

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
VIRTUAL MEETING
MONDAY, OCTOBER 5, 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; Michael Hartnett, Tax Collector/Treasurer; Tom Delaney, DPW Director; Bud Robertson;

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Pine said that the Town Clerk would be speaking about voting in Groton on October 6th at 6pm via Zoom.

Mr. Bouchard said that they just received ballots from the State that day and would be mailing them out later that week.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad said that the Town continued to operate within the COVID protocols adding that the second round of Cares Act funding requirements had just been released.
2. Mr. Haddad said that with respect to Halloween, he and the Police Chief were recommending that door to door trick or treating not be allowed this year due to the uptick in cases they were seeing in Groton. Mr. Haddad said that the CDC guidelines were followed when making this recommendation. Chief Luth said that they went over 6 weeks with no cases but had seen 8 new cases since August 21st. He said that the uptick would continue through Halloween based on the trends. Mr. Haddad said that the CDC was saying that traditional trick or treating was considered a high-risk activity. Mr. Giger asked if the CDC guidelines were posted on the Town's website and if not, he thought it should be. Ms. Pine said she thought they should make a strong statement that door to door trick or treating not be allowed adding this could not be done safely. Ms. Manugian said she agreed adding that communities around them were cancelling and didn't want to risk seeing those communities come to Groton if they didn't cancel.

Ms. Pine moved that the Select Board, under their emergency orders, prohibit door to door trick or treating this year. Mr. Degen seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Reilly-aye; Giger-aye; Manugian-aye

Mr. Haddad explained that Groton had gone from a gray designation community to a green community based on the data from the State. Mr. Haddad said that because they were not a red community, they were allowed to move into Step 2 of Phase 3. Mr. Haddad said that unless the Board had an objection, they would be moving into this step. He outlined what was allowed under this phase and step. Ms. Pine asked about pickleball at the Senior Center and Prescott School. Mr. Haddad said he would have to check on this but thought it might be allowed. Ms. Manugian said that they seemed to be moving in the wrong direction and cautioned people to continue wearing their masks.

FLORENCE ROCHE BUILDING PROJECT PRESENTATION

Meryl Nistler from Studio G Architects was present along with other team members, Sylvia Mihich from Studio G, David Saindon, Eileena Long and Brian Dakin from Leftfield.

Ms. Nistler explained the MSBA process and the 8 modules they needed to go through to get them to the final product. She outlined the ways in which they had engaged the community thus far. She said that they would be improving the site to include improved pick up/drop off, an outdoor, age appropriate playground, opportunity for natural play and teaching gardens and a playing field with walking paths for community access. She said that it would be built for 530 students but designed for 645 students, and house grades K-4/ She added that it would be a 109,800 sqft building, with room for 36 classrooms and additional support spaces.

Sylvia Mihich explained the site plan and showed that the school would be pushed toward the back of the property behind the current school. Ms. Mihich explained the floor plans and the interior layout of the proposed building plans.

David Saindon with Leftfield explained the tax impact/debt service. He said that they used \$80M as the upper limit of the project with the town share being \$55M and the MSBA share being \$25M. He said that the first couple of years would be short-term borrowing. He said that additional estimates would be done in November which would further refine this number. Ms. Nistler pointed out the project website and directed people to it should they want additional information.

Ms. Manugian thanked the team for the presentation. Ms. Pine said she looked for the building plans on the website but could not find them. Ms. Nistler said that they could make them stand out more. Ms. Pine asked if there was a plan to replace the existing track. Ms. Manugian said that there was not adding there was a walking path proposed instead. Ms. Pine said it appeared that no trees for shade were proposed for the indoor learning area. Ms. Manugian said that the drawings were not completed yet but shade was being discussed. Ms. Pine said she didn't think there was enough space for nursing, guidance, and psychology. Mr. Degen said he liked the layout of the spaces and neighborhoods, the façade and the use of the outdoor learning lab. Mr. Degen said he saw traffic congestion occurring with the parent drop off area having only a one way in and out. He also cautioned the design team on putting in too much green landscape because of the lack of help to maintain it. Mr. Giger asked if they reached a point that they were looking at exterior lighting and cautioned them that they further back they moved the building the closer it got to residential housing. Ms. Nistler said that they had not. Mr. Saindon said it would be all led lighting but it had not been designed yet.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT – CONT.

3. Mr. Haddad said that they had a request from the Town Clerk to appoint two members to the Board of Registrars (one for a full three-year term and one for a two-year term to fill a vacancy on the Board). Mr. Haddad said that Jane Fry (a Democrat), who was first appointed to the Board in 2016 was up for reappointment. He said that he and the Town Clerk were recommending that Ms. Fry be reappointed to a three-year term to expire in 2023. He said that there was also a vacancy on the Board due to the fact that Sally Hensley had moved out of Town. Mr. Haddad said that the Board needed to appoint a registrar to fill this vacancy through 2022. Mr. Haddad said that State Law required that the members of the Board to represent the two leading parties, but no party could have more than two members. Mr. Haddad said that right now, there was one Democrat and one Republican on the Board adding that the Town Clerk was also a member, but was Unenrolled. Mr. Haddad said that the Select Board could appoint either a Democrat or Republican to fill this vacancy adding that the two parties had nominated individuals to serve on the Board of Registrars.

Town Clerk, Mike Bouchard said that he was recommending Jane Fry as she had served previously but was leaving the other vacancy up to the Board to fill. Mr. Bouchard said he didn't have an issue with any of the individuals and would be happy to have any of them serve. He added they were primarily an unenrolled Town. Ms. Pine said she was moving to fill the vacancy with a registered Democrat.

Ms. Pine moved to reappoint Jane Fry as a BOR with a term to end June 30, 2023. Mr. Degen seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Giger-aye; Manugian-aye; Reilly-aye

Ms. Pine moved to fill the vacancy with a registered Democrat with a term to expire June 30, 2022. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion.

Mr. Giger asked if it could be one Democrat, one Republican and 2 Unenrolled. Mr. Bouchard said that the statute said that 2 Unenrolled persons could not be appointed to the Board of Registrars adding he was Unenrolled. Mr. Degen said that the August 2020 numbers showed that the Democrats were almost double that of the Republicans. He said he was very comfortable appointing a democrat to the vacancy.

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

Mr. Reilly said he voted against this because they couldn't appoint an additional Unenrolled person. Mr. Giger said he agreed with Mr. Reilly.

Ms. Manugian asked if they had more information on the Democratic candidates. Mr. Bouchard said that they did not. Ms. Manugian asked if they had room to wait for additional information from the candidates. Mr. Degen said that they should not wait adding they had an election forthcoming.

Mr. Degen moved to appoint John Sopka to the Board of Registrars for a term to expire June 30, 2022. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call: Reilly-nay; Degen-aye; Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Giger-aye

4. Mr. Haddad said that the Town Clerk was recommending a temporary change in the polling locations for Precincts 2 and 3 for the State Election to be held on November 3, 2020. Mr. Haddad said that Section 11 of Chapter 115 of the Acts of 2020 allowed the Select Board to make this change at least 20 days prior to the Election. Mr. Haddad said that the Town Clerk was recommending that the Middle School North be the temporary location for Precincts 2 and 3.

Mr. Degen made the motion to temporarily change the polling location for precincts 2 and 3 to Middle School North. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Roll Call: Reilly-aye; Degen-aye; Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Giger-aye

GREAT PONDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE PRESENTATION

Jim Luening, Chair of the GPAC Committee called them to order at 8:32pm.

Mr. Luening said that Baddacook had 9 invasive weeds that were in the lake. He said that Solitude Lake Management was awarded the contract to supply a harvest operator, dump truck and driver to harvest the weeds. He said that 96 loads of weeds were cut this past year.

Mr. Alex Woodle said that there had been a tremendous increase in activity on Lost Lake/Knops Pond this year by kayaks and fishing tournaments. He said that they did their annual spot treatment in June. He said that they had a CPC application approved on Saturday to put out an RFP for another treatment next year.

Mr. Bob Anderson said that Duck Pond had a compressor installed that would feed the bottom of the pond oxygen fresh air. He said that the system worked adding the water quality tests were good. He said that they may need additional CPA funds to continue the process and would be exploring that.

TOWN MANAGERS REPORT-CONT.

5. Mr. Haddad thanked Ms. Dunbar and all the department heads for their help at Town Meeting on Saturday. Mr. Haddad said that they didn't have too much Town Meeting follow-up and reviewed those necessary items. He thanked Mr. Degen for showing how the consent agenda worked by holding an item for additional discussion and a separate vote. Mr. Giger said it was really important that the sidewalk efforts on Route 40 be extended to the castle entrance. Mr. Delaney said that there was designated parking at Gibbet Hill up to the castle. Mr. Giger suggested signage along Route 40 alerting people to the parking at Gibbet Hill.

Ms. Pine applauded those that had a role in making sure Town Meeting happen. Ms. Pine disagreed with the consent agenda for the CPA projects. She said that it was necessary this year but hoped they didn't put the CPA projects into a consent agenda when they got back to a more normal town meeting. She thought that they lost something by doing it this way. Mr. Reilly said he was impressed by the preparedness of the citizens at Town Meeting also. Mr. Degen thanked Ms. Dunbar, Mr. Haddad and all the department heads for everything. Mr. Degen said he had advocated for Saturday Town Meetings for a long time and thought they should strongly consider this as a permanent change.

6. Mr. Haddad said he sent the Board an email about the Stormwater Utility budget. He said that they based the fee on 4468 parcels with a fee of \$42.27. He said that they were preparing the bills today and double checked the parcel numbers and found that they only had 4008 parcels which would make the fee \$47.11. He said that parcels owned

by the Town and the Commonwealth were included and shouldn't have been. He asked the Board for their direction. Ms. Manugian asked how painful a \$20K reduction would be. Mr. Delaney said that they could probably shuffle some of the reporting off and back off on the consultant fees for a year or so. He said that some reporting needed to be done within a couple of years. Mr. Haddad said that the only downfall in not increasing the fees would mean a larger increase next year. Mr. Degen said that mistakes do happen but that he and Ms. Pine wanted to keep the fees as low as possible. Ms. Pine asked if they were sure all impervious parcels were counted. Mr. Haddad said that the Principal Assessor had gone through the list very carefully. Mr. Giger suggested splitting the \$10K over the next 2 years. Mr. Haddad asked if the Town should be paying fees on town owned parcels. Ms. Dufresne said that she thought they should because of past precedent. Mr. Haddad said that they could leave the fee at \$42.27 and budget for Town fees. He said he would need to find out what the budget difference was by adding town parcels and not Commonwealth parcels. Mr. Haddad said he would not over extend the budget and wanted to make sure that was clear. It was decided to leave the fee at \$42.27.

7. Mr. Haddad said that the Invasive Species Committee was recommending that Alison Hamilton and Ron Strohsahl be appointed to the Committee adding that the appointments would run through June 30, 2021. He respectfully requested that the Board consider making these appointments.

Mr. Degen made a motion to appoint Alison Hamilton and Ron Strohsahl to the Invasive Species Committee with a term to end June 30, 2021. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye; Degen-aye

8. Mr. Haddad reviewed the Board's schedule moving forward.

ON-GOING ISSUES

A: Mr. Haddad said that the sprinkler system was moving along at the Prescott School.

B: Mr. Haddad said that the Water Department was planning on coming to the Spring Town Meeting for the design portion of the manganese treatment facility upgrades. Mr. Giger said that the State had identified 6 different types of PFAS and thought they should put it on a list to pay attention to. Mr. Degen said that the Board of Health should be included also.

E: Mr. Haddad said that they were well underway on the Green Communities grant projects. He said that they would start looking at projects for the next round of funding over the winter.

G: Mr. Haddad said that once the final paving was done at the Highway Garage, he would provide the Board with a final accounting.

Mr. Haddad said that the Fire Department received delivery on Friday of the new Engine 3 which was very exciting.

Mr. Haddad said that COVID forced people to golf a lot this summer adding golf revenues were up over last year.

MINUTES

Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of September 21, 2020. Mr. Degen seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Manugian-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye

Ms. Manugian adjourned the meeting at 9:25pm.

Approved: _____
Rebecca H. Pine, Clerk

_____ respectfully submitted:
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 10/19/2020