**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**MONDAY, AUGUST 22, 2022**

**SB Members Present:** John F. Reilly, Chair; Rebecca H. Pine, Vice Chair; Matthew F. Pisani, Clerk; Alison S. Manugian, Member; Peter S. Cunningham, Member

**Also Present:** Mark W. Haddad, Town Manager; Patricia DuFresne, Town Accountant; Dawn Dunbar, Town Clerk; Tammi Mickel, Assistant Assessor; Bud Robertson, Chair Finance Committee; Colby Doody, Finance Committee; David Manugian, Finance Committee; Scott Whitefield, Finance Committee; Michael Sulprizio, Finance Committee; Gary Green, Finance Committee; Bruce Easom, Community Preservation Committee; Dan Emerson, Community Preservation Committee; Carolyn Perkins, Community Preservation Committee; Richard Hewitt, Community Preservation Committee; Bob DeGroot, Community Preservation Committee; Anna Eliot, Community Preservation Committee; Raquel Majeski, Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Committee; Fran Stanley, Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Committee

Mr. Reilly called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and reviewed the agenda.

Mr. Robinson calls the Finance Committee to order.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Pine said Dawn Dunbar was sworn in today as Town Clerk and she congratulated Ms. Dunbar.

**PUBLIC COMMMENT**

Mr. Robinson said the Prescott Oversight Committee met with the Friends of Prescott. For their year-end, August 31, 2022, their preliminary gross revenue is $362,000 of which net is $238,000. Overall, they think they will break even and they have cash in excess of $100,000. He said they have done some great work.

**TOWN MANAGERS REPORT**

1. Mr. Haddad said he asked the Finance Committee to be present tonight to go over the warrant for the Special Town Meeting scheduled on September 12, 2022. Mr. Haddad said he met with the Select Board and members of the Building Committee Team to discuss the potential $9.5 million anticipated short fall in the Florence Roche Elementary School Construction budget. The Select Board called for a Special Town Meeting on September 12, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. at the Middle School Performing Arts Center to consider one Article for additional funding for the Florence Roche Elementary School Constriction to increase the authorization of the $76,495,360 that was approved in May of 2021. There has been an unprecedented escalation in construction costs across Massachusetts since the project was approved in May of 2021. The current estimated project cost is $85.9 million, $9.5 million more than was previously authorized.

Mr. Haddad asks the Board to accept the warrant, authorize its issuance, vote to release the warrant. He said the warrant will go to the printer Tuesday morning and be posted by the constable and delivered to all Residents on August 26, 2022. Please note the Town Clerk has confirmed that the Quorum for the meeting is 173.

Mr. Cunningham said part of the documentation was sent to the Department of Revenue and asked when do we get an answer from them? Mr. Haddad said he sent the packet of information to the Department of Revenue asking to give authorization to bond $9.5 million more without seeking a debt exclusion question. He said he requested to hear from them before September 12, 2022. Mr. Haddad asked the Finance Committee if they wanted to take a position on the Article.

*Mr. Robertson asked for motion from the Finance Committee to recommend the Article to Town Meeting. Mr. Whitefield made such motion. It was seconded by Mr. Manugian. Motion carried unanimously.*

Ms. Pine stated that it is her understanding that it is not a good idea to pause the project to wait until prices settle down, and we need to be prepared to answer that question at town meeting. Mr. Haddad said that will be part of our presentation, it will actually cost us more than $9.5 million if we try to delay the project.

*Ms. Pine moved to accept and issue the Warrant for the September 12, 2022 Special Town Meeting. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.*

Mr. Robertson adjourned the meeting of the Finance Committee at 7:10 p.m.

**ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AND ACTON**

1. Mr. Haddad asked Ms. Majeski to come up to present to the Board a proposed name change in the title of the Diversity Task Force, as well as, a change in the charge of the Committee. Ms. Majeski said she wanted to highlight the main changes. The new name would be the Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion Committee and the main goal of the new Charge is to recognize and commemorate the diversity of the residents of Groton, past and present. To do so, the Committee will examine our town for areas of unequal representation within our public institutions and spaces, both explicit and implicit, while also creating opportunities to celebrate our diversity as a community. The Committee will provide research-based observations and recommendations to the Select Board, focus on the education of our residents, and commit to open dialogue and engagement with our residents. She said the Term, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee will meet beginning in August 2022 and continue through the end of July 2023, an interim report along with an Executive Summary will be delivered no later than February 15, 2023 to the Select Board. Each Committee member will complete the Racial Healing Handbook prior to beginning their term of service.

Mr. Haddad asked does that mean at the end of July 2023, the Committee will disband? Ms. Majeski said that is more for the members. She said we hope to be a committee as long as there are other existing Committees that are that are representing the needs of the residents

Ms. Pine said she hopes with the new charge to the Committee that they still see it as their role to address difficult incidents as they may happen in Town and to help us figure out how to respond them. Ms. Majeski said that is our goal and we hope to do that in a more proactive way. Ms. Stanley said they discussed being proactive, working with the Select Board and work on having a plan beforehand. Ms. Pine said her proposed goal for the Select Board is to work with the Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion Committee to formulate impactful Select Board and Groton-wide interventions to recognize, denounce, and prevent incidents of prejudicial hatred and injustice, such as Anti-Semitism, Racial and Religious Bigotry Homophobic and White Supremacy. She said she would hope that would be included in her committee’s purview. Ms. Majeski said it would and they are working on a protocol to address “hate”. Ms. Manugian said she loves the focus and the proactive piece of it. She said the Select Board needs help with this and she is happy they are willing to help and collaborate on this.

Mr. Haddad asked the Board to adopt the new name and new charge of the committee.

*Ms. Manugian moved to adopt the new name and new charge of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**7:15PM - COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE**

Mr. Haddad said about 3 or 4 months ago the Board was talking about the town meeting and one of the Select Board’s concerns was about how projects that are on town property get on the Community Preservation docket and what role this Board should have in dealing with Community Preservation projects that are on town property that the Select Board controls the property. He said the second issue is trying to figure out how we can get to town meeting with bids in hand so we don’t have a problem of not having enough money for a project. e said it is important to try and go out and bid before we go to town meeting. If there is a way He said it is important to try and go out and bid before e w

He said it is important to go out and bid before we go to town meeting. If there is a way to time Community Preservation project approval with a bid that’s within 30 days of town meeting, it would be helpful. Mr. Reilly said what he heard the last few times, the process on the town’s side takes so long so we are talking about change in process. Mr. Emerson said typically September is the opening period to submit a preliminary proposal to make sure it passes and fits within the CPA requirements and all the rules and regulations. He said on the financing side one of the big challenges is how do you deal with covid and the supply chain issues. He said to me that makes it impossible to come up with a guaranteed realistic bid. Mr. Haddad said by bidding the process the price would be fixed. Mr. Haddad will work with the CPC to develop a new process on bidding prior to Town Meeting.

Ms. Pine said she wanted to mention she saw an email on tips to improve your towns Community Preservation Committee and Groton was called out positively in the best practices for having an evaluation checklist for all the projects.

Mr. Haddad said he recommend that the Select Board and the Community Preservation Committee if a project is being done on town owned property, when they give you the 2-page summary, they should be told they need to get on agenda with the Select Board before submitting their final application for approval from the Board first. Second, anything that is going to require a substantial amount of money, he would like to have the ability to sit down and talk about a process so he can handle the procurement side. Mr. Eason said we would bring them all to him and he can comment as needed.

Mr. Cunningham left the meeting at 7:37pm.

