

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
VIRTUAL MEETING  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 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; Jonathan Greeno, Principal Assessor; Bud Robertson, Finance Committee Chair; Paul DeRensis, Town Counsel; Bob Garside, Building Inspector; Michael Luth, Police Chief; Hannah Moller, Assistant Tax Collector/Treasurer; Andy McBride and Patrick Mannetho, Global Partners – 6 Boston Road; Kenny Patel, Groton Express, LLC – 6 Boston Road

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

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Haddad read a press release into the record about glass recycling.

Mr. Haddad read a notice about the annual Veteran's Day Observance from the Commemorations and Celebrations Committee.

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

1. Mr. Haddad said that he had changed the protocols the week prior to Town Hall being open to just employees and the public by appointment only. He asked people to email or call the department they were looking for to make an appointment or use the drop box at the rear of the building if there was something to be dropped off. Mr. Haddad talked about the new handsfree thermometer installed at the rear of the Town Hall, DPW Garage and Senior Center.
2. Mr. Haddad said that the Town of Groton had gone back to a gray status on the State newly updated COVID map. He said that they had 8 cases this past week which was an increase from the last 2 weeks. He said he would continue to monitor the report.
3. Mr. Haddad said that Section II (B) of the Agreement between Police Chief Michael Luth and the Town read as follows: *"The Select Board shall vote on or before January 1, 2021 at a Regular Meeting whether or not it intends to renew this Agreement for an additional term and shall give the Employee written notice of its decision on or before February 1, 2021. If such notice is not given, the Agreement shall be automatically renewed for a one-year period."* Mr. Haddad respectfully requested that the Board vote to notify Chief Luth of its intent to renew the Agreement for an additional term.

Ms. Pine said she was extremely pleased with Chief Luth's tenure so far citing this summer's forum as an example of this.

*Ms. Pine moved that they decide that it was their intention to enter into negotiations with Chief Luth for another contract. Mr. Degen seconded the motion.*

Mr. Degen asked the Chief if he would like to maintain his position. Chief Luth said he was very enthusiastically in favor of staying on as Chief.

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

4. Mr. Haddad said that Section I of the Agreement between the Town Manager and Town read as follows: *"The Select Board or the Town Manager may opt of years two and three of the contract. The party opting out of the contract must notify the other party in writing of their intention to opt out by December 31, 2019 (opt out after the first year) or December 31, 2020 (opt out after the second year)."* Mr. Haddad said that given the amount of work he was about

to undertake on FY 22 Budget Development and Union Negotiations, along with all the other job-related pressures, he respectfully requested that the Board make a decision now so that he could plan accordingly.

*Mr. Degen moved that the Select Board not exercise their option to opt out of the Town Manager's contract for the next year. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion.*

Ms. Pine said she had no interest in opting out adding that Mr. Haddad had done an excellent job leading the Town but thought it was useful if they included a more frequent check-in with the Town Manager as a Board.

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

5. Mr. Haddad reviewed the Board's schedule for the next few weeks.

### **LIQUOR LICENSE HEARING – 6 BOSTON ROAD**

*Mr. Degen moved to reopen the public hearing on the malt and wine license request for 6 Boston Road. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Reilly-aye; Giger-aye*

Andy McBride, Kenny Patel and Patrick Mannetho were present.

Mr. Haddad said that he drafted a draft decision, with the assistance of Town Counsel and Ms. Pine, for them to discuss and make a decision on this license request.

Ms. Manugian said that the primary concerns discussed at the last meeting were parking, traffic and the impact on the neighborhood. Mr. Reilly asked what the hours of operation were planned to be. Mr. Patel said that they were currently operating from 6am-8pm but would like to run from 5am-10/11pm.

Ms. Carol Swift from 23 Old Ayer Road said that the approval a few years back was no change in use of the station adding she saw this as a change. Ms. Manugian said that the opinion of the Building Commissioner was that this was not a change of use. Ms. Pine said that the abutters could appeal this as a potential change of use to the ZBA. She said that the special permit issued in 2013 controlled hours and use. She said that the hours were limited to a closing time at 9pm. Ms. Pine said that the parking requirements were still in effect as discussed by the Planning Board's site plan decision. Ms. Manugian said that because this was not a change of use, there would be no review by the ZBA or Planning Board. Ms. Pine added that unless it was appealed by the abutters. Ms. Pine said that there were many reasons they should deny this application.

*Mr. Giger moved that they do not approve the application. Ms. Pine seconded the motion.*

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

*Roll Call Vote on Mr. Giger's motion to deny the application. Mr. Degen said that they should approve the denial as drafted with the change forthcoming from Town Counsel and asked if Mr. Giger was willing to accept that as a friendly amendment. Mr. Giger was acceptable to the friendly amendment. Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Pine-aye; Reilly-aye; Degen-aye; Giger-aye*

### **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

Mr. Haddad said that he issued a memo last week for the Board to review relative to the re-organization in the Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office. Mr. Haddad reviewed the make-up of the office currently. Mr. Haddad said that Mr. Hartnett would like to retire at the end of the Fiscal Year and were at the point where they needed to look at the operation of the office after Mr. Hartnett retires. He said that he would like to propose promoting Ms. Hannah Moller to the position of Tax Collector/Treasurer, reclassify Ms. Nancy Amari's position, hire a part time clerk and keep Mr. Hartnett on as the Asst. Treasurer/Debt Manager. Mr. Haddad said he wouldn't make this recommendation if he wasn't comfortable with Ms. Moller's ability to perform the job.

Mr. Robertson said that the Personnel Board had revised the recruitment policy in 2017/2018. He said that the policy stated that advertising would be done unless the policy was waived because of a succession plan. Mr. Robertson said that a succession plan was done with the Principal Assessor, and the Building Commissioner, as added by Mr. Haddad. Mr. Robertson said that this process was not the same as those were. Mr. Robertson said that he didn't think this was following their policy and questioned if this was the right way. Mr. Haddad said that Ms. Moller had been working under Mr. Hartnett since day one. He said he was confident she could do the job today or in July. Mr. Robertson said that she could use other resources to get through the debt. Mr. Robertson asked what would happen when Mr. Hartnett left and asked when that was going to happen. Mr. Haddad said that they would hire an assistant treasurer when that time came.

Mr. Reilly asked what the cost savings was for not doing a search. Mr. Haddad said that they would spend a potential of \$5-10K to advertise this position. Ms. Manugian said she would hate to create a position they could potentially cut with the budget situation. Mr. Haddad said that under the new proposal, the hours would be reduced by 6 hours. Mr. Haddad said he would be leery to give up the part time clerk position as it would diminish the hours in the office. Ms. Manugian said she liked the idea of hiring within and didn't see this much different than the Building Commissioner position.

Mr. Robertson said that the hourly rate for Mr. Hartnett should be the same as he was making now which would be an extra savings. Ms. Pine said she generally thought this was a good idea but cautioned Mr. Haddad to wait until they were closer to knowing what the budget was before they move forward with this. Mr. Degen said that Mr. Hartnett had served the Town extremely well over the years. He said that Ms. Moller and Ms. Amari had also done an exceptional job. He said he had a major issue with keeping Mr. Hartnett on at \$50K but could see keeping him on as a consultant for an hourly rate. He said if Ms. Moller was ready for the position, that was the way to go. Mr. Degen said he could not approve this as is and had expressed his concerns to Mr. Haddad. Mr. Haddad said that he appreciated Mr. Degen coming forward with his concerns in advance of the meeting. Mr. Degen said that that was not a slight to Mr. Hartnett, but Mr. Hartnett had decided to retire. Mr. Haddad said that at Mr. Hartnett's currently hourly rate, they would be looking at an additional \$6-7K savings. Mr. Degen said he could support his hourly rate. Mr. Degen said he would like to be able to discuss this for the next few weeks. Mr. Giger said he was with Mr. Degen. He said that they didn't have a handle on the actual cost savings and was concerned that they hadn't thought out what they would do in FY23. Mr. Haddad said that he did have a handle on what the savings would be and explained the savings. Ms. Pine said she couldn't support paying Mr. Hartnett more than what he had been paid.

Mr. Hartnett said it wasn't intentional on his part to add money to his salary. Mr. Hartnett said that the thought of spending a year or more providing a high level of service to the Town, was something he would like to continue doing. He said he had the utmost faith in Ms. Moller. He said it was hard to train someone in debt scenarios adding it was easier to work through them.

Mr. Reilly asked if this would be a one-year contract with Mr. Hartnett. Mr. Haddad said it would but hoped Mr. Hartnett would give them a couple of years in this role. Mr. Haddad said he liked the suggestion to table this for a few weeks adding he didn't expect the Board to take any action on it this evening.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Degen said that while the CPC had done many good projects, there had been some that lent themselves to long term maintenance costs after they were approved. He said that one thing the CPC was missing was the financial oversight from the point of view of the Select Board and Finance Committee. Mr. Giger said he supported this suggestion.

Mr. Jack Petropoulos said that it seemed like whether there were ongoing costs was a yes or no question and the only value this proposal suggested. He said it was up to Town Meeting to make this decision. He thought that to add an elected appointee politicized it.

Ms. Pine said that they should have a better handle on costs that get approved. She said that didn't have anyone from the Community Preservation Committee present as they too met on Monday's which could be problematic. Ms. Pine said that

they were involved as the landowner on projects on Town land and would be informed about it. She said she could not see them claiming at-large seats and could not support this. Mr. Degen said it wasn't just about the long-term maintenance costs adding that was where he started. He was just recommending they added a little bit of belt and suspenders to this process. Ms. Pine said that maybe the process could be looked at and they could be notified earlier about projects. Mr. Degen said that by the time it reached the Select Board, the projects had been vetted and financial impacts discussed. Mr. Degen said he would approach the CPC and have this discussion and report back by the first of the year.

**ON-GOING ISSUES**

Mr. Haddad had no updates.

**MINUTES**

*Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of November 2, 2020 as amended. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Manugian-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye*

Ms. Manugian adjourned the meeting at 8:23pm.

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

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

Date Approved: 11/16/2020