#  **SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

# **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2023**

**TOWN HALL SECOND FLOOR MEETING ROOM**

**Approved – February 27, 2023**

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

**SB Absent:** none

**Also Present:** Mark Haddad – Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank – Executive Assistant – Members of the Groton Finance Committee; Library Trustees; Finance Team; Laura Chiasson, GDRSD School Superintendent; Sherry Kersey, Director of Business and Finance; Tom Delaney, DPW Director; Paul Funch, Trails Committee

Mr. Reilly called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and reviewed the agenda.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Haddad said due to tomorrow’s impending storm (Tuesday, February 28, 2023), he made the decision to make tomorrow a remote day for Town Hall. Town Hall employees may be reached by email and/or voicemail.

Mr. Reilly wanted to say he had the honor of attending the Police Accreditation Ceremony. He said this legitimizes police departments. He wanted to congratulate the Police Department on this accomplishment.

**IN JOINT SESSION WITH THE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Mr. Bud Robertson called the Finance Committee meeting to order.

Mr. Mark Gerath called the Library Trustees to order.

Mr. Haddad said the Governor released her Preliminary Chapter 70 and Unrestricted Local Aid numbers. Mr. Haddad said the GDRSD continues to not get treated well when it comes to Chapter 70 or Chapter 71. He said something needs to happen and they are working hard with our state delegation. He wanted to thank Mr. Sulprizio, whom worked with the Lieutenant Governor, and setup a meeting for Tuesday, February 28th to speak with her and address the very low increase in Aid for the School District.

The Select Board met in Joint Session with the Finance Committee to review proposed reductions in the Town Manager’s proposed FY 2024 Operating Budget to support the anticipated FY 2024 Operating Assessment from the Groton Dunstable Regional School District. The Finance Committee and Select Board need to evaluate various options to balance the FY 2024 Budget. Mr. Haddad provided the boards with a memorandum that proposed four different options to eliminate the deficit. Mr. Haddad reviewed the four options.

Mr. Haddad said he wanted to put this on the agenda so they have time to review before Saturday’s (March 4th) budget meeting. The deadline to balance the budget or consider requesting an override of Proposotion 2½ is April 3rd.

Mr. Robertson said there are other ways these cuts can happen. On Saturday, March 4, 2023, 8:30am -10:30 a.m. the departments heads will meet here at Town Hall with the Finance Committee and the Select Board to review the FY24 Operating and Capital budget. At 10:30am, there will be budget deliberation with FinCom and the Select Board. Ms. Pine asked what would happen if it snows on Saturday. Mr. Haddad said a zoom could be set up. In the fall the budget can be adjusted.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

**TOWN MANAGERS REPORT**

1. **Review First Draft of the 2023 Spring Town Meeting Warrant-**

Mr. Haddad announced the Warrant closed on Friday. The first draft of the 2023 Spring Town Meeting Warrant was included in the Select Board packet. He reviewed the draft and thirty-three Articles briefly with the board. He said the Public Hearing on the Warrant will be in Joint Session with the Finance Committee and is scheduled to take place on Monday, March 13, 2023.

1. **Consider Approving the DPW Director-In-Training.**

Mr. Haddad said Mr. Delaney gave us notification he will be retiring in two years. Mr. Haddad is requesting that the Board approve a DPW Director-In-Training Program to replace Mr. Delaney with an internal candidate. Previously the Board asked for Mr. Haddad to collect additional information before they would consider accepting the program. Mr. Haddad worked with the Human Resource Director, Melisa Doig to develop this information. The took some time to survey surrounding towns and provided the results to the Board. The purpose of the survey was to review education requirements, department responsibilities, and pay/licenses required. The DPW Director-In-Training Program provides for an annual stipend of $7,000. The chosen candidate will shadow Mr. Delaney. Groton’s DPW Director is a working Director. He is out there plowing and-in-the-fields performing the work. Ms. Manugian said she still has a lot of concerns with the idea of training a director for two years and losing them if they do not succeed in the program. Mr. Pisani suggested being clear upfront. Make sure there are standards being set, have a progress reports etc. Ms. Pine respectfully disagrees with the proposal. She thinks it is the time to require a college degree. With Mr. Delaney’s retirement, now is the time to up our qualifications. Mr. Cunningham asked what do we think we’ll gain with a college degree. Mr. Delaney respectfully disagreed with some of the things Ms. Pine said. He said promoting from within raises moral. Mr. Reilly stated from his experience, the engineering degree is an overkill, which may cost us more money. He said from looking at the conducted survey, others have not stayed in the position for a long time. Maybe they are overqualified.

