

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
VIRTUAL MEETING  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2021  
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; Hannah Moller, Assistant Tax Collector/Treasurer; Michael Hartnett, Tax Collector/Treasurer; Megan Foster, Principal Assistant Assessor; Michael Hartnett, Tax Collector/Treasurer; Michael Bouchard, Town Clerk

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

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Haddad said that he brought an easement release to the Board for Tarbell School a few weeks ago. He said that the neighborhood had reached out and wanted to see the Town keep the easement. Mr. Haddad said he was withdrawing his request and thanked the Board for suggesting that he reach out to the abutters. Mr. Giger questioned the liability with not maintaining the easement property. Mr. Haddad said he could look into that. Further, Mr. Giger requested that Town Government determine which organization or individual is responsible for the upkeep of the easement land and maintenance of the playground equipment installed at that location.

Ms. Manugian said that effective March, there would be no COVID vaccines available to through the Board of Health.

Mr. Haddad said that the Board rejected a liquor license request for 9 West Main Street a couple of weeks ago adding that the applicant had appealed the decision to the ABCC. He said that a hearing would be scheduled and would provide more information as soon as they received it. Mr. Giger suggested that they take pictures in advance of the hearing in order to represent themselves. Ms. Pine said that a number of the abutters had questions about the hearing process. She said she consulted with Town Counsel and learned that no one had answers for the abutters as it was too early in the appeal process.

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

1. Mr. Haddad said that there were no updates to COVID action taken by the Town. He said that Groton was still a yellow community adding they went down this week to a 1.97% positivity rate. He said that if they went back to Green this week, he would recommend that they open back up to the public the following week. The Board was agreeable to this plan. Ms. Manugian said she was also amenable to opening up a few days a week should the employees feel more comfortable with that.
2. Mr. Haddad said that the Diversity Task Force was recommending that the Select Board appoint Gordon Candow to fill the vacancy on the Task Force representing the ADA. He said that Officer Candow had children with disabilities and thought that coupled with the fact he was an officer in Town made him a great addition to this committee.

*Ms. Pine moved to appoint Gordon Candow to the Diversity Task Force. Mr. Degen seconded the motion with a term to expire June 30, 2021. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Reilly-aye; Giger-aye*

3. Mr. Haddad said that the Invasive Species Committee was recommending that the Board appoint Charlotte Weigel to fill a vacancy on the Committee. Mr. Giger asked what her experience was. Mr. Degen said that Charlotte was an avid gardener that lived on a piece of property that was surrounded by invasive species. He said that she had done a tremendous amount of research on this and on eradicating the weeds herself.

*Ms. Manugian moved to appoint Charlotte Weigel to the Invasive Species Committee through June 30, 2021. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Reilly-aye; Giger-aye; Degen abstain.*

4. Mr. Haddad said that Kevin Lindemer of Boston Road had approached him about placing an article on the Spring Town Meeting Warrant that would grant Mr. Lindemer an easement through the Groton Country Club to connect to the Town Sewer. He said that a couple of years ago, the Town Meeting voted to include Mr. Lindemer's property on Boston Road in the Center Sewer District. Mr. Haddad said that after a review of the various options to connect, Mr. Lindemer would like to pursue this option.

Mr. Frank McPartlan from Dillis and Roy Design Group said that they had been working on this plan for a while now. He said that they were seeking an easement to go under the Country Club from Boston Road to a new home that Mr. Lindemer would like to build. Mr. McPartlan said that it would be a 25ft wide utility easement. He said that the Town's sewer line ended across the street from Johnson's. He said that no excavation would be required. He said that they were experiencing difficulty permitting this with MassDOT and why they were needing to explore other avenues. He said that work access would be limited to when the course wasn't being used.

Ms. Pine asked what installing this trenchless meant. Mr. McPartlan said that an auger would be used to dig this trench underground. He said that the contractor had enough equipment and confidence in their equipment to do this in one shot. Ms. Pine asked what their timing looked like. Mr. Lindemer said if Town Meeting approved this, they would need to wait until the Fall to find a good time to complete this so as to not interfere with golf. Ms. Manugian asked why this couldn't be done within the right of way. Mr. McPartlan said that it was because it was a private line. Ms. Manugian asked if any of this was in wetlands. Mr. Lindemer said that they had a wetland survey done. He said that the wetland was solely on his property and not on the golf course property. Mr. Giger said that he believed that Mr. Lindemer was given general support for this approach some time ago. He said he was concerned about putting an access point across from Pediatrics West adding the piece of the golf course was already spongy there. Mr. McPartlan said that if that was too much of a concern, they could pull that off the plan. Mr. Lindemer said he preferred the access point be located on his property also. Mr. Degen asked how many permanent feet the easement was for. Mr. McPartlan said it was 370 feet plus or minus. Mr. Degen said that Ms. Manugian brought up a good point concerning if they were to ever develop that land. Mr. Degen asked if Mr. Lindemer was offering to purchase this easement. Mr. Lindemer said he was not. Mr. Degen said he thought this would open pandoras box for other homeowners. Ms. Manugian said she agreed. She said there was a reason DOT was not comfortable with such a lengthy extension for private use. Mr. Lindemer said that DOT had a set of rules regardless of how long. Mr. Haddad said that there would be legal costs associated with this and didn't want to see the taxpayers have to bear the costs associated with this and thought it should be borne by the applicant. Mr. Lindemer said he fully expected he would bear that cost. Ms. Pine said that she was not as concerned about others asking for this same treatment and didn't think it was unusual for property to be sold with an easement on it. She asked to hear what the Sewer Commission had to say about this. Mr. Bouchard said that this was the most detail he had seen as a Sewer Commissioner. He said that this was a private line and were expecting that all costs be borne by the applicant. Mr. Lindemer said that Mr. Delaney and the Sewer Commission had been great in working to answer all questions either side had.

Ms. Pine asked why this needed to go to Town Meeting. Mr. Haddad said that the Select Board could not approve an easement adding it required Town Meeting approval. Mr. Degen asked if this had been done in this community or other communities. Mr. Haddad said he wasn't aware of any in Groton but would have to research that. Ms. Pine said she hadn't heard a reason to not include this on the warrant. Mr. Degen said he needed to hear how this had been handled in other communities. Ms. Manugian said that an easement would typically come with a dollar value and wanted to understand that also. Mr. Haddad said that the Board would need to authorize the addition of this on the warrant to which Town Meeting would vote to authorize the Select Board to enter into an easement.

Mr. Giger questioned how this was different from Indian Hill extending the line to their property. Mr. Degen said that the difference was others along the way to Indian Hill had the opportunity to tie in where in this case it was for a single private use. Ms. Pine said it sounded like the ability to extend the existing line to Mr.

Lindemer's property. Mr. Lindemer said that they would have to dig a trench and put in a larger line. He said that the easement approach would be all underground and a smaller line. He said it was the least intrusive, cost effective means for doing this. Mr. Degen asked if there was sewer up Skyfield Drive. Mr. Gmeiner said that it did not extend up Skyfield. Mr. Gmeiner said he would like to see this be limited to Mr. Lindemer's property.

Mr. Haddad said that the question before the Board was whether or not they would allow an article added to the Warrant. Mr. Haddad said that Mr. Lindemer was prepared to bring this forward by citizen's petition if the Board did not vote to add it to the warrant.

*Ms. Pine moved that they authorize the Town Manager to work with Mr. Lindemer to draft an article to be include on the warrant for Spring Town Meeting. Mr. Giger seconded the motion. Mr. Haddad asked that all legal costs for the easement be borne by the applicant. Ms. Pine accepted the wording addition.*

Mr. Giger said that there would be no cost to the Town for this. Ms. Pine said this vote allowed it to be added to the warrant. Ms. Manugian said there was too much information unknown and was uncomfortable moving this forward. Mr. Reilly said he didn't have a problem bringing this forward to the Town but agreed there was some value to be discussed further here. Ms. Pine said that gathering more information was a good idea and could be something they end up not supporting at Town Meeting.

*Roll Call: Manugian-no; Degen-no; Pine-aye; Reilly-aye; Giger-aye*

5. Mr. Haddad said that a couple of things had happened since he presented the proposed budget. He said that there was no change in the levy capacity and excluded debt. He said that there was an increase in the Governor's budget and decided to carry that number. He said that the free cash number was going up because they didn't need to set aside free cash for GDRSD capital. There was enough in the GDRSD capital stabilization fund. Mr. Haddad said that based on union negotiations, he had updated those amounts. Mr. Haddad said that the overall budget was reduced by \$238,709 since presented in January. He said that they were now \$132,968 under the levy limit.

Ms. Pine asked if this allowed them to add anything back into the budget. Ms. Manugian said that the GDRSD numbers were still estimates at this point and was based on the assumption the District would not needing additional PPE and remote learning in the Fall. Mr. Haddad said that Dunstable would need to come up with an additional \$70K to meet the needs and was predicated on this. Mr. Haddad said that should any money become available, he had 4 priorities that he would like to see filled. He said that their insurance budget was going to be short by \$40K because of 4 major losses over the last three years putting their use over 200%. He said if there was \$90K left (\$70K for salary and \$20K for insurance) after adding to the insurance budget, he would like to fill the patrolman position. Ms. Pine said that this was all dependent on the Governor's budget coming in where its estimated. Mr. Haddad said the Governor's budget had always been right around what was presented by the Governor.

Ms. Manugian said this was good information and liked how it was laid out. Mr. Haddad thanked Mr. Robertson for all his help with this over the weekend.

6. Mr. Haddad reviewed the Board's schedule for the next few meetings.
7. Mr. Haddad said that the Select Board met during Executive Session earlier to discuss the Fire Union negotiations. Mr. Haddad said that they had agreed to a one-year contract, a 1.5% one-time cash payment, a \$500 COVID stipend, and some wording changes. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to consider ratifying the contract.

*Mr. Degen moved to ratify as presented and discussed earlier this evening. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye; Manugian-aye*

Ms. Pine said they felt that because the Firefighters were put into a unique situation of having to go into COVID infected home and ride in ambulances with COVID patients, that they were putting themselves at more risk than anyone. Mr. Robertson said that these agreements were good for both the employees and the Town and thought everyone worked well as a team to get this done. He said that this came out as good as they could expect from a financial perspective. Ms. Manugian thanked everyone also.

Mr. Degen left the meeting at 8:31pm.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms. Manugian said she compiled a list of committees as was one of their goals. She said she made a list of those that required further discussion. She wasn't sure if they could eliminate any of these committees. She asked what other information folks wanted to see. Ms. Pine said there were some committees that were actually statutorily required but were some she wasn't sure what they did, if they operated still, etc.

**MINUTES**

*Ms. Pine moved that they approve the amended minutes of February 8, 2021. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Reilly-aye; Giger-aye*

Ms. Manugian adjourned the meeting at 8:43pm.

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

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

Date Approved: 3/8/21