

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, MAY 16, 2022
APPROVED**

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

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

Ms. Pine called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and reviewed the agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Haddad announced the Town Meeting Electronic Voting Committee and how those interested should reach out to Moderator Jason Kauppi with interest.

Mr. Haddad said that the Memorial Day Parade would occur on May 30th beginning at 9:30am.

Mr. Haddad said that the closure of the Senior Center had generated a lot of concerns he wanted to address. He said that their two fulltime staff members have Covid and could not come to work. He said that because of liability issues and not having full time paid staff to work, there was no other choice but to close the center for 2 weeks. He said that their insurance company would not allow the liability. He said that he met with Mr. Cunningham this morning to try to come up with another solution should this happen again. He said he was very comfortable with the decision he made but would work with the Director to come up with a plan. Mr. Haddad said that it also had come to his attention that the Gay 90s would not be rescheduled until October which he said was not the Town's intent with having to cancel that event this week.

Ms. Pine said that the Main Street center was being repaved from Old Ayer to approximately Elm Street and would take about 2 weeks to do.

Ms. Pine said that candidate's night was scheduled for tomorrow night at the Center adding the building would be managed by the Town Manager, Town Clerk and Executive Assistant to the Town Manager at 7pm.

Ms. Pine explained the 2 ballot questions that would be on the ballot next week. She said that the Select Board strongly urged voters to vote in favor of changing the Town Clerk to an appointed position. She said that the second ballot question was a non-binding question on whether to remove the words Holy bible from the Town Seal. She said that they were not going to try to figure out what potential costs were ahead of a non-binding question.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Ms. Anna Eliot asked for the Select Board to reopen the Center using alternative measures. She said that the staff illnesses were an unfortunate event but thought they as Grotonians they could come together to open the Center. She explained ways in which the Center could be reopened. She said that seniors were competent to make a decision to come to the Center or not. She asked that they not demote seniors to a powerless generation.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad said that they had been searching for a new Outreach Coordinator for the Council on Aging. He said that a Search Committee made up of COA Director Ashley Shaheen, Human Resources Director Melisa Doig and Detective Pat Timmins interviewed several applicants and had recommended that he appoint Nickole Boardman of Sterling, MA to the position. He said that Ms. Boardman was currently the Outreach Coordinator for Sterling, MA. He said he was eager to have her on board and was very pleased to be making this appointment.

Ms. Pine said that they had hoped to find someone with social work background and she fit that bill. Mr. Cunningham said that he had worked with her many years ago but agreed she would be a great addition to the staff.

Mr. Cunningham moved to affirm the appointment of Nickole Boardman as the Outreach Coordinator at the Center to start on June 21, 2022. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Mr. Haddad said that Cable Director Ashley Doucette and Melisa Doig interviewed several applicants for the position of Production Assistant and have recommended that he appoint David Germain of Malden, MA to the position. Mr. Haddad said he found him to be an excellent candidate for this position.

Ms. Manugian moved to affirm the appointment of David Germain as the Production Assistant with the Cable Department to start immediately. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Mr. Haddad said that Conservation Administrator Nikolas Gualco and Melisa Doig interviewed several applicants for the position of Park Ranger and had recommended that he appoint Michael Perciballi as Park Ranger at Sargisson Beach.

Mr. Cunningham moved to affirm the appointment of Michael Perciballi as the Park Ranger at Sargisson Beach to start immediately. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Mr. Haddad said that Shawn Campbell had requested that he appoint Natalie Gavin to the Country Club's Camp Staff and asked the Board to consider ratifying his appointment.

Mr. Degen moved to ratify the Town Managers appointment of Natalie Gavin to the Country Club Camp Staff. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Mr. Haddad said that based on recommendations from the following Committees, he was nominating the following individuals for appointment and would respectfully request that the Board consider appointing them with all terms to expire on June 30, 2022:

Ronald Hersch - Great Ponds Advisory Committee

Christopher Darling - Williams Barn Committee

Steve Beard - Weed Harvester Committee

Ms. Manugian made a motion to appoint Ronald Hersch to the Great Ponds Advisory Committee, Christopher Darling to the Williams Barn Committee and Steve Beard to the Weed Harvester Committee to serve through the end of June 30, 2022. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

6. Mr. Haddad said that based on their third quarter financial review they were in good shape financially and on target with last year. He said that they budgeted \$75K in rooms occupancy tax and were over \$100K already. He said that they were tracking well with what they budgeted for next year adding the same could be said for the meals tax. Mr. Haddad said that he was confident they were going to hit their PILOT payment line item by the end of the FY. Mr. Haddad said that the Country Club had the largest April they had ever had taking in over \$30K. He said that licenses and permits had also exceeded estimates.

Mr. Haddad said that they were ahead of where they were last year on expenses because they lifted the spending freeze and because of some overtime in some of their departments. He said overall they were comfortable with the overall financial stability of the Town. Ms. Dufresne said that payroll was a little higher but they had an extra payroll this quarter which artificially inflated the expenses slightly. Mr. Robertson said that this revenue was the highest it had ever been after three quarters which was good. He said that the expenses on the other hand was the worst they had ever seen and thought they needed to keep an eye on the spending but agreed revenue was strong.

7. Mr. Haddad said that there were \$269K in funding needs for the end of FY. He said that the fire department wages concerned him adding it was no one's fault that this extra money was needed. He said that they had been plagued by sickness and injury causing much needed overtime. The Town Manager reviewed the items contained in the proposed line-item transfer. Ms. Dufresne said that this was not the final list adding they would officially vote on line-item transfers on July.
8. Mr. Haddad reviewed the Board's goals and provided updates on each of them as contained in the Select Board's packet.

9. Mr. Haddad said that recently, Governor Baker filed House Bill 4720, known as "An Act Investing in Future Opportunities for Resiliency, Workforce, and Revitalized Downtowns (FORWARD). He said that the legislation included \$2.3 billion in ARPA Funds and over \$1.256 billion in capital bond authorizations to strengthen state infrastructure, create jobs and invest in municipalities across the Commonwealth. He said that the FORWARD Bill would make investments in all 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts. He said that Groton was slated to receive at least \$250,000 in Downtown Recovery Grants. Mr. Haddad said that should this proposed Bill become law, it would be a great opportunity for the Town of Groton. Mr. Haddad said that to that end, he would like to discuss using these funds to finally construct the Municipal Parking Lot behind the Prescott School. He said that they could combine these funds with the \$100,000 sitting in the Select Board Gift Account. He said that if they were to enforce parking spots near crosswalks, they would lose 37 parking spots on Main Street which would leave businesses with no parking for their patrons.

Ms. Manugian asked if they could do some sort of a parking study on Main Street. Mr. Cunningham said that they should also look at bridging parking to the rail trail from behind Prescott as part of this.

10. Mr. Haddad reviewed the Board's schedule through Labor Day.

SELECT BOARD ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Mr. Haddad read a proposed draft press release for the Board's consideration relative to the Juneteenth Holiday. He said that the Select Board talked about this in Executive Session and asked that it be placed on the agenda. He asked the Board to vote that the Select Board of the Town of Groton recognize this very important Holiday, and to that end, pursuant to State Law (since June 19, 2022 falls on a Sunday), all Town of Groton Municipal Buildings, including the Town Hall, Library, Center in West Groton and DPW Building would be closed on Monday, June 20, 2022 in recognition of this day. He added that all Town employees would receive Holiday pay for this day.

Ms. Manugian moved to grant the Juneteenth holiday, that all town buildings would be closed on June 20, 2022 and employees paid for this day. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion.

Ms. Pine said that the Commonwealth had made it a holiday and was glad they were also. Mr. Degen said he could not support this adding the unions had had their agreements ratified and creating holiday pay for this day without opening the contracts was not something he could support adding he fully supported the closure of the buildings in recognition of the Juneteenth Holiday. He suggested that they eliminate the last sentence of the press release and vote separately on the holiday pay. Ms. Pine said that they had discussed this and thought some things carried over from previous negotiation years adding this would be no different. Mr. Cunningham said he couldn't see this being difficult to add this to the contracts. Mr. Haddad said that if this was voted that evening, they would reach out to the unions and add side letters to the contracts. Mr. Degen said that he didn't agree with the process.

The motion carried 4-1 with Mr. Degen opposed.

2. Mr. Haddad said that the Board received a request for four One-Day Beer and Wine Licenses from the River Styx Brewing for the Rollstone Rhythms Summer Concert Series to be held at Smith Pavilion for the following dates:
 - Thursday, June 16, 2022 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Rain Date: Thursday, June 23rd)
 - Thursday, July 21, 2022 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Rain Date: Thursday, July 28th)
 - Thursday, Aug 18, 2022 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Rain Date: Thursday, August 25th)
 - Thursday, Sept 15, 2022 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Rain Date: Thursday, September 22nd)

Ms. Manugian asked for some details surrounding the event. Mr. Haddad said he would get the information and bring this back next week.

3. Mr. Haddad said that in light of the Town Meeting vote to approve CPA Funds to design the installation of an elevator at the Prescott School, Select Board Member Manugian asked the Board to consider requesting that the Capital Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC) conduct a thorough study of the total capital needs of the building. Ms. Manugian said that she wanted to understand what the larger picture was for the Prescott School and what costs

would potentially come to the Town. Mr. Cunningham said he thought this was a good idea and hoped the Friends would be in favor of this.

Mr. Lane said that the Prescott Building Committee issued a report in 2016 that laid out a lot of issues adding they had no reason to change the use and had no plans to make structural changes. Mr. Lane said it was a good idea to look at all town owned buildings in town. Ms. Pine said she expected that all buildings, including Prescott School would be on the list of buildings catalogued by the Capital Planning Advisory Committee. She said she wasn't sure it was appropriate for the Select Board to instruct the CPAC to look at anything in particular. Mr. Cunningham asked how they CPAC prioritized what they looked at. Mr. Haddad said that all other town buildings have a department head assigned to it. He said there was no department head assigned to Prescott School adding they have had a placeholder in the capital budget for many years of \$5M to upgrade the building. He said he didn't think it would hurt to have the CPAC review the Bargmann Report and review the building.

4. Mr. Haddad said that the Friends of Prescott would like replace the sign on the front facade of the Prescott School to read "Prescott Community Center'. He said that they were planning on repainting the front of the building and would like to replace the current sign. Mr. Haddad said that he had given them preliminary approval to make this change, but thought it should be ratified by the Select Board. Mr. Haddad said that the Friends would like to remove the letters on the building from Prescott School to Prescott Community Center. Mr. Reilly asked if there were any issues because it was on the historic register. Mr. Haddad said that they needed to research that. Mr. Lane said that the historic designation was to the Groton High School and not Prescott School.

Ms. Sartini asked if the Friends were going to get feedback from the public on this change. Mr. Lane said that they had not considered that adding they were not looking to affirm what it already was. Mr. Cunningham said that it was already known as the Prescott School and wasn't sure why they needed to change the name. He said his initial reaction was to not support this. Ms. Manugian said she agreed with Mr. Cunningham. Mr. Degen said he didn't see this as a big deal and was always going to be Prescott. Ms. Pine said she also didn't see this as a huge deal. Mr. Lane said that the Historic District Commission would be discussing this adding they also needed their approval.

ON-GOING ISSUES

Mr. Haddad said that the Florence Roche Groundbreaking Ceremony was on June 1st at 4pm.

MINUTES

Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting on April 25, 2022. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

Approved: _____
Peter S. Cunningham, Clerk

_____ respectfully submitted: Dawn Dunbar,
Executive Assistant to the Town Manager

Date Approved: 5/23/2022