**TOWN MANAGERS REPORT-CONT.**

1. Mr. Haddad provided the Board with the first draft of the 2022 Fall Town Meeting Warrant. He said there are 21 Articles on the warrant. There was a brief discussion on the master plan, electronic voting at Town Meeting and funding to remove 159 West Main Street Building. Mr. Haddad said the Warrant Public Hearing is scheduled for September 19, 2022.
2. Mr. Haddad reviewed the ARPA budget at Select Board member Ms. Pine’s request. He said Ms. Manugian met with him that afternoon to discuss if we could use some ARPA funds to help offset the Florence Roche Construction costs. He reviewed the ARPA chart which was provided in the Select Board packet. He said the $165,651 in available funds has the potential to go up to $500,000 to possibly to commit to the Florence Roche. Ms. Pine asked how does that effect what we are asking the voters to approve. Mr. Haddad said the 2 biggest bids are happening after the town meeting, the building envelope and the mechanicals. He said he recommends we stick with the $9.5 million number and we do everything we can so when we permanently finance the project 2 years from now and its audited, we do substantially less than then $ 9.5 million and keep the available ARPA funds in our back pocket. He said there are a lot of things that could happen, the state could come through, the bids could come in better than the estimates. Ms. Manugian said there will be a public forum via zoom on September 8, 2022 to go through the whole presentation with information on this.
3. Mr. Haddad reviewed the preliminary meeting schedule through the end of the year.

**ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AND ACTON CONT.**

1. Mr. Haddad asked the Select Board to appoint Gordon Row to the Complete Streets Committee and to expire on June 30,2023.

*Ms. Pine moved to appoint Gordon Row to the Complete Streets Committee. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

1. Mr. Haddad reviewed the Select Board goals for Fiscal Year 2023. There was a discussion on the goals and recommended adjustments to be made. Mr. Haddad said he will make the adjustments discussed and will hopefully bring them back on September 6, 2022 to have the Board vote to approve so they can have them in place.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Haddad said 14 months after the Ixtapa liquor license violation hearing, the ABCC agreed the Board acted properly in saying Ixtapa violated the terms of the liquor license. He said the ABCC felt a 4-day suspension was too much for the particular violation and remanded the decision back to the Select Board and said they can not suspend the liquor license for more than 2 days. Mr. Haddad said that decision is subject to appeal within 30 days by either this Board or by Ixtapa. He said he felt a 2-day suspension was good. Ms. Pine said reading the ABCC’s decision, there was only one violation and that’s why they said 4 days was too much. She said should we have a situation again where there is a complicated situation, we should ask the police to list several violations because in this situation it wasn’t just serving underage people, there were multiple things they did wrong. She said they also mentioned we didn’t have a progressive discipline policy. Mr. Haddad said we may need to draft something, but the Board did do progressive discipline even though they don’t have a policy. He said we should draft a policy but he always wants to hold in the pocket that the Select Board has the right to do more due to circumstances. Mr. Haddad said he recommends a 2-day suspension on September 2nd and 3rd, 2022, Ms. Manugian said September 3rd and 4th captures more lunch time as well. Mr. Haddad said he will issue a decision to Ixtapa, there is a two-day suspension on September 3rd and 4th, 2022 and they are to turn in their liquor license to the police station on those 2 days and they are to collect the license back on Monday September 5, 2022. Mr. Reilly asked can Ixtapa appeal back? Mr. Haddad said they can but they would be appealing the ABCC’s decision which they granted the Board 2 days. Mr. Pisani asked how does this get monitored? Mr. Haddad said he will have the police check it out.

*Ms. Manugian moved to amend the previous decision to suspend Ixtapa’s All Alcoholic On Premise License from four days to two days and that the License would be suspended on September 3rd and 4th, 2022. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**ON-GOING ISSUES**

Mr. Haddad said he has no updates on any on-going issues.

**MEETING MINUTES**

*Ms. Manugian moved to approve the minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting on August 8,2022 and the minutes of the special meeting on August 12,2022. Ms. Pine seconds the motion.* ***The motion carried unanimously.***

Mr. Reilly adjourned the meeting at 8:34pm.

Approved:  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Matthew F. Pisani, Clerk respectfully submitted: Tammi Mickel,

Assistant Assessor

Date Approved: