

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
VIRTUAL MEETING
MONDAY, JUNE 8, 2020
UN-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; Jonathan Greeno, Principal Assistant Assessor; Michael Hartnett, Tax Collector/Treasurer; Mike Luth, Police Chief; Bud Robertson, Finance Committee Chair; Tom Delaney, DPW Director; Shawn Campbell, Country Club General Manager; Takashi Tada, Land Use Director; Paul DeRensis, Town Counsel

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Manugian said that voting was tomorrow, Tuesday, June 9, 2020 and encouraged people to drop off their absentee ballot or vote at the polls from 1pm-7pm.

Ms. Manugian read a statement into the record relative to the rally held on Sunday.

Ms. Pine commended the organizers and the participants for an amazing event in Groton. She also thanked the Police Department for their part in this. Ms. Pine said that emotions were high and energy to do something was high adding this an opportunity for meaningful change. She provided some suggestions that had been brought to her attention including a program called SEED. Chief Luth expressed his honor and pride of being the Chief of the Groton Police Department and their dedication to the department and the Town.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad said he was asked to look at FY209 and FY21 deficits requiring Cares Act funding. He said that they did not anticipate a deficit in FY20 adding those numbers would continue to be monitored. He said that FY21 was a different story. He said that they should be anticipating a deficit in state aid of 20% adding this was the same story in FY08. He said that they could see a revenue shortfall of \$600K. He said that he was hoping they might be able to use Cares Act funding to help with revenue shortfalls. Mr. Haddad added that the District could be helped out by the Town once they exhausted all federal grant funding available to them relative to COVID-19.

Mr. Degen asked what would happen if they couldn't use Cares Act money for revenue shortfalls. Mr. Haddad said that he could answer that better in September adding that he would keep the spending freeze in place as an example. Mr. Giger said that they needed to look at the 20% reduction in local aid as a best case adding they may not even get that much. Mr. Haddad said that they were fortunate that state aid only made up 3% of the municipal budget adding he was more worried about the school district adding state aid made up a larger part of their budget.

APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATE TO NASHOBA TECH SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Ms. Gilbert called the School Committee to order at 7:18pm. Members Cronin, Raynor, and Kubick were also present. Mr. Kauppi called the joint meeting to order. Mr. Kauppi said that he would accept nominations to serve as an alternate to the school committee for a three-year term.

Ms. Manugian nominated John Ellenberger. Mr. Degen seconded the nomination.

Mr. Kauppi closed the period for nominations.

Mr. Ellenberger said he was interested in serving as he had gotten to know and appreciate what they did in his years covering their meetings. Mr. Reilly asked if he had served on other town committees. Mr. Ellenberger said that he had served on the original Cable Committee. Ms. Pine said it sounded like he was a good fit and thanked him for expressing his interest.

Roll Call: Degen-aye; Giger-aye; Manugian-aye; Pine-aye; Reilly-aye; Cronin-aye; Gilbert-aye; Kubick-aye; Raynor-aye; Kauppi-aye

Mr. Kauppi adjourned the joint meeting.

Mr. Kubick moved to adjourn the GDRSC at 7:25pm. The motion was seconded. Roll Call: Gilbert-aye; Kubick-aye; Raynor-aye; Cronin-aye

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT – Cont.

2. Mr. Haddad asked the Board for permission to install porta-toilets at each of the open fields at a cost of \$2,015 per location, per porta-toilet. Mr. Haddad said that they added that cost to their Cares Act funding, should this be approved. Mr. Degen said that because the Park Commission did not take this into account and would fall to their Police Department, he asked if they would be able to use the reserve officers to monitor the parks and further asked if it would be covered by the Cares Act. Chief Luth said that they had an obligation to offer OT to full-time staff first. Mr. Haddad suggested that they see what utilization of the Parks looked like first and see if they needed to add extra coverage. Mr. Delaney said that they had installed snow fencing at the playgrounds and basketball courts to keep people from using them. Ms. Manugian said she still had a lot of concerns about this and was interested to see how this went.

Mr. Haddad asked the Board to approve the installation of porta toilets at the four fields the Park Commission approved opening.

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

3. Mr. Haddad said that a new law was passed updating the Municipal Relief Act but nothing that really affected Groton. Mr. Haddad said that restaurants could open outdoor seating as part of Phase 2. Mr. Haddad talked about the liquor license requirements to serve alcohol outside. Attorney DeRensis suggested designating the Town Manager as the local licensing authority which would speed things up and allow restaurants to operate sooner.

Ms. Manugian moved to appoint the Town Manager as the temp Local Licensing Authority until expiration by law, language that was suggested by Town Counsel. Mr. Degen seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Reilly-aye; Degen-aye; Giger-aye

Mr. Haddad said that hotels and lodging could reopen, and driving ranges and libraries could also reopen as part of Phase 2.

4. Mr. Haddad said that they had been working on the MVP grant to fund the Broadmeadow Road/James Brook flooding issues. He provided the Board with a copy of the draft budget and summary. Mr. Haddad thanked Mr. Burke for leading the charge on this grant opportunity.
5. Mr. Haddad said that they were down 2 fulltime employees in the Highway Department. Mr. Haddad said that being down 2 employees was a huge hardship for the department and said that they really needed to get Mr. Delaney some help. Mr. Delaney said that he lost an employee last July, filled the position in October adding he had been again without some since December. He said that he also had an employee out on extended FMLA. He said that couple all this with childcare issues due to COVID, he said he was really short staffed most days. Ms. Manugian said that it made sense to fill this position given the microburst and COVID issues. Ms. Pine said that the Library and Police Department were short-staffed also and was concerned about those departments coming in to make their case. Mr. Haddad said that he was bringing this forward on a priority basis. He said that the Library was operating on a curbside basis right now and would have reduced hours when they opened. He said that he was not going to bring forward any positions within the police department even though they were going to be down an employee on July 1.

Mr. Robertson asked what this would do to the budget. Mr. Haddad said that these positions were already in the budget and were being fully funded right now. He said that the DPW position was a vacancy.

Mr. Degen moved to temporarily lift the hiring freeze to fill a vacancy in the Highway Department effective June 9, 2020 and replace the hiring freeze in effect after this appointment. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Reilly-aye; Degen-aye; Giger-aye

Mr. Haddad asked the Board to ratify his appointment of Wyatt Pepp from Dracut as a DPW Laborer effective June 16, 2020.

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

Mr. Haddad and Mr. Delaney thanked the Board for their support.

6. Chief Luth talked about parking issues at certain places within Town. He talked about Fitch's Bridge being used as a place for kids to hangout adding that the intent was as a means for access to the trails. He suggested posting along the Pepperell Road entrance as no-parking.

Chief Luth said that the next location was along Gibbet Hill to access Bancroft Castle. He said that they had people accessing the area in the middle of the night. He suggested closing off access in front of the gate to access the field and posting other areas as town zones. Mr. Degen asked about posting the private road as for those residents and authorized vehicles only.

Chief Luth said that Court Street was an engineering nightmare. He said that the road fluctuated in size the entire way down and didn't allow for parking on both sides the entire way down. Chief Luth suggested no parking along the right-hand side of the road which would also allow access to fire hydrants.

Chief Luth said that along Indian Hill Road there was also a narrow part of road that didn't allow for larger vehicles to get through when people were parked on either side.

Ms. Pine said that parking on the left-hand side of Court Street was essentially the wrong way even though it was a one way. Chief Luth said that where it was a one way, it was consistent with the law. Ms. Pine asked if the residents had been asked their feelings about this. Chief Luth said that he had not asked the residents and thought they would not be ecstatic about it. Ms. Pine asked if parking was available at Gibbet Hill restaurant to access the castle adding that was what she had heard. Ms. Manugian cautioned advertising this. Mr. Tada said that along the northside of the parking lot there was a designated area outlined in the conservation restriction for parking to access the trails. Ms. Pine said that trails had been highly used during the pandemic and thought that this may diminish once the pandemic went away.

Mr. Degen said that they needed to notify the residents on Court Street and asked if the Board agreed. Mr. Giger said that if was possible for Mr. Delaney and Chief Luth to look at a layout where no more than 2 cars be parked on either side. Chief Luth said that there was no designated-on street parking anywhere else in Town and would have to delineate parking spaces. Ms. Manugian said that parking on one side makes it easier and safer for the residents.