Mr. Haddad wanted to address the non-college degrees. Groton has three department heads that do not have college degrees and they are three of the best departments heads. He thinks it will be beneficial to the tax payers. Mr. Cunningham asked if is there are any community college courses that may be available and make it a stipulation. Mr. Haddad said we have many available management training programs and budget training programs.

*Mr. Cunningham made a motion to approve the DPW Director-In-Training Program and to have a Select Board Member attend the interview. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. Motion approved by a majority vote, 4 In favor, 1 Against - Pine.*

1. **Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Development Update**

No additional update.

**Update on Select Board Meeting Schedule Through 2023 Spring Town Meeting**

 Saturday, March 4, 2023 - Joint Budget Meeting with Finance Committee

Monday, March 6, 2023 - Regularly Scheduled Meeting

 Monday, March 13, 2023 - Public Hearing of 2023 Spring Warrant Regularly Scheduled meeting

 Wednesday, March 15, 2023 - School Committee Approves Budget

 Monday, March 20, 2023 - No Meeting

 Monday, March 27, 2023 - Continuation of Public Hearing on Mail in Voting at Annual Town Election

 Monday, April 3, 2023 - Regularly Scheduled Meeting

 Monday, April 10, 2023 - Approve Warrant for Posting

 Monday, April 17, 2023 - No Meeting (Patriot’s Day)

 Monday April 24, 2023 - Regularly Scheduled Meeting

 Saturday, April 29, 2023 -2023 Spring Town Meeting

**ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND ACTION**

1. Mr. Haddad asked the Select Board to consider appointing Jennifer Moore to the Commemorations and Celebrations Committee.

*Mr. Pisani made a motion to appoint Jennifer Moore to the Commemorations and Celebrations Committee, term to expire June 2023. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.*

1. Consider approving a One Day All Alcoholic Beverages License for the Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce’s Taste of Nashoba to be held on Tuesday, March 21, 2023 at Lawrence Academy from 5:30 am- 8:30pm.

*Mr. Cunningham made a motion to approve the request for a one day all alcohol license to be held on Tuesday, March 21, 2023 at Lawrence Academy. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.*

1. Consider approving a One Day All Alcoholic Beverages License for the Grotonfest to be held on at Legion Hall on Saturday, September 30, 2023 from 10:30 am- 3:00pm (rain date 10-1- 2023).

*Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the request for a one day all alcohol license to be held on Saturday, September 30, 2023 (rain date 10-1-23). Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. The vote carried unanimously.*

1. Consider approving a letter to the Department of Conservation and Recreation in Support of the Nashua Riverwalk Project.

Mr. Reilly told Mr. Paul Funch, of the Trails Committee, he read the letter. Mr. Reilly wanted him to know he did a remarkable job. Mr. Funch had submitted an application to the Massachusetts Departments of Conservation and Recreation for MassTrails Grant to support the proposed Nashua Riverwalk Project. DCR did not approve the Grant Application and significantly reduced the scope of the project which will not allow the project to meet its original objective. With the Select Board’s approval, Mr. Funch will submit a letter to DCR requesting that they reconsider their decision.

*Ms. Pine moved to authorize sending a letter to the Department of Conservation and Recreation in support of the Nashua Riverwalk Project. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The vote carried unanimously.*

1. Consider Approving a Letter Seeking Support of SD2395 (MSBA Additional funding).

Mr. Cunningham requested the board to send a letter to various Cities and Towns that have school construction projects that have seen cost increases due to COVID and supply chain issued asking them to support Senator Kennedy’s bill seeking additional funding from the State to offset these costs. Mr. Haddad provided the board with a draft letter for their approval.

*Ms. Manugian moved to approve a letter seeking support of SD2395. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion. The vote carried unanimously.*

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**OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Haddad said the Florence Roche project continues to go well. They are going out on the last two final bids.

**ON-GOING ISSUES**

None

**MINUTES**

*Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting on February 13, 2023 as corrected. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.*

The meeting was adjourned at 8:53pm.

Respectively submitted by Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager