

Groveland Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
March 9, 2015

Present: Chair Bette Gorski, Selectmen William Dunn & Joseph D'Amore

Absent: None

Others Present: Denise Dembkoski, Finance Director

Recorder: Melanie Rich

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

RESIDENT/PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Jennifer Close (Vice Chair of Langley Adams Library, member of the Board of Trustees and Chair of District Search Committee) introduced Amy Kraemer as the new Library Director for the Langley Adams Library. Ms. Kraemer starts her position on Monday, March 16th. The library has not had a Director for over a year. Chair Gorski asked the process that was involved and was told by Ms. Dembkoski that it was conducted in stages. The search committee narrowed down approximately eight candidates to the most qualified who had public library experience. There was plenty of interest but since Ms. Kraemer held different positions, they felt she would benefit the library best.

APPROVAL OF WARRANTS:

Selectman D'Amore voted to approve PW #15-37 in the amount of \$127,276.98; Selectman Dunn seconded; all voted in favor; Chair Gorski abstained; warrant approved.

Selectman D'Amore voted to approve DW #15-35A in the amount of \$29,069.07; Selectman Dunn seconded; all voted in favor; warrant approved.

Selectman D'Amore voted to approve BW #15-37 in the amount of 1,337,043.16; Chair Gorski seconded; all voted in favor; Selectman Dunn abstained; warrant approved.

APPOINTMENTS:

Due to the passing of Richard Sciacca, there is a vacancy on the Cemetery Commission. The appointment will only be until the next election at which time there will be two seats to fill. There are two candidates for this vacancy, but the Commissioners are not in agreement on which to choose; therefore according to the law, the appointment must be made by the Board of Selectmen.

Letters were received from John McComiskie (3 Scotland Yard Estates) and Debra Stewart (9 Rollins Street). Ms. Stewart was present and said she has taken out papers to run in the election. Selectman Dunn made a motion to nominate Debra A. Stewart, 9 Rollins Street, for the remainder of Richard Sciacca's term. He said she is passionate about the position and has done her due diligence. Selectman D'Amore seconded the motion. Chair Gorski feels Ms. Stewart is totally invested and cares very much about Riverview Cemetery. Selectman D'Amore said Ms. Stewart is very passionate about the love of the cemetery and believes she will take a very personal approach to the position. He is also pleased that John McComiskie has expressed interest in the position. He feels Mr. McComiskie will not only be compassionate, but will bring in a business prospective on how to manage some aspects of the cemetery business to meet the challenges such as cost, insurance issues, etc. He believes Ms. Stewart and Mr. McComiskie will make a great partnership. Bob Guptill (Cemetery Commissioner) felt that since

they were unable to make a decision, and with so little time remaining until the election, they would let the townspeople decide. Had there been a longer period of time before the election, he believes they Commissioners could have made a decision. All voted in favor; motion approved unanimously.

DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE VOTE:

Police Department (discussion and public outreach on the state-wide heroin epidemic) – Chair Gorski recently attended a very informative forum on the prevention of substance abuse and the youth. Dr. Michael Guidi was the facilitator. Discussed was the abuse of heroin and what can be done about it and the effects on the families and the community (children have died as well as adults). Groveland is not immune. Dr. Guidi is part of the Mass Medical Society and is on the Public Health Committee and the Student Health Committee. He has been working closely with Jeff Mulqueen (Pentucket Regional School Superintendent). Mr. Mulqueen is interested in bringing mental health counselors into the school system. Counseling students would have to take place discreetly since, according to Dr. Guidi, students don't mind getting counseled at school as long as their friends don't know. Mental health is becoming more recognized and people speak out more than in the past because it is more acceptable today. There are many forms of mental health: anxiety, OCD, etc. Dr. Guidi's approach is not with pills, but with counseling and meditation. Dr. Guidi is part of an unofficial committee and is trying to promote each committee member to give their passionate issue to work on. Once the committee is official for six months, they can obtain grants which would be beneficial to the school system (starting in 6-12 grades).

Chair Gorski spoke of mindfulness training starting at a certain age. Dr. Guidi said a mindless person is a negative person and a mindful person is happy. Selectman Dunn said doctors are too willing to prescribe the medication that becomes addictive. Dr. Guidi said the doctors that are overprescribing are cutting back on Percocet so people then turn to heroin. Selectman D'Amore said prescription drugs are a gateway to worse drugs and said there is an active problem in our region, specifically Pentucket Regional Middle School. He said that Dr. Guidi is suggesting pre-incident intervention, early intervention, education and possibly post-incident intervention, all of which cost money. He asked Dr. Guidi if those services were separate from guidance counselors and had he discussed the money source with Mr. Mulqueen. Dr. Guidi said there is no money source currently, but in terms of education, he believes some teachers (particularly health) should be involved as well as guidance counselors in the high schools. Selectman D'Amore asked if his advocacy was to approach the schools system and ask for the resources. Dr. Guidi said yes. Lisa Dube Carpenter (resident) said that would be the reason to apply for a grant; not to ask for funds from the school. Selectman D'Amore said grants seem to be available for large cities. Dr. Guidi believes they would receive funds, but not sure of the amount. Selectman Dunn said education starts with parenting and that today's society has changed. Dr. Guidi said community service is recommended. Ms. Carpenter said the district has so many core responsibilities and it would be difficult to add this piece to it, but agrees that it should be integrated because the cost is too high not to and we need to take an active role to educate the children.

In attendance for the Groveland Police Department were Deputy Chief Jeffrey Gillen and Police Officer Heather Riley. Deputy Chief Gillen read some statistics and said it is all around us. Officer Josh Sindoni was appointed as the School Resource Officer. Officer Gillen said he was glad to hear about education (self-esteem, say no) for children at a younger age. Officer Riley attended a Narcan training and is now a trainer. Deputy Chief Gillen said there is a bill coming up (House Docket 766), an act relative to police as far as police custody that needs local representative support. Currently under 111B they can only take someone into custody for alcohol related incidents; if they are incapacitated or a danger. There is nothing that gives the police authority to deal with someone who is under the influence of drugs. The bill is focused on heroin. Narcan can bring a person back to life, but nine minutes later they can relapse. Because the police have no authority, the person can leave the scene and not go to a hospital. This bill gives the police authority to send them to the hospital to be checked. Selectman D'Amore suggested

formulating a letter to the legislative team. Ms. Dembkoski said there is a list for legislative support. Officer Riley had a letter from a parent in Groveland whose son is addicted to heroin. He has overdosed on multiple occasions and she expressed her concern that Groveland does not carry Narcan. Trinity EMS (ambulance service) does carry it, but since the police are the first responders, there is that time frame that lives could possibly be saved. The Fire Department does not carry it either. The cost per dose to carry it is approximately \$60. Officer Riley has seen it work in the town and feels the cost is worth it. It has an expiration date of 12 months from the date it is received, but does have a shelf life of 18 months. If the town were to approve it, Officer Riley would be able to train the department. Asked what the barriers would be, she said they would have to get someone to represent them in order to carry it and there is a \$300 fee from the state to be able to carry it (possibly a hospital or Trinity). Deputy Chief Gillen said it's hard to put a price on saving a life. Two doses, which are administered nasally, are needed for each patient. There is the possibility of partnering with another community. Selectman D'Amore asked if there were statistics compiled specific to drug activity in the town. Office Gillen they do have access to computer system stats. With limited resources available, Selectman D'Amore said one of the lowest costs would be volunteerism. Deputy Officer Gillen was asked what happened to the DARE program. He said the grants dried up, but they are trying to bring something back. Dr. Guidi said grants and literature are available through SAMHSA. Ms. Carpenter said there should also be a focus on marijuana because people feel it harmless, which is a misconception. She said knowing the statistics would give the community a better understanding; a better sense. Deputy Officer Gillen said there are restrictions on what information can be given out. Ms. Dembkoski said Sgt. McDonald is compiling the 2015 quarterly stats so they can be made public.

Officer Riley read a letter on behalf of a town resident who could not make the meeting. It read...“I am writing this letter in support of Groveland police officers carrying Narcan. My son has overdosed twice and both times Groveland Police were the first to arrive at my home. As they did not have Narcan, my son was not administered it until other personnel arrived. I do not know how much time elapsed between the arrival of the officers and the administration of the Narcan, but every minute is crucial. Narcan saves lives. It does not have any known negative side effects if used when opioids are not in someone's system. It is easy to administer. I was trained in Narcan in less than ten minutes. The kits were provided at an October 2014 training and have an expiration date of May 2016. I am uncertain when this particular batch was manufactured, but based on the time frame Narcan has a minimum shelf life of 17 months. I include this information, as a financial concern will likely be a part of your decision. In any event, please consider that a dollar amount cannot be assigned to the value of a life. I strongly urge that our police officers who arrive first have access to Narcan. Heroin overdoses in particular have arisen to epidemic proportions and this disease of addiction knows no boundaries in terms of age, race, gender, or socioeconomic status. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or for more information on my experience.” Chair Gorski suggested contacting Trinity to see if they could provide resources for us. Ms. Dembkoski said that has to be worked out with the union (since it is a change of work environment matter) to see if the police officers will carry or if it needs to be negotiated or compensated and then they can reach out to Trinity. Dr. Guidi's next meeting is March 20th at 6:30 p.m. at the Merrimack library.

Mike Dempsey, Community Preservation Committee – The CPC has seven warrant articles for the Town Meeting; all CPC projects. Groveland adopted the CPC Act ten years ago and established a 3% surcharge on local property taxes. The CPC is required to spend the money on three categories: 10% on Community Housing, Open Space and Historic Preservation. The remaining 70% can be spent on any of those three categories plus Recreation. This year community meetings were held that resulted in seven proposals that span all four categories. All proposals are on the Community Preservation website. He advises the residents to review them before the town meeting. The website also includes the roundup of the past ten years of all CPC funded projects and the status of the CPC Act fund.

Article 1 is for Phase 2 of the plan for the Groveland Community Trail. \$150,000 was approved last year for Phase 1. A contractor was hired for the planning process and completed a 10% plan which is almost ready for submission to the state. They are ready for Phase 2 which will complete the 25% planning process and bring them closer to the amount of money Groveland may be responsible for. In addition, they have been asking for grants or matching funds that may be available. A grant of \$4-\$5 million is expected to construct the trail once the planning is done and approved by the state, but is a long process; it could take 8-10 years which is typical. Chair Gorski asked if they spent the \$50,000 on the contractor they had from last year. Ms. Dembkoski said they are still working with the contractor and bills are being submitted and paid as the process goes on. Mr. Dempsey said the next goal is for the 25% plan. Selectman Dunn asked if this was the last of the spending. Mr. Dempsey said there will most likely be another \$100,000 request for the final portion of the plan bringing the total expenditure to approximately \$500,000.

Chair Gorski asked about the maintenance of the trail in the future (security, trimming of the brush, etc.). Mr. Dempsey said it will not be funded by CPA money or the state. Part of the development of the 25% plan addresses how the town plans to maintain it e.g., volunteers, highway, etc. It will be discussed with town departments, have citizen input, be decided upon, and put into the 25% plan. Selectman Dunn asked if he has checked with other towns where trails are completed and inquired as to how they maintain it. Mr. Dempsey said they have been looking at the trail in Danvers and said most communities on the North Shore do maintenance through volunteer efforts. Selectman Dunn said he understood the trail will be stopped at Route 97 and King Street and has not been approved to go through the Light Department to Georgetown and will not be connected. Mr. Dempsey did not know if this was true. At the last meeting he attended, they did not have approval from National Grid yet; it is still in negotiations. Selectman Dunn asked does the \$550,000 include the development of that parcel as well. Mr. Dempsey said yes. The only part that is not going to be developed on the rail trail portion in Groveland is on the Haverhill side. It will end at Main Street near Veasey Park. The portion from Main Street to the Haverhill line (one mile) will not be covered by this plan. Selectman D'Amore said since the board will decide whether there will be favorable action taken or not we should take the opportunity to go deeper into it on the 23rd when the presentation is made.

Andy Wildes, 288 Main Street (Finance Committee) asked where the trail starts. Bob Guptill (Open Space & Trails Committee) said it is an "L" which starts on the Georgetown line down to the railroad tracks to Veasey Park to Main Street to the Town Hall. It was asked if there is work needed; yes. The stretch along Main Street will be a very wide path, it will be the one part of the engineering that will be the most technical/difficult to do. Mr. Wildes asked if easements are needed from homeowners. Mr. Guptill said the engineering consulting firm doing the study is the premier rail trail company in New England. They have done multiple trails and are doing 25% solutions on the rail trail piece because all of the work has been done; the right-of-way has been researched and is free and clear from the National Grid standpoint; it is a straight shot rail bed; all level. Mike Davis has done the research. Mr. Guptill said there is a major rail trail coming out of Boston going to the New Hampshire line which he is relying on since they are close to their 100% design. National Grid has agreed to do that piece through Georgetown which comes out of Wakefield through Byfield. It is under development. Selectman Dunn asked the about the section from Main Street to connect to Haverhill which is not in the design and asked if there is an estimated cost for that? Mr. Dempsey said the cost would be shared by Groveland and Haverhill. Selectman D'Amore said that over 10 years the cost would be \$5 million and Groveland's out-of-pocket cost would be \$500,000; yes. The shared piece would be an additional cost (not known yet). The townspeople need to pay attention and attend the meeting to be informed.

Bill Cook, 10 Esty Way (Finance Committee Chair) would like the final cost; no surprises down the road. He wants to know that this is the final \$5 million from the grant and \$500,000 from the town. Selectman Dunn said the article is before the townspeople and they should know the whole cost. Ms. Dembkoski said Mike Davis and the Open Space and Trails Committee will be attending the BOS meeting March 23rd

to do their presentation. Notice was sent to abutters and if anyone had questions, they were to send them to the engineer so he is prepared to answer them on the 23rd. Meetings are posted on the website. Selectman D'Amore said as a board we have to make two decisions: (1) is it going to be a warrant article, and (2) do we support it. Selectman Dunn said the fairest thing to do is to put the completed project out to the townspeople so that have the information. Mr. Cook asked what was agreed upon so far; was it a study? Mr. Dempsey said last year it was voted for \$150,000 for the first plan (10% plan) to be sent to the state; next is the 25% plan. Selectman D'Amore said that article was on the town meeting last year, people voted for it, there was a series of hearings prior, and the Board of Selectmen acted favorably on it. It is a complicated project and detailed questions can be best answered on the 23rd. Mr. Guptill said Mass DOT directs the process. The 10% plan is presented to Mass DOT; they approve all the engineering plans throughout the process. Is it is not a question of the town investing \$500,000 and finding out that the state doesn't like the plan; they are fully invested in the whole process. The \$5 million will not be guaranteed right off the bat because there is a queuing process; it is a working relationship with the state.

Article 2 is to asking for \$325,000 to develop a full set of plans and provide construction oversight for the construction of an affordable community housing project at the town-owned site at the corner of Main Street and River Pines Drive. In 2013 it was voted to approve a project to hire a consultant to put together a financial pro forma and site plan for a potential community housing project. It has been completed and the full report received. The Affordable Housing Committee would like to have full plans drawn up for the development of the project for the purpose of bidding, etc. It was brought to CPC by the Affordable Housing Committee and comes under the category of Community Housing. This project will enable Groveland to advance in its provision of the 10% affordable housing required by the state. The facility would have twenty-seven units. \$75,000 was spent in 2013 for the pro forma. When asked how the construction would be funded, Mr. Dempsey said it is a complicated process that is described in the pro forma. They will mortgage the project and we pay for it by the rents; there are tax credits involved; it is not CPA money. The project cost is approximately \$10 million; the seed money is from the CPA. The Affordable Housing plan is on the website for viewing. Mr. Dempsey said Community Preservation Committee obtains the proposals, they are reviewed, it is voted on it and it goes on the warrant. The BOS can decide to remove them from the warrant, but it typically is not done. Selectman Dunn said the taxpayers should have the chance to have the information available to investigate a project before they vote on it. Mr. Dempsey said meetings are open, proposals are on the website as well as links to the taped meetings. Mr. Cook asked how much money the CPA currently has. Mr. Dempsey \$1,773,341. Mr. Cook felt the CPA was a good idea at first, but what is happening now is that CPA is a down payment on everything. Mr. Cook said there are three parcels on Central Street. Mr. Dempsey said the CPA bought two parcels from Water Department with CPA funds and matching funds. Mr. Cook said we get into projects where we use CPA money for deposits on bigger projects. Mr. Dempsey said that is the idea of CPA; it's seed money to do something that requires something more, such as the community rail trail. Mr. Cook said if we had \$1.7 million in CPA funds, why didn't we put more of that on our open space on Center Street and we wouldn't be looking at future debt, instead of spreading it out different places. He said there is \$1.7 million in the bank and we keep buying open space, and usually it is a deposit for that open space. He doesn't know what we can or cannot afford. Is there a need for affordable housing in Groveland? Who is going to manage it? We get a wish list with lots of deposits put down that is future spending for the taxpayers. We need to purchase a \$750,000 ladder truck. We have a new high school on the hill we will need to build within five years. He said we can't keep doing this; it's out of control. He told Mr. Dempsey that if he looks at the whole package he will see there are a lot of future expenses, and if we keep going down this road, we are going to add \$300,000 on a \$10 million project; \$150,000 on a \$5 million project, and we might get the money; we can't do that; we have to have definites. We need to know the final cost. There have been projects that were final three times down. It can't continue. He said that's very dangerous and scary for a town of 6,500 people. Selectman Dunn said the town needs to forecast for the future; not just for today. We

