

**SELECT BOARD HYBRID MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2024  
APPROVED**

**SB Members Present:** Peter Cunningham, Chair; Alison Manugian, Clerk; Becky Pine

**SB Members Virtually Present:** John Reilly, Vice Chair; Matt Pisani

**Also Present:** Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager; Chief Michael Luth; Deputy Chief Rachael Bielecki; Gordon Candow; Melisa Doig, Human Resource Director; Patricia Dufresne, Town Accountant; Hannah Moller, Treasurer/Tax Collector; Dawn Dunbar, Town Clerk (Virtually); Raquel Majeski, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee Chair

Mr. Cunningham called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Pine announced that there will be a Community Forum for the Master Plan on February 6th at the Center. The event will take place from 2:30-3:30 pm and 7:00-8:00 pm. She said the more people participate, the better the plan will be.

Ms. Pine also wanted to share information on the Squannacook River Dam Project. She mentioned that the Groton Herald's January 26th edition inaccurately reported that the Nashua River Watershed Association (NRWA) supported this effort. The NRWA prepared a letter correcting the information, which will be published in the paper on February 9<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Pine read the letter into the record during the meeting. Mr. Cunningham added that he thought it was important for people to know that it was currently a feasibility study only and no decision has been made.

Mr. Cunningham said the Sustainability Committee will hold a session on Climate Change at the Center on Wednesday, February 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm.

Treasurer/Tax Collector Hannah Moller announced that a TREAD Committee meeting was held earlier that day. She said they determined they would extend the application period. The application deadline is now April 1st, from the previous deadline of January 31<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Pine explained that the TREAD fund is money available to support seniors struggling to pay their taxes. She wanted to encourage people to take advantage of this fund and informed everyone that other programs are available to assist those in need.

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

None

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

**1. Consider Ratifying the Town Manager's Appointment of Gordon Candow as a Sergeant on the Groton Police Department.**

Police Chief Luth, Gordon Candow, and members of the Groton Police Department were in attendance. Mr. Haddad announced there was a Sergeant vacancy in the Groton Police Department. Pursuant to the Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Groton Patrolmen's Association, Police Chief Michael Luth conducted a competitive promotional process that included a test, an oral Board with area Police Chiefs, and an interview with Chief Luth and Deputy Chief Rachael Bielecki. Based on the outcome of the process, Chief Luth recommended that Mr. Haddad appoint Gordon Candow as Sergeant. Mr. Haddad

expressed his pleasure in appointing Gordon Candow as Sergeant, the first Police Officer he had appointed as Town Manager. He read Chief Luth's recommendation letter, which he wholeheartedly supported. Chief Luth added that selecting one candidate was difficult as all three were highly qualified. He expressed that Gordon Candow was a highly respected candidate, and he could not be happier with the decision.

*Ms. Pine made a motion to ratify the Town Manager's Appointment of Gordon Candow as a Sergeant on the Groton Police Department. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion.*

*The Select Board Members expressed enthusiasm for Mr. Candow's appointment as Sergeant.*

*Roll Call: Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Cunningham- aye; Manugian-aye; Pine-aye.*

## **2. FY 2025 Budget Update.**

As requested by the Board at the last meeting, Mr. Haddad scheduled a Legislative Workshop with the Dunstable Board of Selectmen and the Groton Select Board. Senators Cronin and Kennedy, along with Representatives Scarsdale and Sena will attend the Workshop. Mr. Haddad also invited the Groton Dunstable Regional School District Committee, the Groton Finance Committee, the Dunstable Advisory Board, Superintendent Chesson, and Dunstable Town Administrator Silva to the Workshop. The purpose of the Workshop is to discuss the difficult year the Towns of Groton and Dunstable and the Groton Dunstable Regional School District are facing in Fiscal Year 2025. The Workshop will be held at the Groton Center on Monday, February 12th at 6:00 p.m. Mr. Haddad is looking forward to the forum. Ms. Manugian asked if the forum was a time for the state delegates to give the town an update or for the Select Board to provide them with one. Mr. Haddad said it would be a combination of both. Ms. Pine explained during their last visit, they suggested obtaining funds through an earmark. She said it was uncertain how much money they could receive from the state budget. Ms. Manugian would like to develop a list of topics to discuss with the State Delegation. Mr. Haddad stated it is important for them to update the public on the town's efforts to receive more funds. Mr. Haddad said he intends to thank the Legislators for the \$5.3 Million for the Florence Roche Elementary School, as it is great news for the taxpayers to get that reimbursement. Ms. Pine said it would be great for the state to provide funding for school resource officers. Mr. Pisani said they need to find other ways to leverage equality, such as the tax-exempt schools in Groton. Mr. Haddad wants to discuss the allocation of State Aid, PFAS funding for the new water line, an earmark to alleviate Broadmeadow Road flooding, and in lieu of tax payments from non-profits during the Workshop. Mr. Cunningham mentioned that increasing the circuit breaker for seniors would be beneficial. Mr. Haddad said he would work with Chair Cunningham on a list of topics for discussion for the Workshop.

