

MINUTES

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

APRIL 7, 2014

Meeting called to order at 6:15 P.M.

Present Selectmen Elizabeth A. Gorski, Joseph R. D'Amore, Chairman Donald N. Greaney

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance

Geoffrey Geiger – Eagle Scout Project

Geoff informed the Board that he has completed the first steps of his Eagle Scout project that he met with the Board about recently. Geoff told the Board that his project will include collecting old worn and ripped flags and hold a traditional ceremony where they flags are laid over a fire and burnt. He told the Board that he provide new flags to those who need them. Geoff told the Board that he would like to hold the ceremony at the Pines Recreation site on June 14th (Flag Day); that he would set up at 4:00 PM, hold the ceremony at 6:00 PM and clean up at 8:00 PM. He asked whether there is a fee for use of the Pines and if so, would the Board consider waiving the fee. Geoff informed the Board that if he is approved for this portion of his project he would discuss fire safety with the town's Fire Chief; that he will also be working with veterans David Tuttle and Mr. Sample. He assured the Board that he would run a good ceremony. He also informed the Board that nylon flags will be recycled rather than burned.

Selectman Gorski told Geoff that the Board doesn't charge fees for use of the Pines. Chairman Greaney told Geiger he will need to burn logs; that skids are not allowed to be burnt. Greaney asked if the weather was very windy whether he would cancel the ceremony and Geoff responded that he would, and agreed to coordinate with the Fire Chief to have a water supply standing by.

Moved Gorski, seconded D'Amore, and it was

VOTED: To approve the request of Geoff Geiger to use the Pines Recreation site on June 14th for a flag burning ceremony, and to inform the Board's Assistant of a second date in case of windy or inclement weather.

Approve Warrants

Moved D'Amore, seconded Dunn, and it was

VOTED: To approve Payroll Warrant #14-40.

D'Amore, Greaney – "Aye"; Gorski – "Abstain" 2-1

Moved D'Amore, seconded Dunn, and it was

VOTED: To approve Bill Warrant # 14-39 & #14-39C. 3-0

Moved D'Amore, seconded Dunn, and it was

VOTED: To approve Deduction Warrant #14-38A. 3-0

6:20 PM – Board of Assessors

Office Manager Deb Webster presented a written explanation for her salary adjustment. The Board of Assessors were not present at the meeting. Chairman Greaney asked the Board's Assistant to speak with Webster and if there is a rationale for her request, the Selectmen would be willing to meet on her request on Thursday.

6:30 PM - WATER/SEWER COMMISSIONERS

Commissioners met with the Selectmen to seek support for their budget increase for the Office Manager's position; that they have changed their billing cycle from semi-annual to quarterly; that she is now preparing bills two additional times a year; that they have been paying overtime and wish to move her position back to salaried and increase it by the amount they have been paying in overtime. He stated that their Office Manager is always there when she needs to be and they have not had complaints; that it's one person running the whole department. Chairman Greaney commented that they are seeking a 14% increase and Adams responded that it's the same amount of money, just a different way to pay it and they are not seeking a raise for the position. Commissioner Adams stated that they changed to quarterly billing to accommodate their customers and Superintendent Cusick commented that doing quarterly billing also will help them see leaks sooner.

Adams told the Board they are seeking support for a 3% raise for their other help and Greaney responded that the Selectmen will be supporting 2% raises. Adams told the Board that there are fewer people getting licenses; that their men have them; that they lost one employee after he had been trained and that the Commissioners feel they need to pay more than 2%. Selectman D'Amore asked what the Commissioners feel they should be paying and Adams responded that Groveland is a little below average. D'Amore asked how much the average hourly wage is and asked if there is a customary increase in water? Adams responded the average is at rate of inflation and that is 3% this year. Selectman Greaney responded that the Selectmen feel they should be looking at a 2% raise for town employees; that they are the ones negotiating all the other contracts and that if there's a variable in it, it ruins the others. Commissioner Willett told the Board that their department is running very good; that their men need to take courses and become certified; that the men have all their licenses. Adams asked if they accept a 2% raise at town meeting, could they give additional raises during the year and Greaney responded if they have the money appropriated in their budget, and stated again that the town is not giving 3% raises. Superintendent Cusick remarked that they are a unique department and need to be competitive with their neighbors.

Selectman D'Amore told the Commissioners that they may need to establish what credentials they will require; that the town should not be obligated to pay because they exceed the required credentials. Commissioner Sheehan responded that you have to reward your help for bettering themselves.

