

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JUNE 7, 2021
APPROVED**

SB Members Present: Alison S. Manugian, Member Joshua A. Degen, Member; Rebecca H. Pine, Member; Peter S. Cunningham, Member; John F. Reilly, Member

Also Present: Mark W. Haddad, Town Manager; Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant;

Mr. Haddad called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and reviewed the agenda.

BOARD REORGANIZATION

Ms. Manugian said that several people were interested in being chair. Mr. Cunningham said it was good to rotate the chairmanship and nominated Ms. Pine to serve as chair. Ms. Pine said she would like to learn a little more from Ms. Manugian through a transition such as her serving as an active Vice Chair. Mr. Cunningham said he thought it was important that they share the responsibility and it not be all in one place but thought it was also important that they move on. Ms. Pine said she would like to have Ms. Manugian as Vice Chair for a period of time. Mr. Degen said he had been vice chair for the past 2 years and had been actively involved. He said he thought he had done his job and wasn't being moved forward because of his national politics position on Facebook. He said he had always put the Town on the forefront. Ms. Manugian said she didn't have problems with Mr. Degen's persona in meetings and thought he brought a lot to the table but was concerned about his social media posts. She said it didn't impact their day to day but bothered her. Ms. Pine said he had his right to choose to do what he did, but was not the model she wanted to see for their employees. Mr. Reilly said that Facebook was a private choice but he had received phone calls from people offended by those posts. He said he didn't disagree with the good job Mr. Degen had done for the Town. Mr. Cunningham said that it became a distraction from what Mr. Degen was trying to do as a Select Board member for the Town.

The Board voted unanimously for Ms. Pine to serve as Chair.

Ms. Pine said she would like to place a nomination for Ms. Manugian to serve as Vice Chair. Mr. Degen nominated Mr. Reilly. Mr. Cunningham asked if they could hear from both. Mr. Reilly said he didn't have a problem with it but thought if Ms. Pine felt better suited with Ms. Manugian as Vice Chair, he was okay with that. Ms. Pine said she also thought they should revisit the Vice Chairmanship after 3 months. Ms. Manugian said she didn't feel strongly either way and could offer guidance even if she wasn't Vice Chair.

There were 3 votes in favor of Ms. Manugian as Vice Chair (Cunningham, Manugian, Pine) which passed by majority vote.

Mr. Degen nominated Mr. Cunningham as Clerk. The nomination carried unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Pine said that she wanted to acknowledge their first in person meeting in 15 months. She commended the work Mr. Haddad and Ms. Dunbar had done to instantly connect them remotely. Mr. Cunningham asked if they had thought about connecting through Zoom also. Ms. Pine said that they had had some conversations about improving participation remotely and believed there had been some talk at the State level about what was legal. Mr. Haddad said that there had not been any decisions at the State level but would keep the Board updated.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad said he was very excited to make two appointments that night. He said that he was recertifying the appointment of Megan Foster as Principal Assistant Assessor to a three-year term to end on June 30, 2024. He said that for the last eight months Hannah Moller had been the Tax Collector/Treasurer in Training. He said he was pleased to make this appointment effective July 1, 2021.

Mr. Cunningham moved to affirm the Town Manager's appointment of Hannah Moller as Tax Collector/Treasurer effective July 1, 2021. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Cunningham moved to affirm the Town Manager's appointment of Megan Foster as Principal Assistant Assessor effective July 1, 2021. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Senator Edward Kennedy and Representative Sheila Harrington were present.

Representative Harrington said that one of the major issues before them both was unemployment benefits. She explained that some industries were having difficulty hiring such as the restaurant business. Senator Kennedy said that they agreed they needed to get the economy moving again adding employment insurance was more than they would be making working. Mr. Cunningham asked if there was anything formal being proposed. Representative Harrington said it was at the Executive level right now and was looking at how that would be structured further adding they were looking to New Hampshire and Connecticut as what post pandemic unemployment would look like. Ms. Manugian asked what was perceived as roadblocks with businesses offering more compensation. Senator Kennedy said he offered legislation for \$200M of federal money for tourism to help with losses. Representative Harrington said that cocktails to go and some form of remote meetings may be what continues post COVID.

Senator Kennedy said that PFAS was a big problem everywhere. He said that there were PFAS response grants that communities could apply for and an interagency task force that was going to be providing a report by the end of the year on how to address this moving forward. Senator Kennedy said that there was legislation to ban the sale of products containing PFAS. Representative Harrington said that DEP was taking the lead on this adding they didn't have control over products approved by the FDA. She said that they needed to understand what the chemicals were they had control over and thought this would take some time because of that.

Representative Harrington said that there was an enormous amount of money for affordable housing at the State level. She said that they went through \$100M of the amount allocated this year for RAFT but still left them with a significant amount of funding available. She said that they needed to also look at housing programs that also promoted economic development. She said that they would both like to help the Town with economic development. Senator Kennedy said that Mass Housing was a good resource. He said that zoning should also be used to promote the housing they wanted.

