

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
VIRTUAL MEETING
TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2020
APPROVED**

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

Also Virtually Present: Mark W. Haddad, Town Manager; Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant; Jason Kauppi, Town Moderator; Melisa Doig, HR Director; Patricia Dufresne, Town Accountant; Michael Bouchard, Town Clerk; Jonathan Greeno, Principal Assistant Assessor; Michael Hartnett, Tax Collector/Treasurer; Bud Robertson

Ms. Manugian called the meeting to order at 5:00pm and reviewed the agenda.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORTS

1. Mr. Haddad reviewed action items taken since last week's meeting as outlined in the Town Manager's Report.

Mr. Haddad said that the school district was the only one that could authorize the bonding of the Florence Roche project as of right now. He said that they were looking to open the regional agreement so that the Town of Groton could bond the project.

Mr. Haddad said that he was working with the Town Clerk to change policies at the polling locations and would have a report within the next couple of weeks. Mr. Bouchard said it was not too soon to apply for an absentee ballot.

Mr. Haddad said that they had a conference call with Weston and Sampson to discuss the MVP Grant and the James Brook project. He said that they had a town appropriation that they could use toward the state match.

2. Ms. Manugian said that the Governor announced today that public schools would be closed through the end of the school year adding that would help the School District determine any budgetary savings sooner than they thought. Mr. Haddad said that he was expecting the Governor to rule by the end of the week on the stay at home order. He said that an agreement has been signed with other governors to open up the Northeast Region cooperatively. Mr. Haddad said that he sent the Board a letter from the AG's office on local authority. Mr. Haddad said that the use of face coverings was advisory and not something that could be mandated locally. He said that he was going to put together a proposal for possible reopening of Town Hall and wanted to get a ruling from Town Counsel on whether face masks could be required in Town buildings. Mr. Reilly said he thought they may be able to institute the use of masks within public buildings and thought it was good to check with Counsel. Mr. Haddad said that the employees had some concerns and all things he was going to take into consideration when putting together this proposal.

Mr. Haddad said that they could delay the Town Meeting further because it had not been posted yet according to the Governor's Order. He asked the Board if they wanted to delay the issuance of the warrant adding that this would delay the date of the election. Ms. Manugian said that it made sense to leave things where they were so as to not confuse things. Ms. Pine asked what date they may look at. Mr. Haddad said that the Moderator could give 30-day extensions under his authority. Ms. Pine said that they should not change anything at this point adding she didn't want to see the election date have to be changed again. Mr. Giger asked if Mr. Kauppi was required to make a 30-day extension or if the extension could be shorter. Mr. Kauppi said that it could be up to 30 days. Mr. Reilly said he was good with leaving things the way they planned.

WARRANT PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Haddad asked the Select Board to vote to reopen the public hearing on the warrant.

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

Select Board Positions on Articles:

Article 1 - Unanimous Support

Article 2 - Mr. Degen asked what the percentage increase was for the Town Clerk. Mr. Haddad said that it was a 2% increase. Unanimous Support

Article 3 - Unanimous Support

Article 4 - Mr. Haddad asked the Board to hold off on the budget at this. He said that the Finance Committee was discussing the budget that night and wanted the Board to wait until it had been finalized. The Board agreed to hold off.

Article 5 - Mr. Degen asked if the Finance Committee was going to discuss the OPEB trust that night. Mr. Haddad said that they would. Mr. Degen asked the Board to delay taking positions on this. Ms. Manugian said that they could hold off until next week.

Article 6 - Unanimous Support

Article 7 - Mr. Haddad said that the Finance Committee would be discussing the Police Department generator that night as a possible reserve fund transfer and added that the Select Board might want to hold off. The Board agreed to hold off.

Article 8 - Unanimous Support

Article 9 - Mr. Haddad said that they received 2 bids for the sprinkler system project at Prescott School. Mr. Haddad said that the awarding of the bid was up to the Chief Procurement Officer. He said that part of the requirements of the bid was for the bidder to submit a Certificate of Eligibility. He said that this certificate stated they were DCAMM certified. Mr. Haddad said that their history in Groton had been that if your bid was incomplete, the Town rejected the bid. He said that in a couple of instances where Towns had waived requirement of the Certificate of Eligibility, the AG had upheld the Town's award during bid protests when a contractor had been eligible to bid and perform work. Mr. Haddad said that the engineer had estimated the cost of construction between \$350-400K for this project. He said that one bid came in at \$249,400 and the other at \$463,000. He said that in this case, one was under and one was over the estimate. Mr. Haddad talked about how long bids were good for. He said that he had also asked the engineer to reach out to the bidders to discuss bid price difference and check references. He asked the Board for their advice on whether they should waive the requirement of Certificate of Eligibility.

Ms. Manugian said she was concerned about moving forward with this project at all right now during uncertain times and wasn't comfortable asking people to hold bids. She asked if they had the right to reject both bids and hold off until the fall or even a year from now. Mr. Haddad said that there was no requirement to accept a bid and could reject both bids in the best interest of the Town. Mr. Haddad said that the owner of the company who submitted the lower bid reached out to him this weekend to say he had failed to include the Certificate in his upload. Mr. Degen said that he wanted to hear from the engineer after background checks had been completed. He said that the dollar value discrepancy was huge and wanted to make sure Xcel's references were checked. Mr. Haddad said that he had until May 15th to award the bid and expected to hear from the engineer this week. Mr. Giger supported the thoughts about going out to rebid or postponing it but did not support waiving the requirement. He said that this was not an unusual requirement for contractors to submit. He said that if the contractor was careless to not submit it, he was not sure that he felt comfortable waiving this for them. Ms. Pine said that it was an oversight and had submitted it after the fact. She asked what the timing was to send it out to rebid. Mr. Haddad said it would cost around \$1k-\$2K to reissue and it would take a few weeks. Ms. Pine asked if they could do this in short order and how this would work with needed CPC funding. Mr. Haddad said that the earliest he could submit it in the Central Register was April 29th. Mr. Haddad said that only the CPC could recommend a number to the Town Meeting. Ms. Pine said she had no problem accepting the low bid adding it was a good price for them. She said that if they go out and reissue the bid they run the risk of obtaining a higher price. She said that if they rejected this low bid, she was not inclined to accept the other bid adding it was too high a price. Ms. Manugian said that if their standard practice had been to require everything that was mandatory, they should not waive anything. She said that if they re-advertised quickly, it was what she believed to be an end

run around the process. She said that this should be pushed off until the fall and could not support this right now. She said that she still did not agree with the work in general right now. Mr. Reilly said that he would like to hear from the engineer because of the price discrepancy. Ms. Pine said that Town Meeting voted to allow this work and did not think it was appropriate for the Board to say this work should not happen. Mr. Giger said that they received a letter from the Friends of Prescott and asked that it be read into the record. Mr. Haddad read their letter into the record.

Ms. Mary Jennings said that the Friends was concerned about the matter before the Board. She said that due to the technicality, they may not be able to proceed to the Spring Town Meeting. She said that the approved business plan could not succeed without this work and explained how important the sprinkler system and fire alarm panel was for their programs. Mr. Robertson said that the lease ended in 2021 adding that they had funding through FY21 for the building. He said that they would be discussing this that night at their Finance Committee meeting along with the CPC. Ms. Manugian said that there was some appetite to wait until next week. Mr. Haddad said that he would add this to next week's agenda.

Article 9 cont. - Housing Coordinator CPA application- Unanimous Support

Article 10 - Unanimous Support

Article 11 - Unanimous Support

Article 12 - Line Item Transfers - Ms. Manugian said she would prefer to hold off on this and allow the Finance Committee to discuss it that night.

Article 13 - Mr. Greeno said that the Board of Assessors was hesitant to release any money in overlay surplus due to possible decreases in home values and possible abatements. He said that they would take this up at a later date. Mr. Haddad said that he was still recommending wiping the snow and ice deficit out regardless of the release of overlay surplus to help their budgetary issues next year. He said he was still asking them to support this. Ms. Manugian asked what the history had been. He said that they had wiped out what they could using available funds to help with available funds in the next FY. Ms. Dufresne said that they had available money in potential departmental turn backs to cover this. Mr. Degen said that he understood why Mr. Haddad wanted to wipe this out now but was more comfortable carrying it over to the Fall Town Meeting adding that the overlay might be more needed than before. Mr. Haddad said it was cleaner to wipe it out now. Mr. Degen asked the Finance Committee to weigh in on it and bring it back next week. Mr. Haddad said he would bring it back.

Article 14 - Unanimous Support

Article 15 - Board deferred to Town Meeting

Article 16 - Unanimous Support

Article 17 - Unanimous Support

Article 18 - Unanimous Support

Article 19 - Unanimous Support

Article 20 - Unanimous Support

Article 21 - Unanimous Support

Article 22 - Unanimous Support

Mr. Haddad asked the Board to continue the public hearing to 7:15pm on Monday, April 27th.

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

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

3. Mr. Haddad said that the employees were very nervous about allowing the public back into the building once the order was lifted. He said that any business for a short time after the order had been lifted would most likely be done on an appointment basis. Mr. Giger said that aeration (heating and cooling system) needed to be kept in mind when putting people back into the buildings. He said he would have a proposal for the Board at one of the upcoming meetings.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Pine said that she wanted to ask about the status of the Green Communities project application. Mr. Haddad said that they received comments back from the State on their proposed project application. He said that they were providing the requested information by this Friday.

Ms. Pine said that she would like to add to the agenda, next week, a discussion on requiring that dogs be leashed on public property during this pandemic. She said that the Town of Littleton had done this already and would like to discuss this further.

Ms. Manugian left the meeting at 6:24pm.

MINUTES

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of April 13, 2020. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Roll Call: Degen-aye; Pine-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye

Mr. Haddad asked the Board to continue their meeting to 7:00pm this evening with the Finance Committee.

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

Approved: _____
John Reilly, Clerk

_____ respectfully submitted:
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 4/27/2020