7:22 PM - Library Trustees

Chairman Beth Burton asked the Selectmen what the Cori process for new employees is and Lisa Dube' remarked that anyone who has an occasion to be around children should be required to have a Cori completed on them; that their Director had informed them that the town needs to have a policy on record. Finance Director Demboski responded that she will need to check with the State as to what the process is and will let Chairman Burton know.

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Library Director Nathalie Harty submitted her resignation letter effective April 28, 2014 and Chairman Greaney told the Trustees that he has spoken with Nathalie and she assured him she will finish the grant application she's been working on. Lisa Dube' told the Selectmen that the Director also coordinates the annual book sale and the library's Open House and asked what the expectation is of what can be asked of Nathalie; that the staff always participates in these events. Greaney told Dube' that he asked Nathalie and was told any other staff member could coordinate the event for the Trustees. Dube' suggested Greaney ask her to identify which staff member could work with Dube'.

Chairman Burton told the Board that they have money in the budget and will be searching to hire an Interim Director; that they will post the interim position on the municipal web site. Dube' responded that the Board of Trustees should look at how they are doing things. Chairman Greaney asked if everyone is following guidelines of what their roles are? Resident Doreen Blades commented as a library patron, resident and having served on multiple boards in town, that she feels there is a high turnover at the library; that Mim Burbridge left, Deb Hoadley left, and all her staff, and now Nathalie. She remarked that the Trustees have hired fantastic Directors and questions why we lose them. Selectman Greaney told Blades the Trustees will review their responsibilities and that of the Director. Dube' responded stating that the Board is learning with first time Directors not experienced and working under a Board of Trustees. Dube' also suggested that experienced people will not consider the job because of the salary; that public library is a special skill; that this is a learning process as a Board and they are open to looking at things; that when Nathalie expressed some concerns she had the Trustees brought in a person to do team building.

Selectman Greaney told the Trustees that a lot of the patrons are very supportive of the staff and the Trustees are getting blamed for whatever is happening, but people move on. Gorski remarked that people resist change. Greaney told the Trustees to work with the Finance Director to find how each positions responsibilities line up and try to come up with a good guideline for each position to follow.

Selectman D'Amore told the Trustees that he knows they have professional guidance on selecting a new Director but recommends that they figure out what the criteria is going to be; that before engaging in the hiring process, share it with the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee, have a vision and go back and finalize it, and also perhaps do some public sessions, then engage in the process of hiring someone, saying that if they operate in a vacuum they might feel a lot of responsibility and weight and they're not getting any sound board and they just going to go ahead and hire someone, you may carry some problems that you didn't work out. Dube' and Burton both responded that they had community members on the search committee the last time they hired a Director. D'Amore told the Trustees that depending on the time commitment he'd be interested in being involved in the process as well. Chairman Greaney asked that the Selectmen vote to accept the resignation of Nathalie Harty. Moved Gorski, seconded D'Amore, and it was

VOTED: To accept the resignation of Nathalie Harty from her position as Library Director, said resignation effective April 28, 2014. 3-0

Chairman Greaney told the Trustees that the Selectmen will work with them in the process of hiring a new Director and Selectman Gorski expressed the Board's thanks to Nathalie for her service with the Town.

Selectman D'Amore told the Trustees that if they have a designee to act on behalf of the Library Director, that person is empowered to direct staff to assist with the Open House.

Trustee Chairman Burton asked about the process for having the walkway into the library looked at and repaired; that the area doesn't drain well and the patrons have difficulty getting to the library due to the large puddle that occurs across the walkway. Chairman Greaney responded that she will need to present what the problem is to the Board's Assistant and if there are sufficient funds in the municipal budget, they will try to address fixing the problem as soon as possible. The Trustees thanked the Board for their time.

Washington Street House Fire

Chairman Greaney informed his fellow board members that the owners of the home on Washington Street that had recently burned down had made a request to be allowed to place a small house trailer on the site so they can live there while their home is being rebuilt; that he (Greaney) had asked their Assistant to send a letter to the ZBA to please give their immediate attention to the request, which the ZBA did and voted unanimously to allow the trailer at the site. The Board's Assistant informed the Board that she had asked the ZBA to waive their fee due to this emergency situation and asked the Selectmen to vote their approval. The Board of Health will also be notified if approval for the trailer is given so that it can be tied into the septic system.

Moved Gorski, seconded D'Amore, and it was

VOTED: To approve the waiving of ZBA fees for application on the request to place a temporary living trailing at the site of the recent fire on Washington St. in order for the homeowners to have a place to live while their home is being rebuilt. 3-0

7:50 PM - Fire Chief-department budget

Chairman Greaney informed Fire Chief Lay that the Finance Board had met with the Board and Finance Director and the fire department budget came up. Also, Finance Director Demboski gave a memo to the Board indicating that Lay had contracted with the town's website vendor, Virtual Town Hall, to add a burning permit webpage to the website; that the Finance Director notified Virtual Town Hall and the Fire Chief that only she is allowed to sign contracts, not any other department employee and had informed the Chief that he will have to pay for the service from his department's expense budget. Lay responded that this is "on the job learning" for him.

Chairman Greaney told Lay that counsel had provided information as to how the budget under a strong Chief works. Lay told the Board that he had talked about automating and purchasing software that could be used for completing payroll; that when doing that, he would not need a paid Clerk position to complete payroll. Greaney asked if there were other duties performed by the Clerk and Lay responded that he has told the Board several times and invited them and the Finance Director over to the station to view the operation; that it is antiquated and the opportunity for misappropriation of anything is high; that stuff is just stuffed in folders, checks sitting over there from December that haven't been cashed yet and it's not a good way to do

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business. Lay continued that he told the Board that he wants to automate his department and stated he is now asking if he can do so; that they should collectively spend money to automate so as to actually have records for payroll and training, personnel records all part of one system. Lay said the major part of the Clerk's job is to do payroll; that the old system is over there and is antiquated; that he's talked to several vendors and if he purchases the software it would eliminate the Clerk's position. Lay said if they bought the software and eliminates the position it would save \$10,000; that his position cannot be done in 14 hours a week and that's how they got to where they are now; that there's a large amount of responsibility associated with the position.

D'Amore responded to Lay stating that if he (Lay) is reducing the cost of running the Fire Department he (D'Amore) is not predisposed to put the savings into a salary; that if he's going to save money than they should save it. Lay told the Board that he will buy the software and the Board can continue to donate to the Clerk and running the department like in the sixties and told the Board this is no way to run a business. Greaney asked the Finance Director if they remove the position would the employee be entitled to unemployment and Dembkoski replied that he would.

Chairman Greaney worked all the numbers and informed his fellow Board members and Lay that they would be able to increase the Chief's hours by 2.5 per week, for a total of 16.5 hours if the Chief were to buy the software and assume the Clerk's responsibilities. Greaney noted that the Chief had asked in the past where in the budget was there money for his training and suggested that if there is extra money in the Drill Wages the Chief could be allowed to use that line item for his training. Lay responded that there is \$11,000 left in that account at this time.

D'Amore stated that the Finance Board is recommending a 2% increase to the training budget and the Chief is recommending a significant reduction of almost \$6,000. D'Amore asked Lay how he justifies the reduction. Lay responded that D'Amore asked that question before and that he (Lay) answered it before. Selectman D'Amore responded that he is asking the question in Open Session and Lay said it had been asked in Open Session before but he will tell D'Amore again, under run it; that there's plenty left over. D'Amore responded that the Chief is looking for money for training for himself yet he's reducing the training budget by \$6,000 for his salary; that he is confused and doesn't see how the Chief can reduce the training budget by \$6,000 and not cause a problem. D'Amore stated again that the Finance Board is recommending

Chairman Greaney told Lay that he could be paid for training from the Drill wage account, but it would not be added to his salary just additional pay when he has training. Greaney asked what kind of training Lay would be having and was told it is a formal training program for Fire Chiefs. Greaney stated that he doesn't know what type of training Lay is talking about. Lay stated that there is a formal training program available for Fire Chiefs. Greaney asked about the Mass Academy training for firemen and Lay responded that the Mass Academy is 330 hours and a stipend is given in the amount of \$2,750; that they did not send anyone to the Academy this year but they may need to do in the near future. Selectman Gorski responded that she would expect so. Lay noted that it works out to about \$4 an hour.