need to spend what we can afford and forecast down the road. Mr. Dempsey said every project they ever funded is on the website. He would suggest Selectman Dunn and the board look at those things because he disagrees wholeheartedly that these are just down payments and they haven't funded anything that was closed out. The two projects are down payments but there is no plan to request town money to pay for them; the community rail trail is not requesting money from the town. Mr. Cook said he wants definites. Mr. Cook stated that he is voicing his opinion and not that of the committee. He said they have to take a look at the whole picture because that's how we survive. Selectman Dunn said we are trying to protect the hidden costs down the road. Selectman D'Amore said we have to understand what is going on. For example, he spoke of the Master Plan ten years ago; \$60,000 was spent and it was put on a shelf. His feeling on municipal planning – he said one of the articles coming up is a significant expenditure of CPA money for Washington Park. He feels if we don't do it, 20 years from now Washington Park will have a chain link fence around it, it will be overgrown, the asphalt will be broken and the park will no longer be a park. We have to understand that if we get passionate that we are fiscal conservatives, or are we fiscally austere to the point where we are shutting things down and not looking at the big picture; what will the quality of life be in this town if we make no commitment to some municipal planning and development? He said he resents the fact when people say they didn't know what is going on because the information is out there and it was put together by very capable passionate people. Residents need to go to meetings; look at the website; learn about this town we are trying to develop, and the quality of life. Selectman Dunn agrees and said we should look at the fiscal future. He would rather see the money go to Washington Park than other projects. Selectman D'Amore said sometimes you have to make an investment, leverage an investment, to trigger something that we could never do by ourselves. If we shut down CPA completely, we will have a chain link fence around Washington Park. Selectman Dunn said he doesn't think that is a fair statement to say because there are a lot of people who have put a lot of time into it and raised a lot of money, but he did say we need to be fiscally responsible and look at the hidden costs down the road. Mr. Cook said there are needs and wants. The needs are infrastructure and roads which will be in need of repair after this winter. We may have to choose what to spend the CPA money on; we can't have a wish list. Mr. Dempsey said there is a financial plan in place which is on the website. They are not proposing to spend \$1.7 million. They have a plan on how to spend CPA money in the future. They are under some constraint as to the 10 percentages; not all of that money can be spent on any of the four categories. More of the money has to be spent on affordable housing because of that 10%. Over the years, 10% of the money must be spent on affordable housing and we never spent money prior to 2013 on affordable housing. The consequence is that if we ignore the affordable housing ratio, our local aid could be cut. Selectman Dunn asked the CPA cost for all articles if they make it on town ballot; Mr. Dempsey said \$859,000. CPC takes in approximately \$380,000 from collections and matches (including the 60% match). Chair Gorski asked why it is more than that sometimes. Mr. Dempsey said because the CPC collects 3%, they get 100% match because they proceeded to rounds two and three. If you only have 1%, you only get the first round of funding. Groveland has done very well with matches; CPA has received over \$1.7 million in state matching funds.

Article 3 is for \$75,000 for a Historic Preservation project. It is requested by the Cemetery Commission to restore the Riverview Cemetery Griffin Memorial Arch and stone walls that surround it. In 2013, a project was funded (approximately \$20,000) for a plan. A historic consultant put together a plan as to what made the most sense to do to spend money on historic preservation. This plan has been used for guiding the for the past year and a half. The Cemetery Commission would like to work on the arch to restore it to its original state and clean it. It will not be more than \$75,000. Selectman D'Amore said the structure was built in 1873 and the wall around it was built in 1910. He said this would be an override item if we did not have CPA money. The Cemetery Commission feels it is an important investment for the heritage, culture and history of the town. The alternative....if we don't do it now, in thirty years it will have to be taken down and rebuilt with concrete. Selectman D'Amore said all of these projects have a quality of life. Selectman Dunn said don't tell the taxpayers that something is falling down when it is

not. He asked if it was unsafe; Selectman D'Amore said it's not that it is unsafe, but the wall is falling down.

Article 4 is for \$17,500 for the restoration/preservation for a portion of the historic main building at Veasey Park. It will include replacement energy efficient windows, the entrance door in the great hall, and some safety work on some the fireplaces in the Veasey Suite. Selectman D'Amore said the fireplaces need to be maintained because there could be a fire. Chair Gorski asked if the new energy efficient windows would be historic windows. Mr. Dempsey said yes, it will fit in with the nature of the building. That part of the building dates back to around the early 1950s so it is not difficult to find items. The windows are falling out and the door won't close. That part of the building gets regular use for meeting and events. The project will cost \$19,500 but a \$2,000 donation will be received from the Friends of Veasey.

Article 5 is for \$51,000 for the perseveration of historical documents and objects at the Langley Adams Library. An LSTA grant was received from the state for \$4,200 which enabled them to put a plan together to address how they can preserve the historic resources that they have available in the library. Currently, records, volumes and maps are in the basement. This project will enable them to not only protect the materials and shelve them better, but make them more available for research by townspeople.

Article 6 is for \$21,000 to develop plans for the improvement of Groveland Square. The Conservation Commission has been working with the Selectmen to see what can be done with the former Getty station area and the lot with the Post Office. This will not only enable us to do an appraisal on the property for wetlands studies because it is located within the 200' buffer zone of the Merrimack River, but to also update the plans that were put together for the property in 2005 by the Groveland Square Committee. No action could take place unless a Purchase & Sale was negotiated for the property. Selectman D'Amore said the Board of Selectmen would be the voting authority. Chair Gorski said we would want to see a 21E. Mr. Dempsey said that would be expected by July. Chair Gorski said an appraisal was requested by Greg Labrecque in 2008; it was funded with CPA funds. Ms. Demboski cautioned those present that we do not own it; we are not currently engaged in any conversations with the owner; and it should not be discussed in public meeting. Chair Gorski asked if it was premature to have it on the warrant. Mr. Dempsey did not think so. Kopelman & Paige would need to review it.

Article 7 is for \$220,000 for the revitalization of Washington Park to improve the field conditions and the infrastructure as well as overhauling the entire playground. The entire project will cost \$252,000 but Groveland Baseball League has arranged in-kind donations valued at \$32,000. Groveland Baseball League has done a fantastic job and will address some things they are not able to do themselves such as lighting, repair of the parking lot, and fencing. It will be ADA approved. Selectman D'Amore said there has been a change with the baseball program. Bill O'Neil, 45 Elm Park (Finance Committee), explained the changes in the baseball leagues where the field is now a cross between little league and major league dimensions. It is a chance for the youth to play and get used to the large field, but requires renovations to the AAA field. The major league field will be used for the AAA games and the former AAA field has been converted at Groveland Baseball League's expense. They also purchased a new score board. Given the conditions, it is used year round. Mr. O'Neil feels the town deserves a better park. Selectman D'Amore said that nationally there has been a decline in participation in baseball at the youth level. One of the driving reasons they went with the inter-league with multiple teams is that it is similar to a limited travel baseball team. It allows a smaller number of kids to be exposed to a higher quality program, so participation in the new league compels us to have the lighting and reconfiguration of the field and a new scoreboard. Selectman D'Amore asked Mr. Dempsey if there was a change in the law that did not allow a Washington Park to have access to any public funding for development and revitalization. Mr. Dempsey said under CPA, yes. Previously unless the town purchased the land with

CPA funds, you could use it to develop or revitalize. Selectman D'Amore told Mr. O'Neil that he articulated his position well, they deserve a better park, and this is a quality of life issue. Mr. O'Neil added that according to the numbers they had last year, they only had three major league teams and this year they have four.

Article 8 is requesting a transfer of \$20,000 from the CPC Fund General Reserve for the purpose of administrative expenses. Mr. Dempsey said it is spent on communication, appraisals or smaller projects. Chair Gorski said all proposals and recommendations that come to us and are agreed upon require a lot of work for the administrator who has to get bids, work with vendors, etc., and a lot of work is put on our Finance Director. She asked if there was compensation to do all this work. Mr. Dempsey said funds could come out of the administrative funds.

Mr. Cook said there are some salary items being proposed where the Finance Committee does not know what agreements have been made or what contracts are being signed and feels it would be a waste of time to discuss them tonight since they don't know what is being negotiated. Chair Gorski said only the police and dispatchers are contracted. His concern with seeing different pay raises is that he questioned does the job need to be eliminated or not; is it going to be cut back and the added responsibility at that salary being bumped up to a full time salary? Ms. Dembkoski said Mr. Cook is referring to her position and the Administrative Assistant's position. There are only three positions right now that are up for discussion with the board (the Finance Director, the Administrative Assistant and the Fire Chief). Mr. Cook said there are positions that were full time and are being eliminated, but it is a significant pay raise on the other end and was the person needed, not needed, are we going with a lesser salary, are we still going to pay medical benefits for that person. Chair Gorski said when someone does retire, they do retire with medical insurance if they are a full time employee. Chair Gorski said this discussion will put on the agenda for the next meeting. Selectman D'Amore said it is a process problem and suggested joint board meetings from the beginning rather than just a mid-meeting and final meeting as is done now. Being part of three schools (Essex Agricultural, North Shore Vocational Tech and Whittier Vocational Tech) was being discussed and will be a topic for another time.

FY2016 Departmental Budget Requests & Capital Improvements Plan:

Capital Improvements – Ms. Dembkoski said the board discussed and voted on February 10th to support \$750,000 and thinks they should refer the matter back to Capital Improvements for them to review their number of \$850,000 and see if they will support the \$750,000. It is important to go into town meeting with one number agreed upon rather than having to amend it on town meeting floor. If the board is in agreement, Ms. Dembkoski will contact the Chair tomorrow to schedule a meeting if one is needed. Chair Gorski feels it would make it cleaner and supports it. Selectman D'Amore made a motion to ask that the Capital Improvement Committee reconsider their voted number of \$850,000 and to have it align with the Board of Selectmen's number of \$750,000; Selectman Dunn seconded the motion; all voted in favor; with no further discussion, the vote was approved unanimously.

Working Budget – Ms. Dembkoski said the first two pages are revenue estimates (the money they are estimating to come in from local receipts, property taxes, state aid). Any number in the budget that is highlighted in yellow is still not certain. She was informed today of an additional \$251,046 assessment from Pentucket due to the state aid decline that they received and the adjustment in the minimal net school spending. Groveland is taking the impact because they determined that our residents are wealthier than the other two communities. She reached out to the Assessors to ask if they would release \$195,000 of overlay money. They are scheduled to meet on Friday, March 20th and will take it up at that time to discuss the release of funds to help balance the budget. Currently there is a \$64,000 deficit. Assuming receipt the \$195,000 Ms. Dembkoski recommended additional cuts to almost every budget (minimal amounts) and looked at some of the positions, for example, the tree warden expense

money. It is the Highway Department that actually cuts down trees so there is no need to budget additional money in that expense line when the Highway budget covers it.

There are some unknowns when it comes to the revenue side, and the school number is not a definite number, but if it does change it will be more of an impact because the superintendent was presenting his list of cuts tonight to the School Committee tonight and not sure if they would embrace all of those cuts. Selectman D'Amore said the school budget is going to be 2.15% more than last year, but for Groveland, because of the reassessment, will exceed out 2½% which could potentially create an override condition. Ms. Dembkoski said yes if we cannot balance the budget. Selectman D'Amore asked for an explanation of the overlay money. Ms. Dembkoski said each year they put \$150,000 aside to deal with abatements or ATB cases. If nobody files for abatements or if there are no ATB cases, the \$150,000 remains there until the Assessors vote to release that money back into the budget. There is overlay money from 2009. We would be looking to take reserves from years 2009-2011. It is a one-time revenue source. She feels that given the Center Street project, the increase in the tax bills in January, and the potential for a new school building, she doesn't think it's appropriate to ask the residents for an override. We need to do everything we can to balance the budget before we go to the residents.

Actual Budget – Ms. Dembkoski explained that on the left hand side of the page is what was appropriated in FY14 and what was spent in that fiscal year and what was appropriated last year. On the right hand side is the department requested. Ms. Dembkoski requested every department complete a budget request, what they needed for their department, why they needed it, and the backup to explain any increases. The next column is what she recommended to both this board and the Finance Committee as amounts to go forward. They do not have to take her recommendations, but that is what she recommended. The items in yellow are unknowns; those are numbers put in based on our conversations. The numbers in green were unknowns that are now known numbers. As the numbers come in she is more definite. The health insurance numbers came in at an increase of approximately 5.6%. The higher increase of 9%-10% is on the Harvard Pilgrim and Tufts plans. During open enrollment she will reach out to those who have those plans and educate them to see if they might switch. Ms. Dembkoski said the items in yellow are voted on by this board, e.g., the Fire Chief's salary. The amount he requested in his line is for 30 hours of work. She recommended putting in a number to balance the budget; just as she did for her salary and the Administrative Assistant salary. She told the board they can change everything she has recommended and put in their own numbers. The budget needs to be completed early April in order to go to print for the Town Meeting. With regard to the Chief's salary (which is contracted), to change his hours does not need to be negotiated; the board can tell him what they will be going forward.

Revisiting the Pentucket base assessment, Selectman D'Amore said we went from \$7.2 million to \$7.9 million and found that to be shocking. Ms. Dembkoski said she is only given two numbers from Pentucket; base assessment and capital. In the past they would break out the supplemental assessment number of \$244,000; but she has no idea of what that number represents. The \$7.9 million is the combination of \$7.1 million from the previous year and the \$244,000. She has not gotten to the bottom of the supplemental assessment charge. Selectman Dunn asked how the number they assessed us (from the previous comment about this town being wealthier) was arrived at. Ms. Dembkoski said that is the state's calculations. She attended a legislative meeting on Friday and found that we are not the only regional school that is having this issue; it is every regional school in the state. For whatever reason when they reassessed and reallocated state aid, the regional schools took a hit. Selectman D'Amore said it was his opinion that we had a promise when we regionalized that they would have extra margins of support, and now regional school systems in particular are being targeted for less funding; it's like they are going back on their promise. Ms. Dembkoski said the reason one of her recommendations is to use overlay in such a large amount this year is that they are hoping next year it is recalculated and the state readjusts the state aid and the minimum net school spending ratio. Selectman D'Amore spoke of

Chapter 70 and the cost of \$20/child to attend Pentucket. He said there was an increase in local aid. Ms. Dembkoski said we received approximately \$38,000 additional state aid. She said one of the problems historically with schools, all schools in general, is the special education funding. The state does not fully provide for special education and the school districts have to deal with educating these students or providing for them to be educated in another school district. That is hurting schools across the state. We can't keep up with the requirements and the needs of special education, and no one is funding for that. Selectman D'Amore said we budgeted for that in the current fiscal year and then there is a 70% reimbursement the following year. How has that changed, the circuit breaker? Ms. Dembkoski said she is not sure if it is 70%, but it is not enough and she knows the circuit breaker is where people keep asking for increases to come through. Selectman Dunn asked if we could save money by getting out of the regional school system and was told that the costs we would own if we had our own school are currently being shared by three communities. There were five local legislators at the meeting she attended and they all heard the same issues that regional schools are a big problem. We need to reach out to anyone that can help. She spoke with the Northeast Vocational Tech. The way it works is there are 6 students there now, 9 have applied for next year, and they have 1100 applications for 300 slots. Only students that have applied for a program that Whittier does not carry are allowed to attend. Technical schools are specialized based on the programs they offer. She does not know if the town has any say having the second school; it was changed before she got here and it was in the budget last year. Selectman D'Amore wants to accommodate those that are already there, but if there is a legal mechanism to opt out, he would be in favor of that. Ms. Dembkoski says there is a regional formula for vocational school students; it is per pupil amount allocated which is set by the state. Her feeling is if they did not attend Northeast, they would attend Whittier and it would cost us the same. She will be attending a meeting to discuss issues with Whittier (they do not have a current regional agreement). We are encouraging them to come to the table to discuss it and get the other communities to join in. This board at some time in the future will be asked to sign a letter to go to the other communities to ask for support to reengage with Whittier. She has not found anything that exists between this community and Northeast Vocational. They could not give her a solid number but was told to level fund it and hopes it will be lower based on the new calculations. She has not received anything from Whittier. She put in a minimal increase from \$907 to \$915, but has no idea where we stand with them. She will forward the full budget documents, the goals, and mission statements of the departments compiled for the board to review. She hopes to close the deficit more. She reorganized the budget and added more detail so people understand what they represent at town meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Friday, March 13th at 3:00 p.m. Chair Gorski would like to talk about the Administrative Assistant position and make some decisions how they will handle it going forward since it will be a budget item. Ms. Dembkoski said Veterans Benefits was an item Senator Tarr brought up at the meeting on Friday. Currently it is out of the municipality's hands on benefits that we offer to veterans. We have appropriated \$50,000 this year. We are looking for \$85,000-\$90,000 because of the many veterans added. Today she received an additional \$6,500/year request in veteran's benefits, so the number proposed has to be increased. This was one of the initiatives Senator Tarr was talking about, trying to give the municipality some power when it comes to veterans benefits. When we get notified that a veteran has been added, we have to find the money. \$40,000 in one budget year for that line item is a huge hit to us. The governor has supported an early retirement at a state level and is looking to alleviate 4,500 positions through attrition. There has been some talk as to whether or not to make that a local option for municipalities to accept and offer it to their employees. There are a few items that are only at the state level that need to get more support if we are going to bring it down to the municipal side. Ms. Dembkoski does have a list of articles she would be reaching out to them to support which she will share with the board. Senator Tarr and Representative Mirra will be invited to attend the next meeting.

With regard to the snow budget, snow reimbursements don't come in until after July but the state knows that and they allow us to account for that. All estimate requests have been submitted to the state for the four snow and ice storms. Currently the only one that qualifies is the blizzard. We are hoping that the other three will be allowed by the federal government. If so, the state is prepared with the numbers so they can go forward with the proposal.

Votes of the Board:

1. Request from the Highway Commissioner for an additional \$70,000 in deficit spending for snow and ice (bringing the total to \$210,000). The bill for the snow removal of the Bagnall School was \$59,000; the bill for the removal of the snow because of the way it was dumped was \$8,000. Pentucket is currently over \$110,000 with what they spent for the High School and Middle School. Ms. Dembkoski used the same company that Merrimack and Pentucket used. They were highly recommended, she met with the contractor, and was given a per hour price range. When the bill came in, we were charged at the high end while the other two communities were charged at the low end. When she questioned the contractor, he said it was because we were the third school and his guys were tired and were not going to work if they didn't get the higher rate. She told him she did not think that was appropriate and was going to bring it before the board and make it public, but that was the number they stuck with. The contractor is Brandolini Construction. Mr. Dunn said if we negotiated a price they should have held their price. Ms. Dembkoski said he gave her a range of \$40-\$60 per hour. She asked for an estimate and he said he would not know until he got up on the roof to give an estimate. Ms. Dembkoski never received an estimate. He went up and did the work and then sent us a bill. Selectman Dunn said we should try to negotiate half way with him. Ms. Dembkoski agreed and she tried and told him the newspapers are following this; that it was going to be made public to the board; but that was their price. Selectman D'Amore asked if we could negotiate or are we done. Ms. Dembkoski said a check has been cut but not mailed. Selectman Dunn asked if there was anyone there to manage their hours. Ms. Dembkoski said no but could get payroll records who they reported on the site. Summarizing the bill, she said their hours were approximately 7 hours the first day, 10 hours the second day, and 12 the third day; and the number of men increased each day (20+ to 30+ and 40+). Selectman D'Amore asked if she would entertain the thought of engaging in a conversation with the contractor with one of the selectmen present and was told the selectmen can reach out to the contractor. Selectman D'Amore said at the Regional Finance Committee there was a vote taken to form a sub-committee consisting of the Highway Department heads of all three towns and to meet with Greg Labrecque and the superintendent to come up with a pro-active plan so that as snow accumulates, before it gets to dangerous levels, there will be removal of snow. Selectman Dunn asked Chair Gorski if she would agree to have Ms. Dembkoski write a letter asking for the payroll records. Chair Gorski said yes and would like the justification. The board agreed and said we owe that to the taxpayers. The check will be held in the interim. Selectman D'Amore made a motion to allocate \$70,000 to the FY15 snow and ice account for the additional expenditures incurred for the extraordinary snow removal; Chair Gorski seconded the motion; all voted in favor; Selectman Dunn abstained; motion approved.
2. Selectman Dunn made a motion to accept the Minutes (Items 2-9) as read and documented; Selectman D'Amore seconded the motion; all voted in favor; motion approved.
 2. Executive Session Minutes from January 5, 2015
 3. Minutes from January 5, 2015
 4. Minutes from January 12, 2015
 5. Minutes from the Department, Boards and Committee workshop on January 17, 2015 with regards to permitting
 6. Executive Session Minutes from February 3, 2015
 7. Minutes from February 3, 2015

8. Executive Session minutes from February 10, 2015
9. Minutes from February 10, 2015

10. Policy on Membership of Board and Commissions by Selectmen – Chair Gorski had a concern saying that both members serve on the Board of Selectmen as well as on other boards, ZBA, CPC and cable TV board. She asked hypothetically if one of those boards were to be served with a lawsuit, does that put the members in any jeopardy by serving on two committees? Ms. Dembkoski said it should not unless a person is being sued personally. They are two separate positions. It should be known that when a member is in another seat on another board, they are not a Selectman. They are serving in the role and voting in the capacity of the board they are on. Selectman D’Amore made a motion to adopt a Board of Selectmen Policy “Membership of Boards and Commissions by Selectmen” as written; Selectman Dunn seconded the motion; all voted in favor; motion approved.

11. Policy on Attendance at Public Meetings by BOS Members – Selectman D’Amore said this is an important policy and that setting policies will help govern how we do our jobs. Selectman Dunn asked if two Selectmen can attend a public meeting. He was told yes, but you can’t discuss and vote amongst yourselves. Once there is a five member board, you can have two. You can’t have a majority. Selectman D’Amore made a motion to adopt the “Attendance at Public Meeting by Board of Selectmen” policy as written. Ms. Dembkoski asked to amend the policy to change #2 “2 or more members” to “a majority”. Selectman D’Amore’s motion is made with the amendment; Selectman Dunn seconded the motion; all voted in favor; motion approved. The policies will be made available on the website.

Correspondence:

1. February 23, 2015 Meeting Minutes

2. Selectman D’Amore’s Communication to Pentucket Schools regarding Whittier School Committee Appointment – Selectman D’Amore attended a School Committee meeting to support a member of the community who had expressed interest in continuing her service as a School Committee member for the Whittier board. The School Committee said only one letter of interest was submitted, and that was from Doug Gelina. He later found that the letter that expressed interest was addressed to us and not the School Committee. The School Committee has decided to reopen the process of entertaining letters of interest. He also said the School Committee made a monumental decision eliminating the town representative, instead having members of the Pentucket School Committee be direct representatives to the Whittier Vocational Tech, and has an objection with that. He has asked for agenda time to discuss eliminating our town representative. He said a large financial commitment was made as a town to Whittier and doesn’t think we should eliminate that voice. Chair Gorski said Jane Moran has been serving and Doug Gelina is a member of the School Committee, and if Pentucket has adopted this policy to have this School Committee member serve over there, it is their prerogative. There is a report in the paper that there is the potential that Whittier is violating state laws on how they are admitting students. For example, Doug Gelina, our School Committee representative, openly stated that the only entrance requirement should be residency, but apparently they have been selective and that is not in line with state law so there is some controversy. Selectman Dunn is in agreement that we should have a representative that is separate from the school board because they are there on behalf of the townspeople. Selectman D’Amore feels that policy-wise is the wrong decision to put a School Committee member on that board. They are projecting Pentucket’s policies, not the towns’ interest, which is a conflict. Ms. Dembkoski said they are opening up the discussion again to see who they are going to appoint, but they still may choose to appoint Mr. Gelina. Chair Gorski

strongly urges that whoever the representative is, they come to the Board of Selectmen every few months for an update as to what is going on since we don't get information from Whittier; just the bill. Our children are competing but not getting picked because of the selection criteria, but we're paying the bill and the current cost is \$1.8 million. Three towns are spending \$1.8 million to educate children that are not from our towns. This is a problem. Ms. Dembkoski said they are being tested, selected, and transported to the school on Groveland's dime. Selectman D'Amore said that is a lot of money being spent by three towns for children who don't even belong to those towns. Chair Gorski said we need to have a voice. We need to know how many of our children applied, how many were accepted, and if they didn't get accepted do they have another bite at the apple.

3. A letter was received from a resident regarding ATVs and dirt bikes. The area referenced is Alyssa Drive and Center Street. There is a no trespassing sign on it. The letter will be forwarded to the Police Department for follow-up and an update will be requested.
3. Review the letter from ZBA regarding their response on some matters and they have referred back to the Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer to charge a fine and cited the violation as per Statute 1502.2 which states that they can assess fines. They are asking the Zoning Enforcement Officer to assess and collect fines based on violations at that site.
4. A copy of letter from Pentucket saying they submitted a statement of interest to the MSBA (School Board Authority) for the purpose of addressing the needs of a new school was received. It is their letter and they are asking that we record this vote by the end of March. It will be on the next agenda.
5. A copy of the pay increase given by the Water Department to one of the employees of that department was received. The pay increase was because the employee obtained a license, but Ms. Dembkoski does not know how they associated the value to the license. They don't have a contract, and they fall under the Personnel Policy which doesn't have a pay scale. The Water Department will be asked to provide the board with information as to how they came up with that number.

Finance Director's Time:

As of March 1st we have gone online with the Town Clerk's office. Residents now have the ability to obtain their dog license, upload the required rabies vaccine report, upload spayed and neutered documents, and can pay for it all on line. Once payment is received, the Town Clerk will mail out the dog license/tag. Residents also have the ability to request copies of birth, death and marriage certificates on line. Ms. Dembkoski is trying to find more services that can put on line to benefit our residents and allow them 24/7 access. We are currently doing the real estate, excise and water bills through the same site and looking to do the boat ramp and mooring permits as well. She is working with police department for their firearms permits so people can request a permit. The Water Department is also interested in putting their permits on line.

Audit – The audit is complete. The auditors will be coming before the BOS on April 6th to discuss the audit, what their findings were, and what steps we are taking as a town to fix those items. Ms. Dembkoski believes it is important that he comes before the board as an independent auditor to talk about our finances where we are and what we are doing.

Reminder that Articles for the April 27th Town Meeting and Special Meeting should be submitted to Ms. Dembkoski by Wednesday March 25th in order that the board and town counsel can review and the warrant be printed and distributed by April 13th.

Candidates Night – The League of Women Voters will be held Wednesday April 29th in this room.

There have a lot of complaints about sidewalks and snow plowing. The Highway Department does not have the bombardier equipment that surrounding towns have. It is a drivable slow blower that has an arm that blows the snow up and over that allows you to go through the snow banks. We only have a “V” plow. Bobby Arakelian found a company that Georgetown is buying one through as a lease. The acquisition cost is \$151,000. If he has the board’s support, the annual payment through the lease is \$23,000. Ms. Dembkoski told him we would find the money this year and budget for it going forward. There is only one left. It is a large expense so she wanted to bring it to the board. Selectman D’Amore said kids are at risk and it is a quality of life issue. He would be in favor. It is a seven year lease and then we own it. If he goes forward with the lease and they don’t have one available, then we won’t have it until the summer. Selectman Dunn said we are doing the right thing. Some of it would come out of the highway budget and we could look to use stabilization money or free cash. The consensus of the board is to move ahead with it.

Documents for Signature: (1) Certificate of Achievement for an Eagle Scout, and (2) the Traffic Control Agreement for the lights at Bates Bridge. The previous board signed and agreed to this agreement in 2007. It was executed by Town Counsel. Mass Dot lost our agreement so we have new ones that need to be executed. Ms. Dembkoski read it and said it is exactly the same word for word what we agreed to and the way we are actually functioning. Once signed she will send it to Town Counsel for review and signature. At Town Meeting we need to accept traffic regulations in our bylaws, some of their recommendations that are already in place but not formally in our bylaws, and provide proof to Mass DOT that the town has accepted those. It will be on the warrant.

Selectmen’s Time:

Selectman D’Amore said the modulator owned by Comcast needed to be replaced in order to avoid failures of public TV airings. Chris Liquori informed Comcast and it has since been replaced. Hopefully it will take care of the transmission failures we’ve had in the past.

Selectman Dunn discussed the need for the Building Inspector to attend all ZBA meetings. The Building Inspector does not feel the need to come to all meetings, but ZBA feels it is in the best interest of the board if he does. Ms. Dembkoski said the BOS is the appointing authority and can require him to attend, but it has to be an agenda item and voted on. It will be added as an agenda item for the next meeting.

Selectman D’Amore would like to see the building permit(s) that were issued by the Building Inspector for 441 Main Street. He wants to review them to understand what was issued. Ms. Dembkoski will request them tomorrow.

Regards the Highway Commissioner’s position being appointed or elected, Ms. Dembkoski said the discussion was that the board was all in favor but the issue at the time was the timeline, so it was going to be more for next year. The term expires May 2016. An article could be added to the warrant, but it won’t be on the election until next year unless there is a special election. That is when we will give the people the choice to continue that position as an appointed one, but it will be discussed this year at town meeting. You can let residents know that the incumbent is free to stay in that position; so they don’t think there are any tactics involved.

It was mentioned that the Planning Board will have an article on the warrant to have another member (associate member for voting purposes), but Ms. Dembkoski has not received any article yet.

Selectman D'Amore made a motion to adjourn; Selectman Dunn seconded the motion; all voted in favor; motion approved. The meeting was adjourned at 10:32 p.m.

Minutes Unanimously Approved on April 6, 2015