Mr. Haddad said he would be meeting with the Finance Committee on Tuesday, June 6<sup>th</sup> to continue the review of the FY 2025 Budget. The meeting will take place at 7:00 pm in the First Floor meeting room. Mr. Haddad will update the Board during next week's Select Board meeting.

## **3. Update on Select Board Meeting Schedule Through the 2024 Spring Town Meeting**

Monday, February 12, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, February 19, 2024	No Meeting- Presidents Day Holiday

Monday, February 26, 2024	Public Hearing on the Warrant- Held at Groton Center
Tuesday, February 27, 2024	Special Budget Forum- Swallow Union Elementary School
Monday, March 4, 2024	Issue Warrant for Town Meeting- REMOTE MEETING
Wednesday, March 6, 2024	Special Budget Forum- Groton (Senior) Center
Monday, March 11, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, March 18, 2024	No Meeting
Monday, March 25, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, March 26, 2024	2024 Spring Town Meeting
Monday, April 1, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Tuesday, April 2, 2024	Special Election to Consider an Override of Proposition 2 1//2
Monday, April 8, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, April 15, 2024	No Meeting- Patriots Day
Monday, April 22, 2024	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Tuesday, April 23, 2024	2024 Annual Town Election

**ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND ACTION**

**1. Consider Approving location, Dates, and times for In-Person Early Voting for the April 2<sup>nd</sup> Special Election and April 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Town Election Based on the Recommendation from the Board of Registrars.**

The Town Clerk, Dawn Dunbar, presented the Board with information from the Board of Registrars. Ms. Dunbar informed everyone that the Board of Registrars had voted 3 in favor and one against holding in-person early voting for both the April 2<sup>nd</sup> Special Election and April 23<sup>rd</sup> Town Election. She explained Registrar member Mr. Greg Baran voted against the recommendation because he believed in-person early voting should not commence until after the Town Meeting on March 26<sup>th</sup> (so start in-person early voting on Wednesday, March 27<sup>th</sup>). The other three members understood Mr. Baran’s position but felt that scheduling consistency was important, especially during this election year. They also felt there would be plenty of opportunities for the public to inform themselves of the ballot question asked before the Town Meeting on March 26<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Dunbar explained the Select Board needed to consider and vote on the location, days, and hours of in-person early voting. She believes there would be no added cost as the Town Clerk’s Office staff would facilitate this. The Town Clerk will not bring in election workers to assist them. Ms. Dunbar recommended the following schedule:

April 2<sup>nd</sup> Special Election- In-person early voting schedule @ the Town Clerk’s Office

- Saturday, March 23- 9 am-3 pm
- Monday, March 25 - 8 am-7 pm
- Tuesday, March 26- 8 am-4 pm
- Wednesday, March 27- 8 am-4 pm
- Thursday, March 28- 8 am-4 pm
- Friday, March 29- 8 am-1 pm

April 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Town Election- In-person early voting schedule @ the Town Clerk’s Office

- Saturday, April 13- 9 am-3 pm
- Monday, April 15- 8 am-7 pm

- Tuesday, April 16- 8 am- 4 pm
- Wednesday, April 17- 8 am-4 pm
- Thursday, April 18- 8 am-4 pm
- Friday, April 19- 8 am-1 pm

*Ms. Pine made a motion to authorize in-person early voting, with the hours and locations outlined in the Town Manager's Report, for both the April 2nd and April 23rd Annual Town Elections. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll call: Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Cunningham- aye; Manugian-aye; Pine-aye.*

Mr. Haddad explained that, as stated in MGL c.41 §10, the Select Board is required to vote to place vacancies on the ballot. The vacancies for the Annual Town Election are as follows:

- Park Commission- 1-year term
- Groton Housing Authority- 4-year term

*Ms. Manugian made a motion to add the vacant positions of the Park Commission and Groton Housing Authority to the ballot for the Annual Town Election. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Cunningham- aye; Manugian-aye; Pine-aye.*

**2. Consider Approving a One-Day All Alcoholic Beverages License for the Annual Taste of Nashoba to be held at Lawrence Academy on Tuesday, March 19, 2024, from 5:30 pm to 8:00 pm.**

*Ms. Manugian made a motion to approve a One-Day All Alcoholic Beverages License for the Annual Taste of Nashoba to be held at Lawrence Academy on Tuesday, March 19, 2024, from 5:30 pm- 8:00 pm. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Cunningham- aye; Manugian-aye; Pine-aye.*

**3. Consider Approving Letters of Support to the Community Preservation Committee for the Proposed Prescott Building Assessment and Outdoor Fitness Court.**

Mr. Haddad respectfully requested that the Select Board consider approving letters of support to the Community Preservation Committee for the Proposed Prescott Building Assessment and the Outdoor Fitness Court Projects (see the letters included in these minutes).

*Ms. Manugian made a motion to authorize the Chair to sign and approve the letters of support to the Community Preservation Committee for the Proposed Prescott Building Assessment and Outdoor Fitness Court Project. Ms. Pine seconded the motion.*

Mr. Reilly asked Mr. Haddad to explain the proposed Building Assessment to those unfamiliar with it. Mr. Haddad said last year, the Select Board asked the Capital Planning Committee to assess the future capital needs of the Prescott School. Mr. Haddad said he was expecting to receive 4 or 5 proposals.

*Roll Call: Reilly-aye; Pisani-aye; Cunningham- aye; Manugian-aye; Pine-aye.*

**4. Consider Amending Committee Vacancy Policy to Limit the Time a Committee Interest Form will be kept on file for Consideration for six (6) months.**

Mr. Haddad explained that he had amended the Committee Vacancy Appointment Policy by stating that the town would only keep Committee Interest Forms on File for six months. He said they've had instances of people applying for a vacancy over two years ago, wondering why they weren't contacted when a vacancy opened up. He said it was too difficult to track and would recommend they keep the period shorter. The amended Policy is included in the minutes for review and consideration. Mr. Haddad said he would like to let people know we would keep Committee Interest forms on file for six months.

Ms. Manugian asked if six months was too long to keep track of the forms and suggested maybe a three-month period was more appropriate. Mr. Pisani and Ms. Pine thought six months was a reasonable amount of time. Mr. Reilly asked for clarification on when the 6-month clock would start. Mr. Haddad confirmed that the clock would start once the Committee Interest form is received. Mr. Cunningham suggested updating the Committee Interest form to reflect this change.

Mr. Cunningham asked the Board to revisit this topic during the next Select Board meeting on February 12<sup>th</sup>.

#### **6:15 P.M. Update from the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee**

Ms. Raquel Majeski, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee Chair, was in attendance to update the Select Board on their work.

Ms. Majeski shared that Mr. Gordon Candow is an important DEI Committee member and a wealth of knowledge. The DEI Committee had a vacancy, and Damien Huggins was voted to fill the position.

She said the committee discussed hate crimes earlier in the year and provided important recommendations to the Select Board. They hosted a well-attended forum where District Attorney Marion Ryan shared statistics and did an amazing job. The committee organized a wonderful Martin Luther King celebration at Prescott in January. Ms. Majeski expressed the importance of educating the community.

The Committee is researching gender-inclusive restrooms and examining what that would look like in the community. They are continuing their due diligence before making any suggestions.

They are partnering with Lawrence Academy and exploring land acknowledgments. They are excited to partner with Ms. Pine on the great work she is already doing in the town with regard to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Ms. Pine added that the District Attorney also hosts a monthly webinar on topics such as hate crimes, diversity, and various programs. Through one of the webinars which focused on building relationships with the native tribes, Ms. Pine connected with a Nipmuc tribe member who may help in organizing a ceremonial event in the fall, as a newly named Nipmuc Meadow. This would involve the presentation of a plaque for this newly named property and maybe some representation of the Nipmuc Tribe can attend.

Mr. Cunningham shared his positive feedback about the DEI Committee, stating that it is a great resource for identifying issues that the Select Board should be aware of. He also mentioned that the Committee could support the Board if needed. Ms. Majeski suggested the idea of being proactive as the election season

approaches. Mr. Pisani appreciated the proactive approach and commended it as an excellent way of handling things.

Ms. Majeski thanked the Select Board for their time that evening.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms. Pine announced that a non-profit council meeting will be held on Monday, February 26th, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting will take place at the Groton Hill Music Center.

#### **ON-GOING ISSUES**

- A. PFAS Issue- Mr. Haddad stated that now that the Select Board has signed the IMA with Dunstable for Phase II of the PFAS solution at the Groton Dunstable Regional High School, the Town will begin permitting and designing Phase I. He said they are currently looking for a location for a chlorine booster station on Chicopee Row. Mr. Haddad said he would bring it back to the Board once they have a location. Due to this, Mr. Haddad said he may need to add an article to the warrant.
- B. Green Communities Application and Implementation- Mr. Haddad met with Mr. Phil Francisco and Mr. Ken Horton from the Sustainability Commission. They discussed the plans and next steps of the Sustainability Commission. Mr. Haddad will come up with a Charge for a Climate Action Plan Working Group and list it on a future Select Board agenda. Ms. Manugian asked Mr. Haddad to contact Hollingsworth and Vose (H&V), which is responsible for a large part of the Greenhouse Gas emissions. She wants to understand what can be done to reduce these emissions. She mentioned the possibility of Green Community funding or grants to support this.
- C. Florence Roche Elementary School Construction Project- Mr. Haddad reminded the Select Board of the construction tour at Florence Roche on Tuesday, February 6, starting at 11:45 am.

#### **Approval of Minutes from January 29, 2024**

*Ms. Pine made a motion to approve the minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting from January 29, 2024. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll call: Pisani-aye; Cunningham-aye; Manugian-aye; Pine-aye (Reilly- Abstained).*

The meeting was adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

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