Fire Chief Lay told the Selectmen that he is progressing as quickly as he can for the amount of time he has stating that it takes time to do this stuff. Gorski responded that she believes it's

important to train our public safety personnel; that she doesn't believe in short changing Lay or the police department when it comes to that. Gorski told Lay that his predecessor did not have the time either. Lay responded it is clear what John did or didn't do; that they got what they paid for. Lay told the Board that to think he signed up for 30 hours of work to be paid for 14 is unrealistic; that he knows when he was here in October he was told all he could have is what had been voted. Lay stated that he has come to the Board stating there is a problem and he has the solution to the problem and doesn't appreciate it being cut up by saying you'll pay for 15.5 hours for this, you'll pay for 5 hours a week for training, and 3 hours a week to go to inspections, all to avoid having a salary that is similar to what other Chiefs are getting; that actually it's lower than what others are getting. Lay told the Board that the market rate for a Fire Chief in this area is between \$75,000-\$85,000, and the rate that he put down for his 30 hour a week job would be \$61,000. Lay commented that it happens to be what the Georgetown Fire Chief gets. Lay told the Board the way he justifies his request is that he is retired; that he doesn't need to earn \$85,000 a year so he feels to work 30 or 40 hours a week at that rate is a bargain with his experience and skill set. Lay told Chairman Greaney that perhaps they need to agree to disagree because they clearly disagree, get over themselves and hire a consultant or co-hire some consultant and agree to go by what the consultant recommends; that this tug of war isn't good for him, for the board or the community. Lay stated this doesn't make any sense; that is not how this is done in his mind. Selectman D'Amore told the Chief that he is not sold on the fact of shutting down other positions and consolidating others pay will make our department magically better. Lay responded "no magic Joe, business".

Chairman Greaney stated that going back to when they did have all the consultants in the room, when everyone was negotiating and discussing the Fire Chief's salary, they didn't have all the information maybe but based on the information they did have they put together a job description, a salary, it got advertised, other people applied for the job, you (Lay) took the job, and their expectation was that they were going to get the fire department moving forward.

Greaney told Lay that he's not opposed to Lay's recommendation to do away with the Clerk's position, but due to unemployment costs it would only give him another hour and a half a week toward the Chief's hours; that the Inspector's role has always been done by another fire department employee and questioned if it's better to do it that way. Lay responded that if someone has an issue with the Inspector they can appeal to the Chief and if the Chief denies the appeal the person can appeal to the State. Lay told the Board that if he assumed the inspection duties they person would appeal directly to the State. Chairman Greaney asked Lay if he really needs to be going out doing inspections when he could be working on his other duties. Lay responded that since he met with the Finance Board he put the \$3,000 back in the Inspector's line item, found some other opportunities within the expense budget to move over, and told Greaney that the question is do you want him out in the field seeing businesses and doing inspections or do you want the Fire Chief sitting in his office. Greaney responded that there was a lot of initial work that needed to get accomplished which he believes everyone agreed; that all these SOG's and SOP's need to be accomplished and that Lay said he had a plan that he could just grab those from another community and change the name of the towns. Lay replied that that all sounds great but guess what, each department has its own because they wrote them from training modules; that there is no standard but he has gotten some from Essex County Fire Chief's Association that he may be able to use.

Selectman Gorski asked if the Essex County Fire Chief's Association is a good resource for him and Lay told her it is a great resource; that they have been very helpful; that it's a half day a month for him to attend and a full day a month to attend the MA Association meetings. Greaney suggested that once the Chief has all the SOGs and SOPs in place maybe there wouldn't be a need to attend all the monthly meetings; that once the work is done it's done. Lay disagreed stating that it's not a set it and forget it business; that it's a work in progress. Lay said he gets emails everyday sent to all Chiefs; that this business is about Code changes and the way you do business, testing equipment, etc. and told Greaney fighting one fire today is different then when he and Greaney fought 10 a year.

Lay stated again that the reason he feels they should get a consultant is because he doesn't think they should just take it from him; that he feels they should ask a consultant why can't a fire chief do the job in 14 hours and stated "because he can't". He asked why are we the only community that figured out it's a part-time job when every other community sees it as a full-time job; that all the other communities around us have full-time Chiefs with the exception of West Newbury whose population is half of Groveland's. Lay stated again he is saying the get a consultant and ask how long would it really take to perform the Fire Chief's job description. Greaney told Lay that the problem they have is the Town Meeting Warrants need to be posted by Friday and they need to have the numbers on them.

Selectman D'Amore stated it's not just about numbers and budgets; that it's also about the responsibility of the Board of Selectmen; that when the Board of Fire Engineers was eliminated the Selectmen didn't realize that it would essentially become the last stop. He asked if the Board would be who a resident appeals to if they aren't happy with an inspection stating that he doesn't feel he wants to take the time out from his work and his personal life to learn enough about running a fire department; that he doesn't feel he is capable of running a fire department. Chairman Greaney told him that the appeal would not be to the Selectmen; that it would be to the State Fire Marshall.

Lay told the Board that it's still about what he told them in the interview process; that he will give them a better fire department for the same money (referring to the total department budget and moving monies around from within to add to his salary for working 30 hours). Lay told the Board it is still about that. Selectman Gorski responded that people have accused the Board of making agreements with him and have been asked what is wrong with them. She told her fellow Board members that she thinks if they had really been astute at what they do, they as a board should have known that you can't run a fire department on 14 hours a week; that they never did that in the past and they should have been thinking about. Gorski told Lay they had people telling them that they had firefighters getting short changed in their wages; that they weren't getting their training. Gorski stated she wants the firefighters to get all the training, drills, everything they need and education and to be fair with the Fire Chief at the same time. Lay responded that nothing in his recommendation entailed cutting firemen or training. D'Amore disagreed and Lay argued asking how many people had zero training in the month of February and D'Amore stated he didn't know. Lay replied that he sends the reports and asked D'Amore if he looks at them, then asked the Board's Assistant if she gives them to him. Lay said he's not taking their money away; that they decided not to come to training.

Selectman D'Amore responded to Lay stating that to the Chairman's point Lay was also on the committee that wrote the job description and they didn't expect this; that they didn't expect to

get into a fight to give you a 150% increase in salary and shutting out other positions, including one that is dear to his heart; that it doesn't necessarily have to be the person in the position, and that is the check and balances of the fire department clerk. D'Amore told Lay that his proposal is unacceptable to him on multiple levels and that he wants to be very direct with him and hopes he is very clear on it. Lay responded saying he recognizes the fact that D'Amore has very little experience in these matters and that he probably doesn't understand. D'Amore asked Lay if he accepted the position in good faith because he told the Board that this position was something that he could accept and accepted it and within a matter of a week or two you came back and told the Board that you can't do the job in fourteen hours a week. D'Amore asked again if Lay had accepted the job in good faith. D'Amore asked Lay if he would answer his question and Lay asked did he answer it last week when D'Amore asked it, or two weeks ago, and D'Amore advised he should be very careful revealing what was discussed in Executive Session. Lay responded that then he will answer it and said he had accepted it in good faith. Lay stated he was on a committee with other people and they wrote a job description and the Selectmen accepted the job description and nowhere in there was discussion about needing to keep the job description down so it could be done in 14 hours per week; that they didn't do that.

Chairman Greaney responded that it was said it was at the amount of money that was funded and Lay told Greaney that did not happen; that the job description is robust and sitting in an interview and accepting what was in writing and what was voted at town meeting, that he gets all that but the fact of the matter is that he's the candidate and the Board is the hiring manager and he would expect the hiring manager to know what they are hiring the person into instead of trying to spin it around to blame him for the job being greater than what's allowed. Selectman D'Amore responded saying to Lay that he had no idea that the job was going to be much bigger than what he accepted and Lay responded no he didn't and D'Amore commented that he finds that hard to believe.

Fire Captain Kurt Ruschella told the Board that they were not privy to anything that went on with the Board of Engineers. Ruchella told the Board that he would recommend they take on a consultant to see what they need; that he was also on the committee that wrote the job description and it was based on other towns around us and what the Fire Chief is expected to do; that you can't expect people to donate their time when there is this much at stake; that you have to do the job and it's not just the paper, the administration, the payroll; that he told the Board this when they were writing the job description that the Chief has to be a manager, leader, mentor and a motivator; that that's all extremely important for a call fire department; that if you want to see the price tag sky rocket, it's when all the firefighters leave. Kirk told the Board that its important for the Chief to motivate and bring along the next generation of firefighters and the Board has to figure out what's best for the town and that he will tell them right now that what is best for the fire department is keeping a good leader who is also a good manager. Ruschella told the Board that they should go out and do their own bench marking; that he just read that the Town of Essex, for a full-time Fire Chief, with a smaller population than Groveland is paying \$85,000. Kirk told the Board that if they are trusting what is coming from the Fire Department they need to go out and get the information outside.

Selectman D'Amore responded that he is very concerned about the Fire Department; that basically they have dragged out discussion for months now about the Chief's salary and shutting down positions; that if they are going to do that he thinks they put together a study for a

return to a Board of Fire Engineers. D'Amore told his fellow Board members that he doesn't like the responsibility that the Selectmen now have, considering removing more checks and balances; that he doesn't like being in that position and doesn't believe that is in the best interest of the town. D'Amore moved that the Board approve the Fire Department budget as recommended by the Finance Board and shown in the third column, and asked for a second to allow for discussion. No second was received.

Kurt asked what the checks and balances are that are being talked about and Greaney responded that they have to do with the Fire Clerk's position overseeing the hours and payroll of the men. Greaney stated that he always felt it would be easier if the slips were sent to the Finance Director's office and that office could figure it out; that he doesn't know if what they were doing in the past with a Clerk is all that necessary. Kurt responded that it's obvious the town is doing its due diligence because the Board had a question on the budget and asked isn't that the checks and balances? Chairman Greaney explained what the Chief told the Board when he requested changing to a software program for keeping runs and payroll up to date. Kurt responded he thinks there is a fear of change and moving forward; that he doesn't think going back to a Board of Fire Engineers is what should be done. Ruchalla told the Board they should put the Chief's budget before the taxpayers with a plan of where the department is going and let them decide.

Selectman Gorski asked if they agree to do a study and the results show you should be doing this and you should be doing that, and a suggestion of what a fairer salary would be, are we going to be satisfied with that number? Gorski stated that they are in a quandary and although time is of the essence maybe they need to bring in someone to take a look at the job description that was put together by all firefighters. Selectman D'Amore responded saying they already had that study, they had a number of exceptionally qualified people apply for the job and they were telling the Board that they could do the job the way it was presented and designed. Gorski responded that they now have another issue. D'Amore continued saying the Police Department made a change in their organization, created an efficiency in the way of a new position and they came to the Selectmen to have that approved. D'Amore pointed out that the police leadership roles accepted additional duties without additional money for them and rather put it into the men, into the department. D'Amore stated that the situation before the Board is quite different and distasteful to him because it's all driven towards driving all of the salary into the Fire Chief's position.

Captain Ruchalla told the Board that things at the Fire Department have been really good since last October; that there's an open door policy with the Chief and if you have concerns you can go into his office and discuss things, he's managing the training program and developing plans for them; that he also got a grant for gear and has done a lot of other things for them from the standpoint of making what they do better. Ruchalla said he doesn't think it's about the money being put in the Chief's salary; that he's going to bring the department along; that they are getting better; that the budget changes are an investment in the department. Kurt suggested the Board needs to do unbiased research on this as to where the department needs to go; that his comments are made as a firefighter and taxpayer of the town.

Chairman Greaney asked how the communication is from station to station. Kurt responded that the Chief has an open door policy and if you have anything to tell the Chief, come down and tell the Chief. Chief Lay stated that they are averaging about 20 firefighters on a Tuesday night; that they have a great program but it needs to be managed differently than it has been. D'Amore asked how was the quality of management at the recent fire, and Chief Lay told him that the men trained for that and they know what they are doing; that if he wasn't there, whoever else was in probably would have ran a good fire too. Lay told the Board there was a lot of stuff going on; that other agencies were brought in and other Chiefs were there; that it was a big fire for them and where it was located was a challenge for them. Lay told the Board he will have a post incident review on April 22nd; that post incident review is training and they will go over what they did well. Lay stated between the fire and post incident review and investigation he's 15-20 hours into that and he still doesn't have it done.

D'Amore told Lay that one of the questions he had asked during the interview was on the SOPs and SOGs whether he would delegate some of that in order to complete those documents because the Chief's position was only a 14 hour a week part-time position, telling Lay that he had responded he would. Lay responded that he actually said he could delegate all day long but it doesn't get it done; that to delegate the job and the responsibilities inside the job is unrealistic to think someone is going to take that on and go do it for free, although we like to paint this picture that this whole department is nothing but a big gang of volunteers. Lay stated that they are lucky to have the 40 guys they have but the demands on people's time today and to come out and do what they do and stick to it and the training we are real lucky. Selectman Gorski responded that she watch the fire and saw the people work together and was proud to watch them and the people from other communities that came to help; that she's sure there are things that could have been done better but she couldn't point them out but is sure he (Chief Lay) could.

Chief Lay addressed Selectman D'Amore stating that some of the candidates they had for the Fire Chief job are happy they're not here; that he knows them all personally; that some of them were offered the job before the Board got down to him (Lay) and they didn't take it for some of the reasons being talking about tonight; that they wouldn't sign up for that. Chairman Greaney responded that they didn't offer anyone else the job and Gorski concurred. Lay responded that he guess he didn't know that and now he knows.

Chairman Greaney went over the points of Lay's budget requests again, stating that if the software will make it a better situation and if the Chief had the software they could put \$3,000 of the Clerk's salary into the Chief's and add a couple of hours onto the job. Selectman D'Amore responded that in a normal situation he would accept that as a friendly amendment to his earlier motion but this is a constantly moving and very fluid situation and this is not a request made by the Fire Chief and he feels they are done talking. Chairman Greaney replied that in a few weeks he will no longer be involved in this but if it's potentially going to make a better situation for the payroll side it makes some sense. Greaney also stated that he thinks it's a positive that the Chief isn't going to eliminate the Inspector position. Lay commented that he can't do the job in 14 hours; that if the Chairman wants to nickel and dime this thing and give him another hour or hour and a half he will say he can't do the job in 15 hours. Selectman D'Amore responded that he agrees and that's why he wouldn't accept it as a friendly amendment; that they've had this discussion for months now and that is distasteful to him as well; that they need to be decisive and conclude the discussion and accept the recommendation of the Finance Board;

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that it doesn't mean they can't work with the Chief and talk again; that he has contract negotiations coming up. D'Amore stated that he has said publicly that the Chief's ideas have a great deal of merit but at this point with time pressures and the fact that they have been dragging this out since the day Lay got the job he feels they need to move forward and make a decision.

Selectman Gorski commented that she wishes she had something that they and Selectman D'Amore would be comfortable with; that she understands everything that's being said and why; that 14 hours a week for this job doesn't work, but yet they (the Board) was a big part of this. Gorski asked Finance Dembkoski if she has any thoughts on the financial part of this and Dembkoski responded that she has not been here long enough to know nor has she seen the financial expenditures of that department.

Chairman Greaney told Lay that the budget is set for a 14 hour position and Lay asked when do they change that and fix the problem? Lay said that he told them early on that he thinks 30 hours a week is fair and he's still willing to do that; that he thinks they should hire a consultant; that they don't trust him or his opinion, although they say his ideas have merit, but they certainly don't trust him so they need to shop somebody from the outside. D'Amore responded that he's not in favor of the study because he knows they have a design problem here and that's why he is looking forward that they as a town need to explore the redesign of the Board of Fire Engineers; that this little experiment of the change to a strong Chief proves we made a mistake and by the Chief's own admission the job can't be done in 14 hours. Selectman Gorski asked about adding the extra hours and D'Amore responded that by the Chief's own admission adding two or three more hours a week is just going to set them up, it's a fluid situation; that they are just going to be creating more meetings, more time, and executive sessions; that they wanted to try to get a contract done by July 1st and it's just going to be a difficult process; that he can tell that already and he worries about the department as to what's going on while this is going on.

Captain Ruchalla commented that the department is in good shape and suggested the Board shouldn't be going back it should be going forward. Lay told the Board that the Board of Fire Engineers is an outdated law and there are only one or two other towns under a BOFE; that the whole county is going the other way. D'Amore responded they would have to redesign the Board of Engineers and have new people. Lay told him they had a chance to design this and they didn't do it right and now they're going to redesign that. Lay told D'Amore that what he said makes no sense; that he's talking in circles again. He told D'Amore that the Board needs to get professional help; that he doesn't trust him so where are they going to get it from, from the market place and he can go do the work. Lay said he will tell them straight out that he has been in touch with the State Fire Marshall's Office, talked with the Deputy Fire Marshall last week, has been in touch with the folks out at the fire academy, had contacted an attorney, talked to the Fire Chief's Association of Massachusetts and the Essex County Chiefs Association. D'Amore asked and all of these people are suggesting that 150% increase to your salary and eliminating positions is the right way to go for Groveland? Lay responded that what they are really saying is he needs to be careful telling you he can do the job in 30 hours; that he should probably be looking at 40 hours, but the difference for us is we don't run an ambulance; that an ambulance only adds another layer of things to the operation; that we don't have that and we aren't going to run an ambulance so he thinks 30 hours is right; that with his experience and his skillsets he can do the job for 30 hours a week and the money he has suggested he can do it for, if you look

at the market it's way below; that although some are resistant to change he thinks they need some guidance. Lay told the Board that no matter where he goes to talk about this the people just can't believe this is still going on. He suggested the Board get a Fire Chief on the phone and ask if he can do the job for 14 hours a week, run the department with 40 employees, 2 buildings, 10 trucks and everything that goes with it for 14 hours a week and they will hear "14 hours a week, really?"

