

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
VIRTUAL MEETING
MONDAY, AUGUST 31, 2020
APPROVED**

SB Members Virtually Present: Alison S. Manugian, Chair; Joshua A. Degen, Vice Chair; Rebecca H. Pine, Clerk; John R. Giger, Member; John F. Reilly, 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; Finance Committee Members – Bud Robertson, Mary Linskey; Anna Eliot; Peter Cunningham; Carolyn Perkins; Gregg Yanchenko

Ms. Manugian called the meeting to order at 7:01pm and reviewed the agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Haddad said that he sent out a couple of emails that afternoon for additions to the agenda and reviewed those.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad said that he wanted to remind the public that tomorrow, September 1, 2020 was Election Day and reviewed the precincts. He said that the Town Hall and the Center would be closed on Tuesday for employees and also closed on Wednesday for a deep clean. He said that all Town employees would be working remotely those 2 days.
2. Mr. Haddad said that he had appointed Ed Cataldo as Building Commissioner beginning on Sept 9. Mr. Degen said he understood the open ended-ness of the appointment because of COVID but thought they could end it on December 31 and go from there.

Mr. Degen moved to ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Ed Cataldo as Building Commissioner for the stipend of \$1,200 monthly from September 9, 2020 through December 31, 2020. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Giger-aye; Manugian-aye; Reilly-aye

3. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to ratify his appointment of Cooper Wyman as Country Club golf staff.

Ms. Pine made the motion. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Mr. Giger asked if this was a seasonal position. Mr. Haddad said it was. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Giger-aye; Manugian-aye; Reilly-aye

4. Mr. Haddad said that at their last meeting the Select Board asked for a breakdown of revenues they took in from Transfer Station. Mr. Haddad reviewed a comparison showing income/expenses for the last 3 fiscal years. Mr. Haddad said that the volatility of making this an enterprise fund was what had caused them to keep it a town department and not an enterprise fund. Mr. Degen said that FY18 was a little better than break even while FY19 and FY20 had negative trends. He said he would like to see an enterprise fund explored. Ms. Manugian agreed but didn't feel strongly about making it an enterprise fund. Mr. Haddad said that to make it an enterprise fund, increasing fees would push more people away from transfer station to private hauler adding he would do the analysis and come back to the Board.
5. Mr. Haddad said he put together a preliminary meeting schedule for the Board through the beginning of 2021. He said that he would work with the Chair to fill in potential agenda items.

WARRANT PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Degen moved to reopen the hearing on the warrant. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Giger-aye; Manugian-aye; Reilly-aye

Mr. Haddad said he updated his memo on warrant articles. He said that the reserve account balances had not changed.

Article 1 - Mr. Haddad said that there were no unpaid bills at this time and asked the Board to defer to Town Meeting.

Article 2- Mr. Haddad said article 2 proposed amendments to the operating budget and had not changed since last week's discussion. He reviewed the amounts being requested. He said that the total being requested was \$86,620 coming from various funding accounts. *The Board unanimously supported this article.*

Article 3 - Mr. Haddad said that article 3 would update the classification schedule for a few positions that had not been updated with the 2% increase budgeted for. *The Board unanimously supported this article.*

Article 4 – *Pine, Reilly; Giger; Manugian-support; Degen-no position*

Article 5 – *The Board unanimously supported this article.*

Article 6 - *Pine, Reilly; Giger; Manugian-support; Degen-no position*

Article 7 - Mr. Haddad said he changed his position on this and was supporting Mr. Robertson's argument. He asked the Board to not add money to the Capital stabilization fund. Mr. Degen suggested they withdraw the article. Ms. Manugian said she didn't feel strongly. Mr. Degen said that they could indefinitely postpone the article should something come up. *The Board unanimously supported indefinitely postponing this article.*

Article 8 - Mr. Haddad said that they could move to indefinitely postpone this also. The Board agreed.

Article 9 - Mr. Haddad said that the school committee agreed with leaving money in free cash like the Town's capital. The Board agreed to indefinitely postpone this.

Article 10 - Mr. Haddad said that the library roof proceeds could be used toward the police station siding and roof repairs. He said that \$146K would be coming out of free cash and the remaining \$50K from library roof proceeds. Mr. Degen said that he took a look at the parking lot at the library and thought that the parking lot could be pushed off for a couple of years. He said that sealing of the cracks could be done to help the lot for the next few years. Mr. Haddad said he could break this out into two motions if need be. Mr. Robertson said it was an old parking lot but didn't think it should be done this year in order to save the cash. Ms. Pine said that bringing this to Town Meeting would start a larger discussion about the road leading up to 119 owned by LA. Ms. Pine said she was happy with holding off on the parking lot.

The Board decided to make these 2 motions; one for the cruiser, siding and roof repairs and truck; the other for the parking lot. *The Board was unanimous for the first part and hold off on part 2 until September 14th.*

Article 11 - Ms. Pine said she would like to see them utilize a position in the highway department part time instead of hiring an additional employee. *Mr. Degen deferred to September 14th as well as Ms. Pine. Manugian, Reilly and Giger supported this article.*

Article 12 - Ms. Pine said she supported this article Mr. Robertson said he would like to see them hold off adding this wasn't the year to do this. Ms. Manugian said that the roof was in ill repair and possible exterior contamination could occur because of that. Mr. Cunningham said that the condition of the building continued to deteriorate which caused concern in the brook that ran right by there. Mr. Cunningham said that there was grant money that they just heard about and were looking into whether they would qualify for a brownfield grant through the MRPC. Mr. Giger said that they should exhaust grant opportunities first. Mr. Degen said he supported what Mr. Haddad was saying. Mr. Reilly said he thought the Town would own this property no matter what and didn't think they should hold off on this. *Manugian supported this; Pine supported this; Degen-deferred. Reilly supported this; Giger-deferred.*

Article 13 – *The Board unanimously supported this article.*

Article 14 - *The Board unanimously supported this article.*

Article 15 - *The Board unanimously supported this article.*

Article 16 -

A: Manugian - defer to Town Meeting; Giger; Reilly; Pine; Degen - support

B: Pine, Degen, Giger, Reilly - support; Manugian-did not support. Mr. Degen said that to have \$750-1M allowed the Conservation Commission the ability to purchase land taken out of chapter land and avoid the necessity to go to Town Meeting. He said that the Commission had done an exemplary job assessing land potential and being good stewards of the money. He said that the influx of cash was a necessity. Ms. Manugian said she didn't disagree but that this money wouldn't give them enough to do anything with and only tied up money. Mr. Degen said that this would help build their account back up.

C: *The Board unanimously supported this article.*

D: *The Board unanimously supported this article.*

E: *The Board unanimously supported this article.*

F: *Manugian, Degen did not support this. Pine, Reilly, Giger supported this.*

G: Ms. Eliot said that what started this project was the traffic concerns at Cow Pond. Ms. Eliot said that they wanted to bring the storage and sanitary facilities up to code, improve the parking area and locate a new well. She said that this would include a feasibility study and design of this facility. Mr. Yanchenko said that this was one of the most used facilities in town and explained the process. Mr. Degen said he agreed fundamentally with this but wanted to know if this would be administered through RFP, etc. Mr. Yanchenko said that design services would be selected through an RFP. Ms. Manugian asked why all 3 phases were being asked for now. Mr. Yanchenko said that a firm would go through all 3 phases typically. Ms. Manugian said she had a lot of concerns as a parent having been to other facilities that weren't either opened, dirty, etc. She asked if this had been part of the capital plan and if the Capital Planning Committee had been consulted. Mr. Haddad said he didn't understand how it got an out of cycle application adding he was not sure what capital plan this was on. He said he didn't see the urgency of this and had not vetted this out. Ms. Eliot said that part of the recommendation from the out of cycle was because of the storm damage to the shed. Mr. Haddad said that a walking track proposed back in 2012 was the only capital item brought to his attention which ultimately didn't go anywhere.

Mr. Degen said he had never heard about a well or egress issues when he first spoke with Ms. Eliot. Ms. Eliot said that when they brought the user groups, they were the ones that mentioned other items needing attention. Mr. Degen said he did not support this. Ms. Manugian was against this. Ms. Pine said she agreed with some of the points made. She deferred her position. Mr. Reilly said he was worried about the cost to the Town and liked the idea of cutting this up into pieces. He said he was concerned about the way it came forward. Mr. Reilly said he could not support this. Mr. Giger said he supported this adding they needed a comprehensive plan. Mr. Giger said that this was one of the most valuable services that they provided to the town and its children. He said there was a community wide benefit to this. Mr. Degen said he understood Mr. Giger's sentiment but he had major exception with coming in under an emergency application and ballooning the way it had. He urged the Select Board to vote to not support and for the CPC to reconsider the urgency of this.

H: Ms. Perkins said that she was a new member but said this project was something being done around the State. She said that any unused funds would be returned to the CPC at the end of the project need. Ms. Manugian asked if the AHT had talked to the Commissioner of Trust Funds. Ms. Pine said that Ms. Stanley had contacted the Commissioners but said that because it would be CPC funds, it would not be right for the Commissioners to administer the funds. Mr. Haddad said that there were several agencies out there that would help run the program for the AHT. Ms. Manugian asked how the end date was selected. Ms. Pine said that they CPC had most projects run for a two-year running time as was recommended by them adding they wanted to make sure they were available as long as possible for the pandemic to end and people to get back on their feet potentially. Ms. Manugian asked what parameters were discussed to only make this for rental assistance. Ms. Pine said that the State had promoted rental assistance programs and use of CPC money for it. Mr. Haddad said he liked this program. Mr. Reilly asked what made this an emergency. Ms. Perkins said that the pandemic was an emergency which made this a viable emergency application.