Ms. Pine moved to approve no parking zones and restrictions as prepared and laid out by Chief Luth for Fitch's Bridge. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Reilly-aye; Degen-aye; Giger-aye

Ms. Pine moved to approve no parking zones and restrictions as prepared and laid out by Chief Luth for Lowell Road/Bancroft Castle. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Reilly-aye; Degen-aye; Giger-aye

Ms. Pine moved to approve no parking zones and restrictions as prepared and laid out by Chief Luth for Indian Hill Road Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Reilly-aye; Degen-aye; Giger-aye

Ms. Pine moved to approve no parking zones and restrictions as prepared and laid out by Chief Luth for Court Street to begin on July 1, 2020 pending notification to the neighbors. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Reilly-aye; Degen-aye; Giger-aye

7. Chief Luth said that he had come to the Board a year ago to limit parking at Groton Place. He provided the Board with some statistics relative to this change in parking. He said that he was happy with the outcome of the changes.

Ms. Pine commended their police department adding people were grateful for their service.

8. Mr. Haddad said that a motion was made at their last meeting to open the pool at the Country Club adding the motion failed 3-2. He said that it was his interpretation that the pool would not open for the season but that wasn't the same interpretation for all. He said that they had received a number of emails from the community to reconsider opening the pool. Mr. Haddad said he wanted clarification from the Board adding Mr. Campbell had worked with Town Counsel today on a waiver should the Board decide they wanted to reconsider.

Ms. Manugian said that she was one person that didn't think the vote was for the entire season and was open to discussing this. Mr. Degen said he understood the concern of the public and understood how important it was to go to a pool during COVID this summer. Mr. Degen said he was still concerned about the use of the pool and the Town's liability. He said that he could go along with a 2-week trial to see if the protocols put into place and the waiver drafted by Town Counsel worked. He said that the adult signing the waiver needed to be the parent or subject to prosecution. Mr. Reilly said he voted to open the pool last week but thought there should be language about someone getting hurt also. Mr. Haddad said that the waiver would have that language. Ms. Pine said that the CDC was not clear in its protocols but thought that Mr. Campbell's protocols would meet all their recommendations. Mr. Giger said that he could kind of go along with Mr. Degen's thought but one thing that stood out strongly was the lounge chairs. He thought that they needed to go and be replaced with regular chairs only. Mr. Campbell said that the chairs were within the areas that the pool would be sectioned off. He said that the chairs would be disinfected after each use but that removing the chairs was not a dealbreaker. Mr. Degen said he would not support removing the lounge chairs. There was a discussion about adding this to next week's agenda to allow the Board time to review the protocols and the waiver.

9. Mr. Haddad said that Town Meeting was this Saturday, June 13th at 10am with a rain date of 1pm on Sunday, June 14th. Mr. Haddad reviewed protocols in place for Town Meeting. He said he thought they were in great shape and thought the Moderator had done a great job outing plans into place. Mr. Kauppi said that this plan conquered logistical changes.
10. Mr. Haddad said that they would have the draft housing production plan to review next week. He reviewed the Board's meeting schedule for the next few weeks.
11. Mr. Haddad encouraged the Board to review the Finance Committee's budget presentation online prior to the Town Meeting.

Mr. Degen moved to designate John Giger to continue signing the warrant through July 11, 2020 along with the Town Manager. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Reilly-aye; Degen-aye; Giger-abstain

LIAISON REPORT

Ms. Pine said that the Non-Profit council had a great meeting virtually last week.

Mr. Degen said that he attended the School Committee meeting last week adding Dunstable was recommending the Town not meet the needs of the District. He said that the District would need to operate on a 1/12 budget until Dunstable approved the budget. He said that this might mean that the District would need to call for a super town meeting.

Mr. Giger said he attended the Sewer Commission meeting as well as the Park Commission meeting.

MINUTES

Mr. Degen moved to approve the minutes of June 1, 2020 as written. Mr. Giger seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Reilly-aye; Giger-aye

Ms. Manugian adjourned the meeting at 9:05pm.

Approved: _____
John Reilly, Clerk

_____ respectfully submitted:
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: