

Groveland Board of Selectmen  
Meeting Minutes  
August 10, 2015

Present: Chair William Dunn, Selectman Joe D'Amore, Selectman Daniel MacDonald, Selectman Ed Watson, Selectman Michael Wood

Absent: None

Others Present: Denise Dembkoski (Finance Director)

Recorder: Melanie Rich

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

This being the first Monday night town hall is open for business, Chair Dunn thanked the employees and volunteers for coming to the meeting and for their hard work. He reminded them that if they have any issues or needs to let him know.

Selectman D'Amore introduced the new employees: Cassandra Murphy, Administrative Assistant; Tokala Close, Custodian/Facilities Coordinator; Sam Joslin, Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer; and Emily Boutin, Treasurer/Collector Clerk.

**RESIDENT/PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Joe Ryan (865Salem Street) was in to discuss parking legally on Salem Street saying it is a safety issue. He gave the board a copy of a letter he received last October. Chair Dunn said at the last meeting he asked that a letter be given to the Police Department and Road Commissioner and it be noted that there is no parking from the Georgetown line to the Haverhill town line; on Center Street. The board received a letter from Mr. Greenwood stating that he would not park in the roadway. Chair Dunn said we can either determine where the edge of the road is or let the departments that should handle it take care of it. Selectman D'Amore said he has a great deal of respect for Mr. Ryan and for him alerting the town of a safety issue. He said when the town is potentially threatened with litigation, it is customary and assumed that Town Counsel will be consulted. Mr. Ryan said the white line Mr. Greenwood refers to is the fog line which is 14' 4" to his property; all town property. He would like to see a letter from Town Counsel that says if he is parking there the town is liable.

Tom Wakefield (5 Georgia Street), ZBA Chair, had an issue with a \$40 parking ticket receipt that was not being paid unless he submitted proof from his debit card statement which he refuses to do. Ms. Dembkoski said the invoice submitted was for the prior fiscal year and can't be paid without the approval of town meeting. The prior board approved the reimbursement policy which was put in place with the assistance of the auditors requiring anyone using a credit or debit card provide proof it is actually them. The receipt submitted does not have his name on it; it does have a credit card number on it, but there is no proof that it was actually his. He can blacken out everything except for the name and that purchase; it is required for anyone seeking reimbursement. Judy Hauss, ZBA Administrative Assistant, informed Mr. Wakefield that it probably would not be processed and gave him a copy of the employee expense form. Selectman D'Amore said the board has the authority to make exceptions; we can validate that Ms. Dembkoski has done her job properly and followed protocol; but we need to make an exception so as not to discourage volunteers. Selectman MacDonald made a motion that Mr. Wakefield be reimbursed from the ZBA revolving account. Ms. Dembkoski said if they want to authorize to pay it that way she will need to explain it to the auditors if they research that bill. Selectman D'Amore asked for a friendly amendment that the motion be followed up with the fact that the Board of Selectmen is electing to overrule its own policy on reimbursement because it is de minimis; Chair Dunn feels there is enough proof if the auditors select it. Selectman Wood seconded; all voted in favor; voted 5-0-0.

Stanley Sample (40 Center Street) wanted to discuss the situation on lower Center Street. The Conservation Commission July 15<sup>th</sup> agenda included an item specifically for the lower Center Street parcel of land on Johnson's Pond. The grills were removed by the Conservation Commission and there is concern that the picnic tables will be removed. There are vandalism issues that were of concern to the Conservation Commission as well as the Police and Fire Departments. Mr. Sample was advised to attend the September 9<sup>th</sup> Conservation meeting where this issue will be addressed. He asked where the grills were; Mike Dempsey said the Haverhill Water Department has them. Selectman Watson suggested the Conservation Meeting be held in this room so it would be televised; Mr. Dempsey agreed to change it. Mr. Dempsey requested that the Conservation Commission be in this building if an office can be provided.

**APPROVAL OF WARRANTS:**

Selectman Wood voted to approve PW#16-05 in the amount of \$180,424.53; Selectman Watson seconded; all voted in favor; warrant approved.

Selectman Wood voted to approve DW#16-03A in the amount of \$30,044.42; Selectman Watson seconded; all voted in favor; warrant approved.

Selectman Wood voted to approve BW#16-05 in the amount of \$1,811,855.90; Selectman Watson seconded; all voted in favor; warrant approved.

**APPOINTMENTS:**

Selectman Watson made a motion to appoint Shauna Gray to the Historical Commission through June 30, 2017; Selectman D'Amore seconded; voted 5-0-0.

Chair Dunn made a motion to appoint Kyle Chapman to the temporary position of Seasonal Cemetery Groundskeeper effective July 29, 2015 through October 2015; Selectman D'Amore seconded; voted 5-0-0.

**DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE:**

1. Chris Liquori (Groveland Cable Access Channel discussion) – Selectman Watson requested he attend to discuss the local access channel being out again. Mr. Liquori said Comcast told him their INET went down; there was nothing he could do; it was fixed within 48 hours; issues are being documented. Selectman Watson asked if it is part of his job to monitor it; Mr. Liquori said yes. He was asked for a copy of his job description; he does not have one. He was asked how many hours he works; he said 19 and is in town hall twice a week. Mr. Liquori said he knew cable was down Monday morning and made a call to Comcast. He said if it happens over the weekend, there is nothing he can do; Comcast does not staff their plant. Selectman Watson would like the BOS to come up with a job description and post the job and see what else is out there. Tracy Gilford (Cable Advisory Board member) gave the history of cable TV. He said a former Finance Director and former Cable Board Chair decided to hire a part-time person to help him; Chris Liquori was the only applicant. Mr. Gilford would like the BOS to send it back to the Cable Advisory Board so they can work on the job description and accountability. Chair Dunn would like the Cable Advisory Board, along Mr. Liquori to come before the board for more discussion. He said Mr. Liquori is a paid employee; Mr. Gilford is a volunteer and he is monitoring the cable. Selectman D'Amore said he will not tolerate any backdoor attempt to eliminate Chris Liquori from his position. Chair Dunn said there is no backdoor attempt from him; he wants to cure the glitch he sees. Chair Dunn requested it be an agenda item sooner than later. Mr. Gilford said cable will be off the air for most of next week for rewiring.

2. Don Jacobs (Fire Department Study discussion) – Mr. Jacobs said they would provide an overview and scope of services that would entail describing what the Fire Department is today. They would then work to develop an ideal fire services that would lead to an action plan to move the town in the direction they want to accomplish. It is important from a credibility standpoint that whoever comes in can do so in a completely objective way. The approach he takes is that he will look at the general management from a financial and general personnel management policy standpoint; his associate (who is a fire chief) will look at it as a “Fire Suppression Emergency Medical Professional” standpoint so all aspects will be covered. Selectman MacDonald asked if he had any bias on a weak chief system vs. a strong chief system. Mr. Jacobs said they would review it, but said the critical issue is describing and understanding how the Fire Department is managed today. It’s about the department, not the individual, and how the department is being managed. Input will be received from anyone who interacts with the department. Once it is agreed upon, the second step is to define what the board feels is the ideal level of service being provided and describe what it would look like. Mr. Jacobs said if how you are providing the services meets your expectations with respect to what you describe as a level of service that you think is adequate for the town of Groveland, then there are probably no changes needed. Selectman D’Amore said we are seeking a validation whether a strong chief model is correct for this town and, if so, whether the current format, structure and specifically the hours that are directed for the part-time chief are appropriate. We are also looking for validation should we consider for the future a reversion for the previous system of the weak chief working specifically with the auspices of the BOS. A strong chief leaves the BOS out of the equation; could be a disadvantage. Mr. Jacobs strongly recommended that the town does not compare themselves to other municipalities; that is not the best way to do a study. It needs to be what is best for the town of Groveland. Selectman Watson would like to use a call-chief from a department not around here rather than someone local. Mr. Jacobs said the proposal is subject to approval by the board. He will provide studies on call departments for more review.

**VOTES OF THE BOARD:**

1. Selectman Watson made a motion to accept the July 13, 2015 Meeting Minutes; voted 5-0-0.
2. Selectman Watson made a motion to accept the July 15, 2015 Executive Session Meeting Minutes; voted 5-0-0.
3. Selectman Wood made a motion to accept the July 15, 2015 Meeting Minutes; Selectman Watson seconded; voted 5-0-0.
4. Selectman Watson made a motion to accept the July 22, 2015 Meeting Minutes; Selectman Wood seconded; voted 5-0-0.
5. Selectman D’Amore read the Honor Certificate thanking Valerie LePage for her years of service to the town.
6. Selectman Watson made a motion to approve the One-Day Liquor License for a wedding at Veasey Park on August 22<sup>nd</sup>; Selectman D’Amore seconded; voted 5-0-0.
7. Chair Dunn made a motion to approve the Special Event Permit for Groveland Historical Society for Pines Speedway Reunion, October 2<sup>nd</sup> from 10AM to 4PM; Selectman Watson seconded; voted 5-0-0.
8. Selectman D’Amore made a motion to accept a donation of bench from the Zalewski family in honor of their son Zack who passed away February 15, 2012; Selectman Watson seconded; voted 5-0-0.

9. Chair Dunn made a motion to accept the resignation of Michelle O’Keefe from the Finance Board and Community Preservation Committee effective September 1<sup>st</sup>; Selectman Watson seconded; voted 5-0-0.
10. Chair Dunn made a motion to accept retirement of Officer James Morton from the Groveland Police Department effective December 30<sup>th</sup>; Selectman Watson seconded; voted 5-0-0.

**NEW AND OLD BUSINESS:**

Selectman MacDonald regarding the Salem Street issue; what is the town’s policy on parking on town property; we need to clarify if parking is allowed on town property as long as you are not on a through way; he feels there is a potential safety issue. Selectman MacDonald made a motion that we seek a legal opinion on that issue; no second. Chair Dunn said we reviewed the information and found there was no parking from the Georgetown line to the Haverhill line and thinks we need to get a letter from the Road Commissioner. Ms. Dembkoski spoke with the Road Commissioner; he plans to go out and measure so he knows exactly where the actual road ends. She can then send a letter to Mr. Greenwood and the Police Department to identify that anything over that line would be enforced; this is what the board voted on at the last meeting; dealing with the town property would be the next step. Chair Dunn said the departments who should be enforcing it should be enforcing it. Selectman MacDonald feels it is more complex than simply where you can or cannot park at the specific location and agrees with Mr. Ryan that something needs to be looked at further. Chair Dunn said if it is not done in a timely manner we can go to Town Counsel.

Selectman MacDonald said he has been on the board for three months; he doesn’t want anyone to think he is attacking anyone. He wants to define the role of the Finance Director and wants to have an executive session to clarify that because the position did change from the position of old; what is the future interaction in terms of policy making between the BOS. His perception last year was that the former board had changed the description of the Finance Director. It appears to him that it was morphed into a Town Manager. He said he listened to constituents and to his own ears and would like to have an executive session to clear the air and clarify some issues he has and suggests an executive session so nothing is taken as a shot at Ms. Dembkoski. He wants to clarify for his own knowledge and proceed with being a selectman and know where the boundaries are between the Finance Director’s role and the BOS. Chair Dunn asked does he want only the board members or with Ms. Dembkoski also; both. He wants to discuss some ideas and issues of his own in terms of what is being done and how it is being done, interplays between employees within town hall; a number of issues. Selectman D’Amore said in fairness to Selectman MacDonald, Selectman Wood and Selectman Watson, we do owe them the opportunity to go back in time and help them understand what the decision making inputs were to create the current job description which Ms. Dembkoski has. He does not know if that qualifies as an executive session issue. Selectman MacDonald said the reputation needs to be protected because he wants to clarify issues and facts; it meets the requirements. Ms. Dembkoski will forward the Open Meeting Law to the board and noted that if she chooses, she can request it be in open session. Selectman D’Amore said he is agreeable because he is prepared to defend his decision making process, and feels it should be an open session. Ms. Dembkoski will not know if she wants open session or executive session until she knows what the grounds are. Selectman D’Amore said Selectman MacDonald should send the grounds to the Chair and he will decide from there.

Chair Dunn said he and Selectman Watson met with the Police today on some concerns; it was a productive meeting. They also had a productive meeting today to discuss issues with the Library Trustees; they are asking that they resolve it themselves. He wants residents to know we are working as a board, hearing people and trying to help in any situations. He would like Ms. Murphy to provide an update from the Harbormaster discussion.

Regarding the Washington Park process, Ms. Dembkoski gave them samples of Requests for Proposals; they formed a committee and are working on it. Chair Dunn asked if they will be hiring an engineer. Ms. Dembkoski said they can't split it because it is one amount of money. To comply with public bidding a scope of work has to be put out. The plan is to prioritize the items once the proposal goes out.

Regarding Shanahan Field, Ms. Dembkoski said the bathrooms went out to bid; they received one bid which came in slightly above the available funds. Community Preservation felt comfortable moving ahead with the price that came in. Chair Dunn asked about the fire truck. Ms. Dembkoski spoke with the Chief; no movement yet. He applied for a federal grant and made it to the second round; he wants to wait until the grants are fully awarded. Chair Dunn had a discussion with the Road Commissioner and at some point would like the board to have a discussion with him to talk about getting more money for the roads.

Selectman Watson asked for an update on the Finance Director and the Chairman visiting some of the projects. Ms. Dembkoski said she did not put it on as an agenda item because there is no vote necessary; it was decided to email all when a site visit is scheduled.

Selectman MacDonald said he met with the Police Chief and Deputy Chief and discussed the Gloucester Initiative drug program; they are in the fact-finding mode now. If anyone has any input, contact the Police Department.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

1. Minutes from July 27<sup>th</sup> to be reviewed.
2. Resignation from Laurie Leblanc from the Langley Adams Board of Library Trustees effective July 29<sup>th</sup> to be reviewed.
3. Informational letter from the Conservation Commission.

**FINANCE DIRECTOR'S TIME:**

Ms. Dembkoski spoke with Northeast Mosquito Control. They collect and test from the traps weekly; currently nothing has come back positive. On July 21<sup>st</sup> all catch basins were treated; no suspicious larva. One positive testing was found in Winthrop. They do not recommend spraying the town unless a virus is positive from one of their tests, but will treat certain areas if it is a problem.

She spoke with the Planning Board about Seven Star Road and they were aware of the issue. Chair Dunn said the section has been repaired.

She informed the Chair and Vice Chair that she will be on vacation from Friday, August 14<sup>th</sup> returning August 24<sup>th</sup>. The agenda will be posted Thursday.

**SELECTMEN'S TIME:**

Selectman MacDonald said he has been on the board three months and hasn't seen a financial statement but has seen some journals. He asked Ms. Dembkoski to provide an updated financial statement. Ms. Dembkoski said they have not closed the fiscal year yet; they are working on the end of June; we don't normally do monthly balance statements. She will provide him with receivables (which would not be on a financial statement). The Town Accountant handles the accounting and spreadsheets; she will contact her.

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Chair Dunn asked if Ms. Murphy would be coming to the meetings. Ms. Dembkoski said she is only scheduled to work until 8:00 p.m. and can attend until then; she works 18 hours and does not want the majority of those hours spent at a meeting.

The next meeting will be held Monday, August 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.

Chair Dunn made a motion to adjourn; Selectman Wood seconded; voted 5-0-0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:03p.m.

\*\*\* Unanimously Approved on September 8, 2015 \*\*\*