Captain Ruchella mentioned that the Board is talking about a request for 150% increase to the salary but they are not talking about the increase in hours which is over 100%; that he just wants everyone to understand that it's not a "fund the Chief program" and Selectman D'Amore responded that that is what he believes it is. Ruchella responded saying he knows what D'Amore believes; that his position is crystal clear and he understands it 100% and knows where it is being driven from too. Kurt stated that they have to understand it is not just giving more money to that position; that they are asking for more hours to do the job better. D'Amore told Ruchella that also hears from other people like the Finance Board, a board he respects and who gives advice.

Town Meeting Article - Community Preservation Funds-Community Trails Project

Chairman Greaney asked Mike Dempsey and Mike Davis to speak with the Board to clarify whether the State will be paying for the trail project and Davis responded no, the State won't be paying for the trails. Davis to the Board that the Article on the Town Meeting Warrant which seeks CPA funds is only to cover some of the cost of the conceptual design plan in order to engage all parties, i.e., abutting property owners, National Grid and the voters of the town. Chairman Greaney asked how much more money will they have to spend for the design before the State provides funding for the project. Davis replied that their best estimate through 25% design is \$500,000-\$550,000 over approximately seven years, 100% of design cost will be paid through CPA funding, no tax increase ever. Mike estimated three years thereafter for construction and this portion of the project will be funded through MA DOT. Davis suggested there will be a need for committing future town funds in the amount of \$2,000-\$3,000 a year for maintenance of the trail system. Davis stated if the current Article passes at Town Meeting it will allow them to have a discussion with National Grid and told the Board they need this Article to pass this year for the project to succeed. D'Amore complemented Mike and the Open Space and Trails Committee for their work trying to enhance our citizens' way of life without the need for a debt exclusion or override increase to their taxes.

Town Meeting Warrant & Omnibus Budget

Selectmen reviewed the Omnibus budget recommended by the Finance Board and agreed to recommend the following changes to the Fire Department budget: (1) Reduce Fire Clerk's wages from \$9,231 to \$3,400; (2) Add \$3,400 of the reduction to Fire Clerk's wages to Fire Chief's salary line item for the purpose of adding two/three hours to Chief's weekly work schedule to bring the total weekly hours to 16 or 17 hours weekly; and (3) Add \$2,400 of the reduction to Fire Clerk's wages to fire expense budget to allow for the purchase of payroll tracking records for the fire department.

Selectmen noted the increase request to the Tree Warden's budget, \$300 of which was a stipend which the elected official always turned back. The Board's Assistant explained the \$3,000 increase was due to the number of trees on public property needing attention.

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APRIL 7, 2014

The Board reviewed Warrant Articles 1-21 of the Annual Town Meeting Warrant. Following a brief discussion that Article 21 sets a dangerous precedent, D'Amore moved, Gorski seconded, and it was

VOTED: To remove Article 21 from the Warrant, a copy of which is attached hereto. 3-0

It was agreed the Board will meet again on April 10th for final review of Omnibus and Warrant Articles.

2014 Capital Fund Amendment – GHA Grant #MA06P13250114

Moved Gorski, seconded D'Amore, and it was

VOTED: To authorized Chairman Donald Greaney to sign the 2014 Capital Fund Amendment for the Groveland Housing Authority Grant #MA06P13250114. 3-0

Release with Fireman's Fund re Haverhill Landfill Settlement

Selectmen reviewed a Release with Fireman's Fund relative to the settlement with the City of Haverhill for Groveland's prior use of Haverhill's Landfill. Town Counsel provided the Release and recommended the Board sign same. Moved D'Amore, seconded Gorski, and it was

VOTED: To sign the Release with Fireman's Fund relative to the settlement with the City of Haverhill for Groveland's prior use of the Haverhill Landfill. 3-0

Adjournment

Upon motion duly made by Greaney, seconded by Gorski, it was

VOTED: To adjourn.

Adjourned at 10:38 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Lewandowski
Administrative Assistant