

SPECIAL SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
ZOOM MEETING
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2024
APPROVED

SB Members Virtually Present: Alison Manugian, Chair; Becky Pine, Vice Chair; Matt Pisani; John Reilly; Peter Cunningham, Clerk;

Also Present: Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager; Bud Robertson; and Pay Your Fair Share Initiative members Jim Barisano, Paul Fitzgerald, and Ginny Babin.

Ms. Manugian called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. DISCUSS/REVIEW/APPROVE SENDING LETTERS TO GROTON SCHOOL AND LAWRENCE ACADEMY CONCERNING THE PAY YOUR FAIR SHARE DEMONSTRATION SCHEDULED FOR SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2024.

Ms. Manugian said this meeting was being held to discuss possibly sending a letter to Groton School and Lawrence Academy regarding the scheduled demonstration by the Pay Your Fair Share Initiative members on Saturday, October 19th. Mr. Haddad mentioned on Monday that he was copied on an email from the Headmaster of the Groton School with his response to a member of the Pay Your Fair Share Initiative concerning the demonstration and felt the email's tone from the Fair Share Group was somewhat threatening. Mr. Haddad believes the Select Board should take a public position on the proposed demonstration and consider sending a letter to the headmasters to clarify their stance. He summarized the draft letter, informing the two headmasters of the Board's position that they do not support nor condone this demonstration. Ms. Manugian reminded everyone that this matter has been added as a Select Board Goal and will remain on their agendas. Mr. Pisani said they are taking this on because it was a response to what they have heard from the community. Ms. Manugian and Ms. Pine agreed with Mr. Pisani. Ms. Pine said the Board objected to the demonstration because they thought it was the wrong approach. Mr. Cunningham said they are indicating as a Board that they are not formally endorsing the demonstration, and this is a separate effort from this group.

Public Comment

Mr. Jim Barisano said he was disappointed the Board was not getting behind the demonstration. He said the town's citizens believe it has gone on for too long and feel this is disappointing and costing the residents. He thinks that as a community, it is responsible for everyone to Pay Their Fair Share.

Ms. Manugian expressed concern that it would decrease voluntary school contributions. The Board members agreed that Mr. Haddad's letter should be forwarded to the headmasters of Lawrence Academy and Groton School.

Mr. Cunningham made a motion to send the letter as drafted and reviewed by Town Counsel to Lawrence Academy and Groton School. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll call: Cunningham-aye; Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Pisani-aye; Reilly-aye.

Mr. Haddad said he would post the letter on the Town of Groton website, email it, and mail it to Lawrence Academy and Groton School.

Mr. Paul Fitzgerald was in attendance. He said that by sending the letters to the schools, they are working against the citizens and the Groton taxpayers. He said they have tried to work with the Town Manager and the Chair. He said they hoped the Select Board's letter would boost the attendance at their demonstration. Mr. Paul Fitzgerald and Ms. Ginny Babin read a statement from the Pay Your Fair Share Initiative Group into the record.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:17 p.m. Respectively submitted by Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager.