

Groveland Board of Selectmen  
Meeting Minutes  
August 24, 2015

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

Absent: Selectman Michael Wood

Others Present: Denise Dembkoski (Finance Director)

Recorder: Melanie Rich

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m.

**RESIDENT/PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Kurt Ruchala (16 Union Street) Fire Department Captain said since the Fire Department budgets, consultant, etc. were discussed recently, he wanted to let the board know that the current program is working well and they are moving in the right direction. He thinks the strong chief is the better route, but from the standpoint of maintaining their program with the call firefighters, he said in the long term to make sure it is still viable no matter who is in charge of the Fire Department or who is serving as firefighters; maintaining the call firefighters is what adds value to the town at a low cost. Lt. Mike Lawless (9 Governors Road) has recently been assigned as the EMS Coordinator Officer for the Fire Department. EMTs can now administer Albuterol, Aspirin, Narcan, Glucose, and EpiPen. They are also looking into the Heart Safe Program. He would like to move in that direction to make it better for the Town of Groveland. Chair Dunn said he received calls that the response time for a recent accident was poor; the problem was they were waiting for an ambulance to show up. Chair Dunn explained that with regard to the consultant, he was trying to determine what our chief should have money wise; he wanted information on local chiefs. Capt. Ruchala feels it is important to have an outside view on where we are and how we will grow.

Joe Ryan (865 Salem Street) was in again to discuss illegal parking on Salem Street saying it is a public safety issue. He was contacted by Bette Gorski who said she never agreed to or spoke to Town Counsel. He submitted a copy of the 1985 ZBA permit to run the garage and it doesn't say anything about the 14'5" in front of the building. Mr. Ryan said it is not about the edge of the road, it is about running a business on town property; the 14'5" from the fog line to the property line is town-owned land. He wants to know if the town has liability insurance on the 14'5". Chair Dunn told Mr. Ryan again that we found there is no parking from Salem Street to the Georgetown line; we said we would write a letter to the Road Commissioner to show where the edge of the road is, then write a letter to the Police Department to enforce it; we did all that. Chair Dunn does not know what else we as a board can do; we can only put in place what needs to be done, and we have done that. Chair Dunn further said that Mr. Ryan's original complaint was about the sight line of his driveway, which we helped him with; now he is complaining about parking on town land. Selectmen MacDonald said if he wants to pursue the ZBA permit, he needs to contact the Code Enforcement Officer; the BOS has no jurisdiction over a Special Permit.

**APPROVAL OF WARRANTS:**

Selectman D'Amore voted to approve PW#16-09 in the amount of \$163,135.66; Selectman Watson seconded; all voted in favor; warrant approved.

Selectman D'Amore voted to approve DW#16-07A in the amount of \$34,132.07; Selectman Watson seconded; all voted in favor; warrant approved.

Selectman D'Amore voted to approve BW#16-09 in the amount of \$389,487.92; Chair Dunn seconded; all voted in favor; warrant approved.

**APPOINTMENTS:**

Selectman Watson made a motion to appoint Heather Degnan to the Conservation Commission through June 30, 2017; Selectman Chair Dunn seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Chair Dunn made a motion to appoint Patricia Denn to the Historical Commission through June 30, 2017; Selectman D'Amore seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Chair Dunn made a motion to appoint David E. Shanahan as a reserve officer with the Groveland Police Department through June 30, 2016; Selectman D'Amore seconded; Selectman MacDonald yes; Chair Dunn yes; Selectman D'Amore yes; Selectman Watson abstained.

### **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE:**

1. Claire Walsh (Update on Washington Hall) – Ms. Walsh thanked the current and former BOS for their support and the CPA for their financial support. The goals for Washington Hall were to save an important resource in the town, to restore a rundown and endangered historic building, to provide a home for the Groveland museum, and to showcase the Groveland mills. The Veasey family donated Washington Hall to Groveland in 1939 and it is believed to be the oldest community center in the country. She gave a power point presentation listing some facts, describing the before and after photos, what the rooms will be used for, and the restoration/renovations. It will be dedicated and there will be an open house in the fall, but no date has been set for opening. Chair Dunn asked if it would be self-sustaining. Ms. Walsh said they own the Knox Building which is now a studio apartment and the rent should help sustain the hall. Selectman MacDonald asked if senior events could be held there; yes. Selectman MacDonald asked if it is put on the historical list will they want to put restrictions on it for historical use. She is not sure of the restrictions; she needs to contact the MA Historic Commission. His concern is that it could be restricted to the point that it can't be used for anything but a museum. Ms. Walsh said they plan to hold historical and educational programs but may have to minimally charge for admission. The Chair thanked her for the presentation.
2. Veto Discussion – Chair Dunn invited the Committee tonight to discuss the possibility of moving the Veto to Washington Hall which would allow room for the Council on Aging. Kurt Ruchala said that wherever it goes, the main goal is to be sure it is conditioned properly. Purchased in 1823, it is one of the oldest fire engines in the country. Selectman Watson said he measured at Washington Hall and it will not fit in there. Don Greaney said there was a fundraiser to build that building and if the board wants to take it over they should pay those people back; \$35,000 was raised to put the building there; the Selectmen allowed the building to go there; the building supervisor at the time (Kermit Cross) wanted it here instead of in front of the Fire Station because there was no basement access at the other building to get heating, heat was put in but never connected. He also said there was a request for approximately \$50,000 for renovations years ago that still hasn't gone out to bid. Chair Dunn apologized and said he unaware the building was donated by the firefighters. Ms. Demboski said the proposal is ready to go; all that is needed are the revised drawings from the architect; Tracy Gilford will contact the architect. Mr. Gilford gave a brief history for the new members as well as those watching and felt it should not be used for anything other than the Veto. Chair Dunn, with the consensus of the board, recommended the Committee move forward. Selectman Watson suggested monthly updates be received. Selectman D'Amore asked if they would pursue CPA funds to restore it; they do plan to do that.
3. Sam Joslin, Building Inspector (to discuss current Building Department Fee Schedule) – Mr. Joslin told the board that the fees we charge are 30 years and outdated. He is aware that the board is not a fan of fees, but said our current fees do not cover the cost of the department; the general taxpayer is paying for those permits, and will leave it up to the board if they want to increase the fees to cover it or continue to let it be supplemented through the general fund. He said right now the taxpayer is supplementing

approximately \$10,000-\$20,000 per year. Selectman MacDonald feels they are paying twice: once for the permit; then again in taxes and thinks it is cost-prohibitive. Selectman D'Amore felt we should not make a decision tonight but asked Mr. Joslin if he could do a schedule between the two extremes (more competitive). Selectman MacDonald said we are not subsidizing; its one household; one budget. Chair Dunn said we should protect the homeowners, but on the other hand, contractors are making a profit and not giving the town any more money. He said Mr. Joslin's department should run at least at a breakeven point. Selectman Watson said we need to think on it and not ready to vote on it tonight. Mr. Joslin will do a further breakdown for the board.

Mr. Joslin asked the board to address the Trench Permit. He is proposing \$50.00 for processing; under MGL he should have a fee to cover it. Selectman D'Amore made a motion that the Trench Permit fee be implemented at \$50.00 as recommended by the Building Inspector; Selectman MacDonald asked if it is for the purpose of safety; not revenue generated; yes. Selectman Watson seconded; all voted in favor; voted 4-0-0.

4. Cable Advisory Committee – Present were Tracy Gilford (4 Abbott Circle), Beth Rose (792 Salem Street), Chris Liquori, and J.R. McComiskie (27 Broad Street). Chair Dunn's concerns are that Mr. Liquori has no one to answer to except the Committee, no set hours in town hall, and no way to check the hours worked. Mr. Liquori said he does have a job description from Greg Labrecque, the former Finance Director. He said he has answered to the board, Ms. Dembkoski and the Cable Committee.

He said last week they finished replacing the head in wiring; it is rock solid now and there will be no more equipment failures. Over the course of the last year they recorded 126 meetings and had issues with 4; 2 were our fault; 1 was Comcast's fault cutting wiring to the plant; and 1 was HP doing wiring incorrectly. Selectman Watson said he is a paid employee and a volunteer was monitoring the cable. Mr. Liquori addressed that; he does not get the channel because he does not live in town; however he did put in a system last week that allows him to check the channels. Selectman Watson questioned why nobody has ever seen him in town hall other than at a meeting; Mr. Liquori said his office is at the police station and most of his time is spent there. Selectman Watson asked if his timesheet indicated how much time was spent on a task. Mr. Liquori does not break the time down into 15 minute increments. Mr. McComiskie said just because you don't see someone does not mean they are not working; preventative maintenance is behind the curtain; that is the job description. Selectman MacDonald said we are trying to make everyone accountable. Ms. Dembkoski said he submits his timesheets to the Assistant Treasurer who submit them to payroll. Chair Dunn asked who his boss his; he said Ms. Dembkoski, BOS and Cable Committee. Selectman Watson said the job description show 19 hours a week at \$15.00-\$20.00 per hour; Mr. Liquori said that was what was posted; he was hired at 19.5 hours/week which was cut back to 19. Chair Dunn asked what he does for 19 hours/week. Mr. Liquori said he uploads the meetings and makes sure channels are scheduled and updated. Selectman MacDonald asked if his job could be done in 2 hours one week and 20 hours the next. Mr. Liquori said it does fluctuate. Selectman MacDonald suggested since it is not a written contract, could he be paid up to 19 hours/week, but if he submits a timesheet with 3 hours, that's what he gets paid for. Ms. Rose said it is ridiculous and Mr. Liquori is being attacked; he has always reported and given the Committee the information they asked for and is a very good technical person. Chair Dunn said he is not attacking Mr. Liquori but believes he should be answering to someone; since 2010 he has not. Selectman Watson said the Committee is doing a great job and wants to make sure the town is getting the best bang for the buck; he is putting in for 19 hours/week at \$25.75/hour; he wants to make sure he is accountable. Ms. Dembkoski said every cable subscriber in town has an agency fee; Comcast money comes in specifically to fund Comcast related items (technology, staff, etc.); it is not a revolving fund; it is a special revenue account which is dedicated to Comcast related items. Selectman D'Amore said we now have some history on how this position was created and who was in charge. He commended Selectman Watson for bringing this before the board. Selectman D'Amore's recommendation is that the Committee work with Mr. Liquori and come back with some recommendations for changing the

