

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
VIRTUAL MEETING
MONDAY, APRIL 26, 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; Michael Hartnett, Tax Collector/Treasurer; Hannah Moller, Assistant Tax Collector/Treasurer; Megan Foster, Principal Assistant Assessor; Patricia Dufresne, Town Accountant; Bud Robertson; Michael Bouchard, Town Clerk; Mike Luth, Police Chief; Kevin Lindemer

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Haddad said that Town Meeting was going to be held on Saturday, May 1st beginning at 9am on the Field behind the Florence Roche Elementary School.

Ms. Pine said that the Non-Profit Council would be meeting on Friday morning at 9am via Zoom. She said it was open to any non-profit group in Groton.

Ms. Pine said that there was an article on the Town Meeting warrant relative to affordable housing. She said that Jack Petropoulos's show on Groton Cable Access, Groton Matters, interviewed one of the Trust Members for anyone who wanted to view that episode.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad said that Groton was still yellow last week and would continue to keep Town Hall closed to the public.
2. Mr. Haddad said that the Police Department had been working for the last several years in becoming an Accredited Department. He said that part of the process required an update to the Department's Rules and Regulations to conform with all current laws, practices and policies.

Chief Luth said it was important for his profession to have Rules and Regulations in place so that there was a clear understanding of what was expected. He said that some of the material contained seemed obvious but was required. He said that they were in que with the Accreditation Organization to come out and be reviewed as they moved toward full accreditation. Chief Luth said that the recent marijuana changes at the State level provided for modifications within the regulations, and the body tattoo policy was reduced in strictness, to name a couple of the changes.

Ms. Pine said she thought the Rules and Regulations were impressive. She said that there was within the new police reform law, mention about a citizen's oversight committee and asked if there would be any changes with the accreditation because of this. Chief Luth said that he didn't see many changes coming down the pike for their department as far as the new state laws and accreditation.

Ms. Pine moved to adopt the Groton Police Department Rules and Regulations as presented that night. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Reilly-aye; Giger-aye

3. Mr. Bouchard said that they were obligated to produce an informational ballot question booklet whenever there was a ballot question. He said that this was in regard to potentially funding the Florence Roche Building Project. Mr. Bouchard reviewed the information booklet adding that Town Counsel had reviewed and approved the contents.

Ms. Manugian asked for a motion to issue the booklet as presented with the one change as described. Ms. Pine made that motion. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Reilly-aye; Giger-aye

4. Mr. Haddad said that he was in receipt of the Appraisal provided by Kevin Lindemer for the easement through the Country Club for the Sewer Connection to 227 Boston Road. Mr. Degen said he spent a significant amount of time researching this online. Mr. Degen said he only found a couple of cases similar to this adding he wished he could have found more. He said that determining an amount to use someone's property for an easement was arbitrary. He

suggested that the Town have a right of first refusal on the easement should plans for the Town's property change. Ms. Manugian said that not all details needed to be worked out now adding the motion gave the Select Board the right to further discuss this and negotiate prior to issuing an easement. Mr. Lindemer said that he found an appraiser who was knowledgeable in this subject matter. He said that the amount the appraiser came up with was close to what he had proposed. He said he was there to ask for the Board's support at Town Meeting on this article. Mr. Reilly said he wanted to see the appraisal before deciding whether or not to support the article and thought the Town's people should see it also. He said he appreciated the amount of work that had been done but added he was still in a deferred status as he still had some of concerns. Ms. Pine asked Mr. Lindemer if he was committed to paying the amount stipulated. Ms. Manugian cautioned them when discussing a monetary figure adding it was subject to a negotiation. Mr. Lindemer said he was prepared to pay the amount stated in the appraisal for the easement. Ms. Pine asked if they should amend the motion to include that information. Mr. Haddad said that the motion allowed the Select Board to negotiate/grant the easement.

Ms. Pine asked those who deferred why they would be hesitant to recommend this to Town Meeting. Mr. Degen said that they would be setting a hard precedent on many levels if they recommended this. He said that there were big problems with this. He said he was a no vote on this and would be speaking against this at Town Meeting. Mr. Lindemer said that the Sewer Commission did accept this in the Fall of 2018. Mr. Haddad said that Town Meeting voted to allow the extension but not the manner of which it was to be done. Mr. Lindemer said that they could have continued to pursue Mass Highway but didn't when they raised the issue of private sewer going down the right of way and because of the added cost to drill test holes every so many feet which would require them to stop traffic for an extended period of time. He said that based on this, they wanted to avoid that situation. Ms. Manugian said that she had concerns about some of the assumptions and numbers used in the appraisal. She said there were a number of reasons Mass DOT wouldn't support this on their land and couldn't understand why if Mass DOT didn't want it, the Town would. She said that the idea that this approach was cheaper or easier somehow was concerning to her. Mr. Lindemer said that Mass Highway was technically more difficult. Ms. Pine said it was unfortunate that a fair amount of bureaucracy was getting in the way. She said it was unfortunate that a citizen was the small player with other parties making the rules, with not a lot of room to maneuver. Mr. Degen said that Town Meeting might allow this adding it would be up to them to negotiate the value of it. Ms. Pine argued that they had an appraisal with a fair market value.

