Degen said he contacted Mr. Haddad this morning. He said that he was the mover of the motion at Town Meeting for the financing. Mr. Degen said that there was wording in the motion that allowed them to change how they financed this. Mr. Degen said that he found it disingenuous to the taxpayers to do this adding it was not how it was presented to Town Meeting. Mr. Reilly said he would like to see them settle it himself. Ms. Manugian said that it helped with revenues moving forward. She said it would be more helpful looking at a proposal as a whole and not discussing it piecemeal. Mr. Haddad said that if they approved this tonight, it would give him the opportunity to bond this in February. He said it would give him a lot of flexibility right now if they voted to approve this. Mr. Degen said that it was difficult to stop a train once it was moving. He said he was extremely uncomfortable with a debt burden right now. Ms. Pine said she wasn't sure what the capital plan looked like before they made any final decisions adding she was okay with declaring the useful life.

Mr. Robertson said that he would support the 20 years adding that by doing this they would look at other options. He said it was important to do that this year. Mr. Reilly said that if it would benefit them to look at payment options, he didn't think it was disingenuous like Mr. Degen said. He said that this was pieces of a whole adding it sounded like it would bring the budget in line. Ms. Pine asked if Mr. Haddad needed a vote that night. She said she was hearing that they agree with declaring the useful life. Mr. Haddad said that they could not bond the truck without a vote. He said he could provide them with the capital plan by December 31st and they could vote before February if they wanted to bond the truck. Mr. Degen asked if they could use money out of stabilization over the next few years and replenish it out of free cash. Mr. Haddad said he was being pushed to bump up estimated receipts which meant that there wouldn't be the free cash that they had generated in the past. He said that they needed to show Wall Street that they had the 5% put away in stabilization for the Florence Roche bond issue.

Pine-aye; Manugian-nay; Degen-nay; Reilly-aye; Giger-aye. The motion carried 3-2 in favor.

7. Mr. Haddad said that they were in the process of finalizing the operating budget. He said that he had a meeting with the School Department scheduled for Wednesday to show them the numbers and see where they were at. He said he would have a better update for them next Monday. Mr. Giger said that the School Department had not yet declared what they were looking at budget wise like the Town had. He said that splitting the deficit was not something he had

heard being discussed adding he thought they needed to stand firm on that. Mr. Giger said that he remained concern that they asked for a copy of their expenditures for FY19 and they hadn't received it. Ms. Manugian said that their schedule was a little off from the Town. Mr. Haddad said that there had been a lot of collaboration between the schools and town and felt as thought that would continue.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Haddad asked the Board to authorize himself and one member of the Board to sign the payroll and expense warrants for the next 30 days when they were not available to.

Mr. Degen moved that pursuant to 3.2.2 (iv) of the newly approved Charter that John Giger and the Town Manager sign both expense and payroll warrants through January 8, 2020. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

ON-GOING ISSUES

A: Mr. Haddad said that they paid the final contractor bill with the exception of the retainage. He said he was hoping to have the final accounting to them as soon as he could.

B: Mr. Haddad said that he, Mr. Robertson and Mr. Degen would be meeting with the Friends of Prescott on Thursday.

C: Mr. Haddad said that they received good news on the PFAS testing. He said it was not an issue right now. Ms. Pine said that they had asked for a conversation on the cost sharing for this. Mr. Haddad said that he put in his operating budget a proposed solution under major initiatives for them to debate and discuss. He said that there was no way they could implement it in FY21 though. Ms. Manugian said that they were waiting to hear from Town Counsel on whether this could be done in Executive Session. There was a discussion on the need for the DEP consent order. Ms. Manugian said that they had Water Commissioners, a separate entity, moving forward with a possible solution based on information they didn't have yet. Mr. Giger said that they had an oversight responsibility.

D: Mr. Haddad said that they would be holding public hearings in January and February on the MS4 permit. He said they are putting together what they need to comply and get cost estimates.

E: Mr. Haddad said he sent out an example bylaw last week but wasn't sure where the BOH was at with the polystyrene containers.

F: Mr. Haddad said that the Green Communities application was submitted on November 22nd. Ms. Pine asked why Prescott was not included. Mr. Haddad said that that was because the building was leased out and not under the Town's control citing Hazel Grove as an example. Ms. Pine had some additional questions.

G: Mr. Haddad said that there was a lot going on with Florence Roche and would be updating the Board.

H: Mr. Haddad said that because of the snow, the Library Roof had some minor leaks which the contractor was taking care of.

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

MINUTES

Mr. Degen moved to approve the minutes of November 25, 2019. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Manugian adjourned the meeting at 9:09pm.

Approved: _____
John Reilly, Clerk

_____ respectfully submitted:
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 12/16/19