Mr. Haddad said that they submitted legislation last fall and asked what the status was. Representative Harrington said that it was refiled recently. Mr. Haddad said that they received an earmark of \$350K to repave Main Street and asked about the status. Senator Kennedy said he would look into it tomorrow. There was a brief discussion about possible funding options for sidewalks to Indian Hill.

Ms. Manugian asked how they advocate for communities that do have better demographics than others. Representative said that they needed to look toward earmarks adding the way they distributed money wasn't going to change anytime soon. Senator Kennedy said that they needed to keep looking at the education formula to bridge the gap as much as they could. There was a discussion about regional school districts working together to fight for the funding they need such as increases in transportation costs for students.

Ms. Manugian asked what they could do to help them advocate for Groton at the State level.

Mr. Degen thanked them for coming in and asked that they consider doing this annually.

ANNOUNCEMENTS – CONT.

Ms. Pine said she attended a Court of Honor for four young men yesterday. She provided a brief description of their eagle scout projects.

Mr. Cunningham said that he, Ms. Pine and Mr. Reilly attended the Memorial Day celebration albeit small but added it was very nice.

Mr. Haddad said that they would be holding the 4th of July Fireworks this year on Monday, July 12th.

TOWN MANAGERS REPORT – CONT.

2. Mr. Haddad said that because the Governor was rescinding the State of Emergency on June 15th, he thought it would make sense for the Board to rescind the local State of Emergency in line with the State.

Mr. Degen moved that they rescind the local State of Emergency effective June 15, 2021 in line with the Governor lifting the State of Emergency. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Mr. Haddad said that it was time to make his annual appointments. He asked the Board to ratify his appointments as presented to the Board within their meeting packet. Ms. Pine pointed out that Mr. Cunningham was on the list as an election worker. Mr. Cunningham said that if the Board were not comfortable with him serving as an election worker, he wouldn't serve. Ms. Pine said she had no issue with it.

Mr. Reilly made a motion to ratify the Town Manager's appointments as presented. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Haddad asked the Board to ratify the appointments he appointed, per the Charter.

Mr. Cunningham made a motion to ratify the Town Manager's appointments as presented. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Haddad asked the Board to ratify the appointments he nominated for appointment, per the Charter.

Mr. Degen made a motion to ratify the Town Manager's nominated appointments as presented. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Haddad said that the Police Chief was on the list as a department head but that it was the Board's appointment.

4. Mr. Haddad said that the Board needed to begin the process of setting their goals. Ms. Pine said that they had met in a workshop session some years to work out goals and depending on what was submitted could determine that at a later date.
5. Mr. Haddad said they had received four proposals for Town Counsel. He said he sent them to the Board adding the Board was scheduled to hold those interviews next Monday, June 14th. Ms. Pine asked if they should interview all four firms. Mr. Cunningham said that there were two he felt were stronger firms and should be interviewed. Ms. Manugian said she thought they should interview all four. The Board agreed to interview all four firms.

There was a brief discussion about the interview questions and about asking follow up questions. Ms. Manugian provided some suggested questions. Mr. Haddad said he would review the questions with the Chair later in the week and then distribute them to the Board.

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

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Haddad asked the Board to appoint Jennifer Nassimos to the Affordable Housing Trust for a two-year appointment.

Ms. Manugian made the motion. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion with a term to expire on June 30, 2023. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Haddad said that Ixtapa had appealed the 4-day suspension issued by the Board. He said that the ABCC were not able to hold the hearing until July 28th. Mr. Haddad said he spoke to Town Counsel today. He said Town Counsel said that the Board should stay the suspension until September 3, 4, 5, 6, 2021 and let the appeal process move forward. Mr. Degen said he thought that made sense.

Mr. Degen moved that they change the proposed suspension of the liquor license at Ixtapa to September 3, 4, 5 and 6th 2021. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion.

Mr. Haddad suggested that he and the Police Chief could handle this appeal. Ms. Pine said they should have a member of the Board there also. It was recommended that Mr. Reilly be present for that hearing also.

The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Degen moved that John Reilly represent the Select Board at the appeal hearing before the ABCC concerning Ixtapa. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Haddad said that they held interviews for the COA Director today. He said that they interviewed 5 excellent candidates, that they were advancing 2 candidates forward to meet with the COA Board of Directors, to be followed by a meeting with the department heads next Tuesday at 9:30am. He said he would bring the final appointment to the Select Board on June 28th.

MINUTES

Mr. Degen moved to approve the meeting minutes of May 24, 2021 as corrected. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-0-1 with Mr. Cunningham abstaining.

Ms. Pine adjourned the meeting at 9:21pm.

Approved: _____
Peter S. Cunningham, Clerk

_____ respectfully submitted:
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 6/21/21