job description and accountability. Ms. Dembkoski wanted to clarify regarding a contract for Mr. Liquori, that he is not eligible under the law; he falls under the personnel policy. It was suggested that when the Committee has their meeting they invite Selectman Watson to attend.

**VOTES OF THE BOARD:**

Selectman D'Amore made a motion to accept the July 27, 2015 Meeting Minutes; Selectman Watson seconded; voted 4-0-0.

**NEW AND OLD BUSINESS:**

Selectman MacDonald inquired about the follow-up on financial statements; tax collections. Ms. Dembkoski will have an update for the next meeting.

Chair Dunn checked with Ms. Dembkoski on the Bagnall Committee update. She said they will be coming to a meeting soon. She said the Recreation Summer Program will be in September 21<sup>st</sup>, the same night as the Finance Committee, to recap their program and to talk about planning for next year's program.

Chair Dunn was unable to contact Deb Webster, Assessing Manager regarding the Comprehensive Permit booklet the town is working on. Ms. Dembkoski spoke with her today and she did reach out to Merrimack Valley Planning Committee. The draft is almost completed; and Ms. Webster made the new Building Inspector the point person. She is trying to schedule a meeting, but MVPC cannot meet until early in September.

Chair Dunn said the Pines project may not get to where we thought. He asked Ms. Dembkoski if it is possible not to do the boat ramp and put the money elsewhere. She informed him that so much money has been spent on engineering and putting the project together that it would not make sense to do that at this point. The proposal is done; we received a revised permit from the Army Corps of Engineers; Conservation Commission has granted a waiver; all the bid documents are ready to go; only advertising is needed.

Chair Dunn has asked about financial statements. She sent it out June 23<sup>rd</sup> as requested by Erin Merrill. She sent it to the parties on her email which included several Selectmen and added Chair Dunn and re-forwarded to Selectman MacDonald as well. The software goes back to 2006.

Chair Dunn announced that the Pines will be paved tomorrow.

Selectman MacDonald asked what the shortfall was at the Pines. Ms. Dembkoski said there is \$344,000 left in the account. The paving will cost \$60,000-\$70,000. \$250,000-\$300,000 is estimated for the boat ramp. \$31,000 in the boat ramp account will be used first. The next steps were to be street lights, the bathrooms and the fields. The back field is complete, the utility field (multi-purpose field), the two front fields are not completed at this point. Bathrooms will cost \$50,000-\$100,000; the plumbing and utility work is completed; they looking at modular bathrooms. Since she has been here there have not been many requests for additional softball/baseball field space. Erin Merrill is the liaison to work with Selectman Wood; she has met with her. The only feedback received was from Dan Stewart who is very pleased with the way things are progressing. Ms. Dembkoski said we need to figure out if we need more baseball/softball fields and then how to pay for it. Chair Dunn will talk with Erin Merrill and Selectman Wood to figure out what to do; we need more direction for field use and how the fields will be completed.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

1. Minutes from August 10<sup>th</sup> to be reviewed.

2. Resignation of Jennifer Close from the Langley Adams Board of Library Trustees effective August 12<sup>th</sup> to be reviewed.
3. H3552 – “An Act validating the results of a certain town election in the Town of Groveland”
4. Letter to Richard Greenwood regarding parking restrictions on Salem Street.

**FINANCE DIRECTOR’S TIME** – No items for discussion tonight

**SELECTMEN’S TIME:**

Selectman D’Amore said we received an email concerning the school Superintendent’s incomplete proposal on increasing the fees or creating fees for the usage of fields which has many youth groups concerned that those fees would be impossible to support under the current structure. He contacted the Chair of the School Committee and found that no proposal has been approved by the School Committee. The Policy Subcommittee will meet in September to begin putting together a plan to increase fees but the Chair said those fees would not impact any youth groups in any of the three towns; they will only impact outside groups. Selectman D’Amore asked if there would be a policy decision by the Policy Subcommittee and was told there would be. He will attend the School Committee meeting when it will be discussed and report back to the board. Chair Dunn agreed to have Selectman D’Amore attend.

The next meeting will be held Tuesday, September 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.

Selectman Watson made a motion to adjourn; Selectman D’Amore seconded; voted 4-0-0. The meeting was adjourned at 10:06 p.m.

\*\*\* Approved September 21, 2015 with a 4-0-1 vote. Selectman Wood abstained. \*\*\*