

Town of *Dunstable* Selectboard
&
Town of *Groton* Selectboard
Joint Meeting Minutes
January 21, 2015
Town Hall, Dunstable, MA 01827

Convened: 7:01 pm

Present: Walter F. Alterisio, Chair, Kenneth J. Leva, Daniel F. Devlin member; Josh Degan, Chair; Anna Elliot, Vice Chair, representatives for the Groton Board of Selectmen. Madonna McKenzie, Town Administrator

Opening

Mr. Alterisio opened the meeting and briefly explained the purpose of the meeting. He extended a warm welcome on behalf of the citizens of Dunstable to the citizens of Groton and specifically to the Groton Board of Selectmen.

Groton-Dunstable School District

The Board started off by discussing the situation concerning the school district regional agreement, including the MARS Consulting Group's review and recommendations made to the School Board. The Board noted specifically that the at hand is how the school committee members are selected and serve. Currently there are five ways by which members may be chosen. If elected, Federal Law requires that they be elected based upon the population of the community. Currently, regional school district agreement bases school committee seats on student population rather than community population. School Committee members may under law be elected, appointed, and so forth. There also exist some maintenance issues that need to be addressed in order for the agreement to be fully in compliance with MGL. Currently, the way things are done by the schools administration are in fact in compliance with law, but the agreement itself is not up to date as it should be.

The Board proposes to Groton that the two towns embark on this task, with recommendations to revise by the next Annual Town Meetings of the both towns. The component of the School Committee would be to endorse and confirm the agreement from an administration side. Ms. Eliot clarified some questions she had concerning the Mars Consulting Group's recommendations. The Board elaborated that there are situations where students might have to go out of the school district, and this situation is not only expensive, but can be somewhat complex. As such, Dunstable would like to see the school district at least help in coordination of the administration of such situations (while the town would pay the pupil costs necessary). This would clarify out of district situations.

Mr. Degan noted that Groton sends its students to Nashoba Tech, and that its needs are different from Dunstable's. He noted that the first approach would be to form a committee with one member of each Selectboard, the Town Administrator (Dunstable) and Town Manager (Groton), the superintendent of the schools (GDRSD), and the chair of the school committee. He also noted that a warrant article articulating the reaffirmation by both towns towards the basis of and the need for the agreement would not be out of the question as requested by Dunstable. Subsequent discussion revolved around things this committee could take the opportunity to consider what if any changes should be taken in the agreement. There was also consensus that each town should be able to propose changes.

Ms. Eliot moved the conversation make to the Mars Consulting Group report by asking who commissioned it. The Board explained that it was initiated by the School Committee. Ms. Elliot accepted this explanation and noted that if a committee was formed between the two towns but expressed that Groton would have to know better what specifically it is that Dunstable wishes to see changed in the

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agreement if any changes are even desired. The Board noted that there are some elements of the current agreement out of sync with the law and with how things are done by the school district. The Board feels that the agreement ought to specifically state that the School Committee members are in need of being based on the population. Mr. Degan noted that it has been a while since this agreement has been revisited, and he agrees that the two boards need to take a look at it. He noted that it costs over 55 percent of each town's budget. The Board reiterated that money is a side issue, and likely to stay the same regardless of how the agreement might be modified.

Mr. Degan asked if there was a consensus on the formation of a committee. The Board responded that this indeed would be acceptable. Ms. Eliot agreed. Mr. Degan asked whether Dunstable would be willing to communicate with the school district concerning the formation of this proposed committee. He did not make promises, but appeared to reach consensus with the Board. Mr. Degan also asked that Dunstable's Town Administrator talk to Groton's Town Manager to get his started. Ms. McKenzie clarified the membership of this committee, which Mr. Degan aptly provided.

Ms. McKenize clarified on the matter of out of district students and why that is one of the things that Dunstable would like to change in the agreement, as Mr. Alterisio noted.

The Groton Board left at 7:24pm

Action Items

➤ *Conservation Commission Request*

The Conservation Commission submitted a request for \$10,000 from the Wetland Protection Fund for a site survey. The Commission assured the Board that sufficient funds are in the account to cover this expenditure. The Board agreed to the transfer and a motion was made by Mr. Devlin to provide approval for the Commission to spend up to \$10,000 from the Wetland Protection Act funds for their stated purpose. The motion was seconded by Mr. Leva and passed without objection.

➤ *Town Hall Use Request*

A request to use Grange Room was made by Lt. Dow of the Dunstable Police Dept. in order to allow for training for the cert group. The date was for January 17th. The Board noted again their appreciation for the commitment of the cert group and for first responders in the town. A motion was made by Mr. Leva to approve of the application retroactively to allow the cert group to use the Town Hall for training on the 17th of January. The motion was seconded by Mr. Devlin and passed without debate.

➤ *Cemetery Request*

The Cemetery Commission requested that the Board allow for the disposal of a shed that is no longer of use or value to them. The law requires that the Board agree with this conclusion by formal motion before the shed may be disposed of. The Board agreed that the shed was no longer of value and a motion was made by Mr. Devlin to adopt the recommendation of the Cemetery Commission to remove the shed. It was seconded by Mr. Leva and passed without objection.

➤ *Town Clerk Election Workers*

The Town Clerk submitted a request for increase in wages for election poll workers. The Clerk noted that this increase is required in order for the town to be in full compliance with all relevant MGL. Ms. McKenzie informed the Board that the Advisory Board was ok with this given the legal requirement in place. A motion was made by Mr. Devlin to increase the pay to \$9 dollars per hour and to \$10.50 per hour

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respectively for each of the two positions in question in order to remain in full compliance with applicable MGL. The motion was seconded by Mr. Leva and carried without objection.

➤ *Warrants & Mail Items*

The Board reviewed mail that included communication from the Town Clerk, the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, and reviewed a contract sent to the town by the Commonwealth that concerned the Affordable Housing Plan. Mr. Alterisio as Chair signed the contract, which awards \$10,000 to the town to fund work on the Affordable Housing Plan.

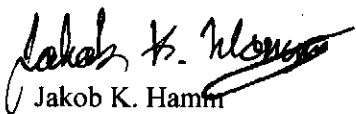
The Board also signed the payroll and vender warrants from the Town Treasurer.

➤ *Water Commission*

The Board determined after some discussion that it needs to hold a joint meeting with the Water Commission. The Board would like to discuss with the Commissioners what the vision is going forward and how the infrastructure of the town will need to adapt and change as the town meets its goals and requirements under MGL. This is important in light of the need to update the Affordable Housing Plan amongst other projects relating to expected development and change in the town. The Board determined that it would invite the Water Commission to join it for its meeting scheduled for February 11th if possible.

Motion to adjourn at 7:37pm made by Mr. Devlin, seconded by Mr. Leva and passed without debate.

Respectfully submitted by



Jakob K. Hamn
Admin. Assistant to the Selectboard & Town Administrator

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