

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
VIRTUAL MEETING  
MONDAY, JULY 13, 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; Melisa Doig, HR Director; Patricia Dufresne, Town Accountant; Jonathan Greeno, Principal Assistant Assessor; Michael Hartnett, Tax Collector/Treasurer; Mike Luth, Police Chief; Officer Casey O'Connor; Laura Chesson, Superintendent; Sherry Kersey, GSRSD Business Manager; Michael Bouchard, Town Clerk; Nik Gualco, Conservation Administrator; Cheney Harper, Sargisson Beach Committee Member; Alex Woodle; Finance Committee Members: Mary Linskey; Bud Robertson; Art Prest; Scott Whitefield; Gary Green; David Manugian; School Committee Members: Marlena Gilbert; Brian LeBlanc; Rafael Glod; Fay Raynor

Mr. Robertson call the Finance Committee to order at 7:00pm.

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

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Haddad introduced Officer Casey O'Connor to the Police Department and explained her journey through the Academy. He said that they were excited to bring Officer O'Connor on board. Officer O'Connor thanked everyone for having her adding she was looking forward to joining the department full time.

Mr. Prest thanked Mr. Haddad for all his hard work during this unprecedented time and thought they were lucky to have him.

Ms. Pine announced the forum that was being held next Monday, July 20, 2020 at 7pm to discuss their Town, Police Department and proposed police reform.

Ms. Gilbert called the GDRSC to order at 7:05pm.

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

1. Mr. Haddad said that they received an email last night from Alex Woodle about a couple of things he had seen going on at Sargisson Beach and his concerns. Mr. Woodle said that he was kayaking yesterday and saw a horse swimming near Sargisson Beach, that there were powerboats beached and dogs running loose all at the beach. He said he was also concerned that there were no porta toilets at the beach.

Mr. Haddad said that because the beach was officially closed, there were no protocols for NABH to test the water at Sargisson Beach. Ms. Manugian asked if NABH could test the water if the beach was swim at your risk. Mr. Gualco said he hadn't specifically asked that but thought that if the beach wasn't open the testing wouldn't be done. Mr. Gualco said that they received two applicants for Park Ranger and would be interviewing candidates shortly. Mr. Giger asked if they posted somewhere that the beach wasn't being tested. Mr. Gualco said that there were three signs posted that said there were no life guards and that the beach wasn't being tested. Ms. Harper said that they should come up with some regulations that horses not be allowed at the beach. Mr. Gualco said that dogs were allowed on the beach but needed to be leashed and they needed to stay out of the swimming area.

Ms. Pine said that the Conservation Commission or Sargisson Beach Committee should come up with some rules about horses in the public water bodies. She said that it was bad behavior, but that the Ranger wouldn't have stopped it because of the hour of the day adding she didn't think that changing any decisions about opening or closing Sargisson Beach was going to change anything. Mr. Haddad said he thought that the Select Board could make a decision to ban horses and dogs from the beach under their local state of emergency. Mr. Haddad said that under the non-criminal disposition, the police could fine people for not obeying the rules.

*Mr. Degen moved that they adopt a no horses at the beach policy and that people found to be in violation of this could be fined by the Police Department under non-criminal disposition. Ms. Pine seconded the motion.*

Ms. Manugian said she wasn't sure how horses were any different from dogs. She said that the beach either needed to be open for testing, porta toilets, etc. or shut down completely.

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

*Mr. Degen moved that they authorize the Town Manager through the Conservation Administrator to have a porta toilet installed in the parking lot and cleaned daily at Sargisson Beach. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Manugian-aye; Reilly-aye; Giger-aye*

*Mr. Degen moved to authorize the Town Manager to investigate water quality testing on a weekly basis at Sargisson Beach and to hire a testing facility for a fee not to exceed \$1,500 through Labor Day or hire NABH to do so if they are willing to. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Manugian-aye; Reilly-aye; Giger-aye*

Mr. Degen said that if in two weeks things hadn't improved, he would be making a motion to close down the beach and parking area.