Mr. Robertson said that he too had done a fair amount of research on easements. He said that he didn't understand what the risk was especially where the easement would go across undeveloped property on the part of the course that was outside playable area. Ms. Manugian said he was spot on but the downside was whether they wanted to develop this piece in the future. She said it was a risk that would have to show a lot of upside right now and she wasn't seeing that. Mr. Lindemer said that the soil types were not conducive to building down there and would require a sewer connection. He said that the connection would be there if this was allowed. Mr. Lindemer said that he also had not found a downside to this in all the research that he had done.

Ms. Manugian and Mr. Degen were not in support of this; Mr. Reilly was deferred to Town Meeting; Ms. Pine and Mr. Giger were in support.

5. Mr. Haddad said that the Friends of Prescott would like to expand the area they lease from the Town to include the open field behind the building. He said that their current insurance policy covered this area. Mr. Haddad said that in order to allow this, the Select Board needed to amend the description of premises in the lease to read as follows:

PREMISES: The three-story building, including the rear open space of the property, known as the Prescott School, located at 145 Main Street, Groton, Massachusetts.

Mr. Haddad said he was in favor of this. Mr. Robertson said that they were doing a great job and was in favor of this. Mr. Degen said that they had spent some time with the Friends reviewing their plans. He said that they had been successful and was in support of allowing them to expand their services.

Ms. Manugian said she didn't want to see any further development back there. Mr. Haddad said that there was a provision in the lease that the Friends could not alter the premise without approval by the Town. Mr. Degen said that with COVID restrictions, an additional outdoor space was a good thing for them to have.

Ms. Pine moved to approve the alteration to the lease for the Friends of Prescott as outlined in their packet. Mr. Degen seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Reilly-aye; Giger-nay

6. Mr. Haddad said it was time to renew the annual fuel storage permits. He asked the Board to approve page (see attached).

Mr. Degen moved to approve the fuel storage permits as read on page one. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Reilly-aye; Giger-aye

Mr. Haddad asked the Board to approve a fuel storage permit for AL Prime (see attached). Ms. Pine made the motion. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Reilly-aye; Giger-aye

7. Mr. Haddad reviewed the motions for Town Meeting and how Town Meeting was going to proceed with multiple consent motions.
8. Ms. Manugian said she had been working on a review of Town committees. She said that this was one of their goals and wanted to see all elected and appointed committees gone through to see if they were active, necessary, etc. She said she broke them out by mandated boards/committees which there was not a lot they could do with these and then the remainder of the committees not mandated. She said she also broke them out by who they were appointed by, the size, vacancies and her and Mr. Haddad's comments/explanations. She said that because of COVID, a lot of committees had not been active over the last year and wanted to keep that in mind.

Mr. Degen said he thought they should see if the Conservation Commission wanted to take over the Invasive Species Committee but thought they were busy enough to stay intact. He suggested that Sargisson Beach Committee should also remain intact. Ms. Pine said that a lot of these committees functioned well on their own but wasn't sure where the oversight would go. Mr. Haddad said that the GPAC, Trails Committee, Williams Barn Committee as examples all called him when they needed something. Ms. Pine said that a three-year reporting cycle would be okay but didn't see a huge benefit in shifting the organizational chart without knowing what the impact would be. Ms. Manugian said that she didn't know what some of the Committees did because they didn't receive reports from them. Ms. Pine said that they received an annual report from most committees within the annual report. Mr. Haddad said that the goal was completed but the Board needed to discuss further. There was further discussion about committees.

9. Mr. Haddad reviewed the 3rd quarter financial review for the Town. He said they were right where they should be for motor vehicle excise and didn't believe they should have any trouble meeting their projections. He said that those revenues had shrunk but would keep an eye on it. Mr. Haddad said that the meals tax and rooms tax was lower than what they hoped, primarily the rooms tax, but that they would make their projections between the two. He said that PILOT payments were coming in and would meet their projections. Mr. Haddad said that the Country Club was way ahead of where they were last year. He said that this April had far surpassed the best April they had, which was last year. Mr. Haddad said he was concerned about motor vehicle excise and local room occupancy tax even though they were going to make their projections.
10. Mr. Haddad reviewed the Board and Town Manager goals and where they stood on completing them.
11. Mr. Haddad said that they were still waiting for guidance on money that had been set aside that was allocated for Groton in the next round of CARES Act money. Ms. Dufresne said she was hoping to get guidance on May 10th on how they could spend this. Mr. Haddad said they would have a proposal for the Board around that time for how they recommend the money be spent.
12. Mr. Haddad reviewed a proposed meeting schedule through the summer. Ms. Pine said every other week sounded appealing but remembered stacked up agendas and thought that could be changed.

MINUTES

Mr. Degen moved to approve the meeting minutes of April 12, 2021 as presented. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Reilly-aye; Giger-aye

Ms. Manugian adjourned the meeting at 8:57pm.

Approved: _____
Rebecca H. Pine, Clerk

_____ respectfully submitted:
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 5/10/21