The Board unanimously supported this.

Ms. Pine asked for a letter of support from the Board and made a motion for such and to authorize the Town Manager to sign it on behalf of the Board. Mr. Degen seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Manugian-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye

Article 17 - *The Board unanimously supported this.*

Article 18 – *The Board deferred to Town Meeting.*

Article 19 – *Degen was at Town Meeting; Pine, Manugian, Giger, Reilly supported this.*

Article 20 – *Pine was at Town Meeting, Degen was a no; Manugian, Giger, Reilly supported this. Mr. Degen said this went against their zoning requirements but would support this if it was to renovate an existing barn or garage on the lot.*

Article 21 - *The Board unanimously supported this.*

Article 22 - *Mr. Haddad asked the Board to defer to Town Meeting.*

Mr. Haddad said he sent the Board an email this afternoon adding that the Diversity Task Force met last week and requested that Groton add a warrant article to remove its designation as a sundown town. He said that this was not at all the case in Groton but would like Town Meeting to make this symbolic vote. Mr. Haddad explained what a sundown town was. Mr. Degen said that this was not symbolic but in the books. He said it should have never occurred and should be stricken from the records. Mr. Reilly said that this was embarrassing and asked how it was found. Mr. Degen said he found it and had wanted a diversity task force for years because of things like this. He said he wanted Groton to be the welcoming community that it was. Mr. Giger asked when the original vote was taken on this. Mr. Haddad said he was researching this still. Mr. Degen said he agreed to a certain point but that a warrant article could be crafted in such a way in case they didn't find a date before then.

Mr. Haddad said that the second requested addition to the warrant was to petition the State to amend the Charter to allow the Town Manager and one Select Board member to sign off on all warrants. Mr. Haddad said that all Select Board members received the warrants from the Accounting Department adding the proposal would be one member and the Town Manager to sign off on them. Ms. Manugian said she was comfortable voting to continue to do this right now but wasn't sure she supported the change. She said she could support a change a quarterly, twice annually or annually vote. Mr. Giger said he didn't see a need to have everyone sign these. Mr. Giger said a 90-day period might make sense and would rotate through the Board. Ms. Pine said that Mr. Giger's suggestion was a good one but could not support this. She didn't think this was important enough to bring it forward to the legislature at this time. Mr. Degen said that he could not support this.

Mr. Degen moved to open the warrant. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Manugian-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye

Mr. Haddad asked the Board to authorize that the sundown town article be added to the warrant. Mr. Degen made the motion and asked that proper wording be added as discussed earlier. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Manugian-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye

Mr. Degen moved to close the 2020 fall warrant. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Manugian-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye

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

TOWN MANAGERS REPORT – cont.

- 6. Mr. Degen moved to extend the signing authority on the warrants to the Town Manager and Mr. Reilly for the next 30 days. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Manugian-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-abstain*

ONGOING ISSUES

Mr. Haddad asked if the Board authorized the Chair of the Board to sign the IMA for the Flo Ro bonding.

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

Mr. Haddad said that the Board had the final Town Manager review and needed to finalize it. Ms. Manugian said that all 5 members were eligible to review the Town Manager. She said that the ratings went from 85 to 150 points. She said that the combined rating put the Town Manager at an outstanding rating. She reviewed some of the categories in which the Board rated him. She said it had been a great year and thanked him for his service over the past year. Ms. Pine said that many aspects of the new form were a huge improvement. She said she realized that this process did not allow for discussion that would be useful. She said that there was a range of levels and for her would have appreciated having an understanding of someone else's reasoning. Mr. Degen said he heard what she was saying but because he was one that couldn't find time to write comments because of personal things going on, his numbers reflected his comments. He said that Mr. Haddad had had the best year ever and didn't require any comments. Mr. Haddad said that he had always seen his review as individual members having their own opinions of his performance without being influenced by other members. He said he liked it being independent and the way it was. He praised his department heads adding they were the best in the state. He said that Ms. Dunbar was the best assistant he had ever had and would be remiss if her didn't recognize her. Ms. Manugian said she heard what Ms. Pine was saying and appreciated her comments but wasn't sure there was a way. Mr. Giger suggested members review the guidelines for reviewing managers under the OML.

Mr. Degen moved to approve the Town Manager's evaluation for the 18-month period ending June 30, 2020 and file it with the Town Clerk as a public record. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Manugian-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye

Ms. Manugian adjourned the meeting at 9:33pm.

Approved: _____
Rebecca H. Pine, Clerk

_____ respectfully submitted:
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 09/14/2020