### **CARES ACT/COVID FUNDING**

Mr. Haddad talked briefly about the three plans the district had to come up with to comply with the Department of Education. Mr. Haddad reviewed funds left in Cares Act funding and explained that the needs of NVTHS was going to be around \$25K preliminarily. Mr. Haddad said that he was estimating about \$750K in free cash, that unexpended tax capacity was about \$295,000, that stabilization was at \$2M, that the capital stabilization fund had \$554K and GDRSD's capital stabilization was \$234K. Ms. DuFresne said that there was \$196K left in this year's free cash. Mr. Haddad said that the \$750K included the \$196K.

There was a brief discussion about concerns over unknowns relating to tax revenue and the possibility that residents may have trouble paying their tax bills because of continued layoffs.

Dr. Chesson reviewed categories of expenses they were looking at for the upcoming school year to include safety and PPE, technology, training, special education and staffing. She reviewed and outline of preliminary costs they were anticipating needing to cover the models they were drafting. Mr. Haddad said that those known and estimated costs totaled \$1.4M. Dr. Chesson said that there were additional items that they didn't have estimated for yet also. Dr. Chesson said that after FEMA grants and the allotment of funds from the Governor, they were looking at a \$945K shortfall. Ms. Gilbert said that the added positions being proposed were temporary positions but that they would have to anticipate unemployment once the temporary status was no longer needed. Dr. Chesson said that they had not factored in unemployment costs. Ms. Linskey asked for some clarification on technology and storage costs that they had estimated already and those same not yet estimated yet. Mr. Degen asked what type of buy in they had from the teachers with the models and asked how they planned for coverage if there was a sickness or outbreak. Dr. Chesson said that they would match up at risk teachers with at risk students as an example. She said there was additional guidance coming out this week on in school learning vs. hybrid learning vs. remote learning. Mr. Degen said that they needed to look at what capital could be deferred and possibly use a town meeting vote to use the GDRSD capital stabilization fund to help the schools with their needs. Mr. Prest said he was concerned they would see a COVID monster in Groton if they send the children back to school.

Mr. Haddad said that the Town Department heads were putting together estimates for COVID related funding on the Town side. He said that he was recommending that they provide the district with \$600K to help with their costs. Mr. Giger asked if the temporary employees could be 1099 employees and if not, were they entitled to benefits. Dr. Chesson said that they were not 1099 employees and benefit costs were included in their estimates.

Ms. Gilbert said that it would be helpful for the Superintendent to have an idea from the Town on how much money would be available to them. Mr. Haddad said he would like to recommend that they set aside \$600K of Cares Act money for the schools district, \$245K in unexpended tax capacity and \$234K in GDRSD capital stabilization, to be brought to Town Meeting for a vote to appropriate, so that the District would have about \$1.1M from Groton to help with COVID related costs. Mr. Degen said he was fine with the Cares Act money being recommended, but thought they needed to leave a 10% contingency for the Town, should the municipality need it. He said he was not okay taxing the unexpended tax capacity at this time. Mr. Haddad said he wanted to make as much money as possible available to the District. Mr. Degen suggested waiting on the unexpended tax capacity.

Mr. Giger said that if they were going to set an amount that night, they needed to set an amount for Nashoba Tech also. He said he agreed with Mr. Degen's concerns about taxing the unexpended tax capacity.

*Mr. Degen moved to designate \$650K of Cares Act funding for the GDRSD. Mr. Giger seconded the motion. Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye*

Dr. Chesson thanked the Town for their support with this adding nothing about this was comfortable.

*Mr. Giger made a motion to set aside \$25K for Nashoba Tech out of the Cares Act money. Mr. Degen seconded the motion. Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye*

#### **INTERMUNICIPAL AGREEMENT – FLORECNCCE ROCHE**

Mr. Haddad said that the School District had a AA bond rating whereas the Town had a AAA bond rating. He said that the interest difference would total about \$3.2M for the Florence Roche project based on the bond rating difference. He said that the Town of Groton taxpayers would be responsible for this debt. He said that bond counsel wrote the intermunicipal agreement and was recommending that the school district and town sign the agreement so the Town could move forward with the bonding when appropriate. Mr. Robertson asked if there was any liability on the Town side if the Town owned the building. Mr. Degen said that they needed to ask Town Counsel to look at this. Ms. Pine said they should go ahead and do this adding it was a huge savings for the Town. Mr. Haddad said he was comfortable with the draft provided by bond counsel but agreed that Town Counsel and Counsel of the District review it as well based on the suggestion by Mr. Degen.

#### **POLLING LOCATION – NOVEMBER ELECTION**

Mr. Haddad said that they wanted to ask the School Committee if it would be possible to use the Middle School as a polling location for the November 3rd presidential election. He said this request would require the School District to close schools that day. He said that the statistics showed that that the three polling locations in place now would not accommodate an 85% turnout anticipated for the upcoming presidential election. Ms. Gilbert said she had no issue with working collaboratively with the Town on this one. Ms. Pine said she supported this idea but thought they should look at it on a permanent basis. Mr. Degen suggested moving all precincts to the middle school. The Board would wait to hear from the School District.

The School Committee adjourned by unanimous roll call vote at 9:14pm.

#### **TOWN MANAGER'E REPORT - CONT.**

2. Mr. Haddad reviewed the proposed line item transfers for FY20 totaling \$135,901.15 as provided to the Board in their packet.

*Mr. Robertson moved that the Finance Committee accept the line item transfers as proposed by the Town Manager. Mr. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call: Linskey-aye; Whitefield-aye; Robertson-aye; Green-aye; Robertson-aye*

*Ms. Pine moved to accept the proposed line transfers for year ending FY20. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Reilly-aye; Giger-aye*

3. Mr. Haddad said that the pool had been open for a couple of weeks now adding they had no problems what-so-ever. Mr. Haddad reviewed the pool utilization since reopening. Mr. Haddad said that because they had not been filling all reservations, they would like to open the pool to non-residents too. He said that for the first hour of each day, reservations would be solely for Groton residents and non-residents could reserve time after that first hour. Ms. Carol Wright said that they had only been at capacity one time since they opened the pool. She said that there were 12 squares of seating that could be reserved. Ms. Pine said she was okay with opening this up to non-residents but asked if they could open it up for grandparents to bring their grandchildren. Mr. Degen said he didn't want to open it up to non-residents. He said that they were already 1/2 way through July and didn't think the risk reward was there. Ms. Pine said that the protocols were in place to protect public health. She said that there was revenue potential they were not able to capitalize on if they didn't open it to non-residents.

*Ms. Pine moved to extend the opportunities to make a reservation to Groton families that included grandparents bringing their grandchildren and residents of other towns and that non-residents be included in the reservation system. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion.*

Mr. Giger said that they needed to figure out wording on the waivers so that grandparents could bring their grandchildren. Ms. Manugian asked if this was addressing an issue. Mr. Giger said it was an issue about numbers for the Country Club. Mr. Degen said he understood trying to help the books but it wasn't all about profit. Mr. Haddad said that the Board authorized a capacity number, allowed them to have lifeguards with protocols in place but that use by Groton residents only wasn't being utilized fully.

*Ms. Pine withdrew her original motion and moved that they allow families that include people that do not live permanently in Groton to access the pool as long as they meet the protocols and must sign the liability waiver. Mr. Degen seconded the motion.*

Mr. Giger asked how many requests there had been. Ms. Wright said she had had 10-15 requests from non-residents about allowing this.

*Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Reilly-aye; Pine-aye; Degen-nay; Giger-nay. The motion passed 3-2 in favor.*

*Ms. Pine moved to allow people who do not live in Groton use of the pool with the same rules as Groton residents but during a later timeslot. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion.*

Mr. Degen said that they were opening a can of worms if they voted for this. Ms. Pine asked if they were limiting golf to just Groton residents. Mr. Giger said that they took risk in opening the pool adding it seemed to be going well but that he could not vote to add to their risk.

*Roll Call: Manugian-nay; Degen-nay; Giger-nay; Pine-aye; Reilly-aye. The motion failed 3-2 against.*

4. Mr. Haddad said he didn't see a need to change their COVID protocols at Town Hall with the exception of allowing Town Hall employees to bring takeout food into Town Hall to consume at their desk.
5. Mr. Haddad said that they instituted a 14-day quarantine for those that travel outside of new England, New York and New Jersey. He said that they currently had a couple of employees who were quarantining due to travel adding if an employee was able to work from home during those 14 day, that they would allow them to do that.
6. Mr. Haddad said that the Governor removed the statewide ban on reusable bags at stores. Mr. Giger said they needed to discuss their new bag bylaw when the use of plastic bags was removed completely adding their local bylaw was supposed to take effect on July 1, 2020.

7. Mr. Haddad said that there was some confusion over employees at the Transfer Station wearing masks. He said that if the employees were close to the public, they would wear masks but if they were not close to employees or the public, and were able to socially distance, they weren't required to wear masks.
8. Mr. Haddad said it was time to call for the 2020 Fall Town Meeting. He asked the Board to call for the Fall Town Meeting to occur on Saturday, October 3, 2020 with the warrant to open that evening and close on Thursday, August 6, 2020. Mr. Haddad said that the Town Meeting would be held outside on the field behind Florence Roche as they had done for the Spring Town Meeting,

*Mr. Degen moved to open the 2020 Fall Town Meeting warrant effective tonight, Monday, July 13, 2020 and close it on Thursday, August 6, 2020 at the end of the business day. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Reilly-aye; Manugian-aye; Giger-aye*

*Mr. Degen moved to call for the 2020 Fall Town Meeting on Saturday, October 3, 2020 at 10:00am with a rain date of Sunday, October 4, 2020 at 1:00pm. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Reilly-aye; Manugian-aye; Giger-aye*

9. Mr. Haddad said it was time to start the annual review of the Town Manager. He asked the Chair to certify that all board members could participate and to ask the Town Manager to start his self-evaluation. Ms. Manugian certified the members and asked Mr. Haddad to complete his section of the review.
10. Mr. Haddad said that a resident had approached the office about changing the name of Redskin Trail as it was found to be racist. He said that a couple of residents they had heard from did not want to see the roads name changed. He said that the problem with changing the name of a street required a lot of behind the scenes things by the residents, such as changing checks, statements, etc. He said that the only costs for the Town would be to change the street sign, file the name change at the Registry of Deeds and update plans. He asked the Board for their thoughts.

Ms. Pine said she would like to explore ways to change the road name but thought they should hear from all the residents. Ms. Pine said she didn't think it was something they should unilaterally change and suggested that they ask the residents to do it. Mr. Haddad said that the resident did not want to file it and thought the Town should and consume all costs. Mr. Giger said it was important that they get down on paper exactly what fees that Town would pay for. Ms. Manugian said it would only be the fees as described by the Town Manager. Mr. Haddad said it would include recording plans, registry costs, updated GIS maps and maps for the Police and Fire Departments and street signs. Mr. Degen said that this street name was a derogatory name but asked where this would end. He said that part of the charge of the Diversity Task Force could be to look at all street names. Ms. Manugian said that that made sense.

11. Mr. Haddad reviewed the schedule of the Board for the next couple of weeks. There was a discussion about Select Board goals and Town Manager goals coming up on July 29th. Mr. Degen said he didn't see any need to have separate goals adding that the Town Manager always helped them work to complete their goals.
12. Mr. Haddad asked for approval for the Town Manager and a member of the Select Board to sign the warrants for the next 30 days. Mr. Degen offered to sign the warrants with the Town Manager. Ms. Manugian thanked Mr. Giger for taking on this task for the last few months.

*Ms. Pine moved to authorize Josh Degen to sign the warrants with the Town Manager through August 13, 2020. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Reilly-aye; Manugian-aye; Giger-aye*

### **ON-GOING ISSUES**

B: Mr. Haddad said that the sprinkler system contractor was mobilizing on the Prescott School the next day.

H: Mr. Haddad said that the generator at the Highway Garage had been installed. He said that the lawn needed to be re-seeded and the final coat needed to be placed on the driveway to finish the project. He said that they could plan an open house post COVID.

**MINUTES**

Ms. Pine moved to approve the minutes of June 29, 2020 as corrected. Mr. Giger seconded the motion. *Roll Call: Pine-aye; Reilly-aye; Manugian-aye; Giger-aye; Degen-abstain*

Ms. Manugian adjourned the meeting at 10:09pm.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Rebecca H. Pine, Clerk

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

Date Approved: 7/27/2020