**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**MONDAY, October 24, 2022**

**APPROVED**

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

Member; Rebecca H. Pine, Vice Chair

**Also Present:** Mark W. Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant; Patricia Dufresne, Town Accountant; Melisa Doig, HR Director; Megan Foster, Principal Assessor; Dawn Dunbar, Town Clerk; Hannah Moller, Tax Collector/Treasurer; FinanceCommittee Members:Bud Robertson, Chair; Colby Doody, Vice Chair; Gary Green, Member; Michael Sulprizio; Mary Linskey;

John Reilly called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and Bud Robertson, Chair of the Finance Committee called the

meeting to order. Mr. Reilly reviewed the agenda.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Pine announced that next Monday is Halloween. Trick or treating will be 6:00 to 8:00pm and the Select Board will not

be meeting. She also announced early voting has started and anyone can visit the Town Hall to vote during regular business

hours. Ms. Dunbar, Town Clerk, announced Saturday, October 29, 2022 the Town Hall will be open 9:00am to 3:00pm for

voting.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No Public Comments

**TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT**

1. **2022 Fall Town Meeting Follow-up**

Mr. Haddad said now that Town Meeting has approved Electronic Voting, he spoke with the Moderator about how the Moderator will proceed. Mr. Haddad explained the Moderator sets the Rules and Regulations of Electronic Voting and will form a group to implement these. The Electronic Voting Committee supplied a list of potential Regulations and the Moderator will utilize this list and move forward. Public Meetings and Public Hearings will be scheduled by the Moderator, for an overview on his rules.

Mr. Haddad is going to compose a quote to go out to three vendors for the demolition of the former Squannacook Sportsmen’s Club at 159 West Main Street. The Town Accountants will need three written quotes because it will be under $50,000. Prior to the demolition of the building, the Select Board will need to vote to take the property.

1. **Update from the Town Manager on Former Nod Road Landfill Discussion**

Mr. Luke Fabbri and Mr. Haddad had a follow up discussion regarding the previous Nod Road landfill meeting. Mr. Fabbri said if we do any testing it will have to report to the DEP. Mr. Fabbri wanted Mr. Haddad to reiterate to not conduct any further testing. Whether the deed can be amended by adding the landfill was in question during the previous landfill discussion. Mr. Haddad said that to pursue amending the deed, it would take a 2/3 Majority Vote at Town Meeting. The No Trespassing Former Landfill signs have been ordered with DPW Director, Tom Delaney. If the Select Board would like to add No Motorized Vehicles signage, this can be added as well. Ms. Pine doesn’t think there should be access to trails on the property. She said walking can cause erosion on the property. Mr. Pisani agreed with Ms. Pine that there should be no trespassing signage posted at the location.

1. **Update on the Select Board Meeting Schedule Through the End of the Year**

Mr. Haddad would like to update the meeting schedule that will take the Board through the end of the year.

Monday, October 31, 2022 No Meeting

Monday, November 7, 2022 (virtual) FY 2024 Budget Update

Monday, November 14, 2022 Meet in Joint Session with the Library Trustees

Monday, November 21, 2022 Tax Classification Hearing

Monday, November 28, 2022 No Meeting

Monday, December 5, 2022 Annual License Renewal

Monday, December 12, 2022 Regularly Scheduled Meeting

Monday, December 19, 2022 Regularly Scheduled Meeting

Monday, December 26, 2022 No Meeting (Christmas Holiday)

Monday, December 26, 2022 No Meeting (New Year Holiday)

Monday, January 9, 2023 FY 2024 Town Manager’s Budget Presentation

**ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND ACTION**

1. The Sustainability Commission has requested that Charlotte Weigel be appointed as an Alternate Member of the Commission. Mr. Haddad respectfully requested that the Board make this appointment.

*Ms. Pine made a motion to appoint Charlotte Weigel as an Alternate Member. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Ms. Manugian suggested appointing a member to sign warrants for the next thirty days.

*Ms. Pine made a motion to authorize the Town Manager and Chair, John Reilly, to sign Warrants for the next thirty days. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**MINUTES**

*Ms. Manugian made a motion to approve the minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting on October 17, 2022. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**PFAS Issue at GDSD-**

There is ongoing PFAS issue at the Groton Dunstable High School, Mr. Haddad stated that a meeting was held with representatives from the Groton Dunstable School District, the Water Department, Town of Dunstable, Town of Pepperell, DEP**,** and our consulting engineers about the PFAS. The GDRSD cannot treat the water on site because of maintenance and cost. The consulting engineers are going to put forth a proposal and cost estimate on the following four choices:

1. Town of Groton to run water to the site. This would be about three miles.
2. Town of Pepperell could run a pipe one mile and a half but there is a PFAS problem with their well.
3. Town of Dunstable and Town of Pepperell to join in.
4. The Groton Water Department take over the well and put in an on-site treatment.

**IN JOINT SESSION WITH THE FINANCE COMMITTEE- DEVELOP FISCAL YEAR 2024 BUDGET GUIDANCE FOR THE TOWN MANAGER**

The purpose of the meeting was to meet in Joint Session with the Finance Committee to develop Budget Guidance for the Town Manager to develop the Fiscal year 2024 Proposed Operating Budget. To set the anticipated Levy Limit for FY 2024, Mr. Haddad said they need to figure out the final FY 2023 Levy Limit. At this time, new growth has not been certified by the Department of Revenue. Principal Assessor, Megan Foster’s best estimate for new growth for FY 2023 will be certified at $15 Million. This will add $257,850 to the Fiscal Year 2023 levy. This will need to be updated once new growth and values are certified by the Department of Revenue. The FY 2023 subtotal will be the basis for calculation for the estimated Fiscal Year 2024 Levy Limit.

State Aid was the first item addressed and reviewed by the Town’s Finance Team. Mr. Haddad said they are going to level fund State Aid ($1,077,749) at this time. Mr. Haddad said a recent report in the Boston Globe stated Lottery Revenues are down, for the first time. Mr. Haddad and the Town’s Finance Team will continue to monitor the numbers to see if that will impact State Aid. Mr. Haddad reviewed the potential new growth estimate for FY 2024. He said Shepley Hill started to pull building permits and will count towards growth. Hayes Woods was just approved by the Planning Board. Groton Farms 40B Development will be filing an application to the ZBA sometime in November. The ZBA will get 6 months to review this application, so we will probably not get any new growth from that project.

Estimated receipts was the final area of review. In FY 2023, Mr. Haddad said an estimated $4,917,620 was estimated. Looking into next year the following were reviewed:

1. **Motor Vehicle Excise Tax-** The three and five-year average were looked at $1.8 has been the three-year average.
2. **Meals Tax/Room Occupancy Tax-** Mr. Haddad said this has been an excellent revenue source over the last year. It has increased by $100,000 and they are confident it will keep growing. They are estimating an additional increase of $50,000 in FY 2024.
3. **Recreational Marijuana Revenue-** There are two licenses the Select Board granted. Mr. Haddad by July 1st the Town will have two operational marijuana businesses. The have conservatively estimated $150,000 in revenues for FY 2024.
4. **Payments in Lieu of Taxes**- This line item was estimated to increase by $25,000, in anticipation of the new ticket surcharge agreed to by Groton Hill Music.
5. **Other Charges for Services-** This line item has been increased by $9,000 to $99,000. This increase reflects the agreement we have with the Town of Dunstable to increase their reimbursement for Dispatch Services.
6. **Other Departmental Revenue-** Mr. Haddad said they have increased this estimate by $25,000 to $800,000 in anticipation of the reimbursement from the Enterprise Funds increasing due to an anticipated increase in Health Insurance.

Mr. Haddad said taking all of this into consideration, we are anticipating an increase in revenues in FY 2024 of $1,392,115 or 3.46%.

The Finance Committee stated to Mr. Haddad they did not hear anything about any new positions. Mr. Haddad said the only department where we would increase in personnel would be the Fire Department. This year they have a per diem employee working extra shifts. Finance Committee Chair, Bud Robertson, said he believes the revenue will go up. He said looking at the revenue, there are four items that could go up in $25 to $50K each, this is based off history. Mr. Robertson said the expenses look high and wages could come down anywhere from $50 to $100K. Mr. Robertson said this looks like a solid budget. Finance Committee Member, Mr. Sulprizio, suggested it could help for Department Heads to present show how they could cut their budget by 1 to 2%. Mr. Sulprizio believes it to be a good practice to envision how they could reduce their budget. Mr. Haddad said they do this if need be already.

Ms. Manugian would encourage Mr. Haddad to reach out to the schools. She understands they have not formally begun their budgeting process yet. Mr. Haddad said the superintendent was copied on his memo and they do talk regularly. Mr. Cunningham said if we can provide some relief to tax payers it would be a great thing.

Mr. Haddad agreed and said he is concerned over the increased in the Florence Roche debt. If there is a way to use some Operational Revenues to offset the debt increase and can be done within the Levy, he will try to do that.

Finance Committee Member Gary Green said the schools are expecting significant funding to catch kids up on education from COVID.

The Finance Committee and Select Board recommended the following items as their guidance to the Town Manager:

1. Balance the Budget work with the Finance Team.
2. Look at Revenues
3. Reach out to schools
4. Look to offset Flo Ro
5. Come in lower than the Levy

The meeting was adjourned at 7:11 PM

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

Matthew F. Pisani, Clerk respectfully *submitted:* Kara Cruikshank,

Executive Assistant to the Town Manager

Date Approved: November 7, 2022