

Groveland Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
February 22, 2016

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

Absent: None

Others Present: Denise Dembkoski (Finance Director)

Recorder: Melanie Rich

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m.

RESIDENT/PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Ché Condon (VP Pentucket Youth Football) inquired about the future use of the football fields at the Pines. Chair Dunn said they should be putting in a sprinkler system, fertilizing and seeding but it could be delayed; they may want to rebid. Ms. Dembkoski said she does not believe the Recreation Committee put in an additional article for the lighting. Mr. Condon said they were looking to buy a new storage shed. He was informed that anything with a foundation would become town property; he said it would be portable. The Road Commissioner would meet with him to find an area that would work because of the irrigation. He was asked to provide a schedule since there are other groups that want to use the field as well.

APPROVAL OF WARRANTS:

Selectman Wood made a motion to approve PW#16-35 in the amount of \$147,173.05; Selectman D'Amore seconded; all voted in favor; warrant approved.

Selectman Wood made a motion to approve DW#16-33A in the amount of \$24,365.92; Selectman D'Amore seconded; all voted in favor; warrant approved.

Selectman Wood made a motion to approve BW#16-35 in the amount of \$743,110.76; Selectman D'Amore seconded; all voted in favor; warrant approved.

APPOINTMENTS – There were no appointments this evening.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE:

Council on Aging and Affordable Housing Committee (to present findings per BOS request) – Lynn Stanton (COA Director) said they met with the Affordable Housing Committee with regard to the property in front of River Pines on January 25th. Bruce Adams sent a letter to the BOS indicating their willingness; they voted all in favor to release their interest in that property; it is a useful spot for a Senior Center. The COA, members of the board, and the president of the Friends of the COA are asking the BOS to transfer the right to use the property to the COA as an initial step in the Senior Center initiative. Selectman Watson asked what their next step would be. Ms. Stanton said they would seek community input in addition to input from people who have experience going forward with this type of project, and will contact the State Executive Office of Elder Affairs to see what available funding there is; they will keep the BOS informed. Selectman D'Amore made a motion that the BOS accept the Affordable Housing Committee's release of interest in the property and transfer that interest to the Groveland Council on Aging; Selectman Watson seconded; voted 5-0-0.

Michael Ingham (Veterans Services) – There were questions as to Mr. Ingham's presence and availability in town hall. Is there any time set at town hall to serve the people of Groveland; is he required to have office hours here? Mr. Ingham provided the board paperwork that explains what he does in the community. He has been the Veterans Services Director for the City of Haverhill for 21 years. The town was tied in with Ipswich at that time. Groveland residents were coming to see him and he handled the claims, etc.;

financial benefits were handled by Ipswich. He was asked to take over Groveland from Ipswich since they were coming there anyway. Night hours were held; few showed; they were still coming to Haverhill during the day. Working with the COA, appointments were made when needed. With regard to the secretary, he said there is a great deal of paperwork that goes with the job. He explained the process; it all has to be processed and accounted for, and recertified every June. Selectman Watson asked if there is an agreement between the Town of Groveland and the City of Haverhill for his and the secretarial services. Mr. Ingham said it was basically all verbal; he is hired for the Town of Groveland separate from the City of Haverhill. Selectman Watson asked who set the \$92.94/hour and \$46.11/hour salaries and should the BOS be setting the rate of pay. Mr. Ingham said they were set for a reasonable amount of hours per month to do the job. In reality, the secretary receives approximately \$100/month; he receives approximately \$200/month. Ms. Dembkoski suggested it be a monthly stipend and not based on hours. She will discuss and work it out with Mr. Ingham. Selectman Watson also said if the people are going to Haverhill, shouldn't the town be reimbursing Haverhill? Mr. Ingham said there is some overlap but he does handle VA cases for the town; it is not all Chapter 115; it offsets the costs. Mr. Ingham said he was shut down with the past administration. Chair Dunn wants visibility and accountability for the money being paid. Ms. Dembkoski will put his contact information on the website. Selectman Watson would like to see it easier for the Veterans of Groveland to participate in the program by having regular hours here. Mr. Ingham will provide a monthly breakdown of what is going on with Groveland residents. Selectman MacDonald said we owe the Veterans and they deserve the benefits. In summary, Mr. Ingham will meet once a month with Ms. Dembkoski to give an update specific to services applied for and paid to our local Veterans; contact information will be put on our website as well as in the COA newsletter; and, if possible, post one hour a month at town hall. He will be given a town email address for people to contact him.

Route 97 Liquors (to discuss request for new manager on liquor license) – Devyani Patel, current manager and owner of Route 97 Liquors is changing managers; Nileshkumar (Neil) Patel is the new manager. Chair Dunn said in the past there have been problems and said it can't continue; he wants management present to stop the problems. Selectman Watson said looking at the paperwork it seems the new manager is the one who has had the problems before. Ms. Patel said he was not there when the violations occurred, he was being called. She has been acting as an absentee manager because she lives in Boston and only comes on weekends. Ms. Patel said since he is a local resident, it would be a benefit to the community as well as the store to have him as the new manager vs. her. Chair Dunn agreed but said when he is not there to make sure that the person in that position is running it as it is to suppose to be run. She said they are in process of getting an ID scanner (probably within a month). Selectman MacDonald reiterated that she is going to put in system and changes so it doesn't happen again; she said absolutely. Chair Dunn said he would be satisfied if Neil is in the Liquor Store. She said she is also looking to hire another person with previous experience. Selectman Wood made a motion to approve the new manager with a Liquor License at Route 97 Liquors; Selectman Watson seconded; Chair Dunn made a friendly amendment that the manager be onsite, they will hire someone for when he is not there, and they are to work to get a register that accepts the licenses sooner or later. Someone that is educated and knows the job needs to be there and something needs to be in place to check what needs to be checked when Neil is not there. Selectman Watson accepted the friendly amendment; voted 5-0-0.

Fire Department (to present their recent approval by the MA Office of Emergency Medical Services as a Heart Safe Community) – Chief Lay thanked the firefighters for coming and demonstrating their support. John Brickett (Executive Director of OEMS, Region 3) on behalf of the Department of Public Health Office of Emergency Medical Services, his office as well as the residents and support of the board, presented to Chief Lay and Firefighter Balletto a Heart Safe Community designation. Firefighter Balletto was instrumental in obtaining the designation in such a short period of time. He said what prompted it was that they were trying to improve EMS in the Fire Department as well as improving the chain of survival. The program will begin to offer CPR classes and they will try to get more defibrillators in public places. It would also be a good step to fund AEDs for all town buildings. They will talk to businesses as well. Chair Dunn commended all the men on behalf of the board for their hard work and all they have done.

Fiscal 2017 Budget Discussion – The Water Department was discussed. The 6% raise for the superintendent was questioned; Chair Dunn thinks the numbers in a few places are out of line. Ms. Dembkoski said there is a requested amount and an actual article they are submitting. The Water/Sewer Commissioners did not support a 6% increase for the superintendent, they supported a 3.8% increase. She reminded the board that they are the authority to set all salaries; it does not matter if employees work for elected commissions or if they are under enterprises funds, the board is the salary setting body; town meeting cannot set a salary or cannot overrule a salary. If they put more money in a budget item that is fine, but they do not receive that increase unless this board approves it. Selectman MacDonald said he likes consistency and feels that unless someone comes before us and says they are underpaid, we have to take the budget into consideration; expenditures already exceed revenue and we haven't figured in capital improvements; we should be fiscally responsible; we as a board should hold the line on salaries unless somebody says they are underpaid. Ms. Dembkoski clarified that the Water is not in the general fund budget; they are enterprise funds and are funded through the water and sewer rates. Chair Dunn thinks we should flat line it; they will be asked to come it to discuss it. They are going to submit articles for their capital plan which will include some water main replacements. Selectman Watson said there should be something in there for the electric company building. Ms. Dembkoski said it may not be available to be occupied until July 2017 and expenses that would be needed would be included in this budget.

Selectman MacDonald wants to start with the deficit and work backwards. Ms. Dembkoski said if there is free cash and a portion should be put in OPEB, capital stabilization, and regular stabilization. Selectman MacDonald asked how much of the assessment overlay is going to be released. She recommended using \$175K (we used \$195K last year); leaving the three most recent years untouched. The Finance Committee has not set a meeting schedule yet. She will send the members the spreadsheet with the percentage increases included. She sent an email to the Finance Chair to invite them to the March 7th meeting when the school is here.

VOTES OF THE BOARD:

Selectman Watson made a motion to approve the January 25, 2016 Meeting Minutes; Selectman Wood seconded; voted 5-0-0.

Selectman Watson made a motion to approve the February 1, 2016 Executive Session Meeting Minutes; Selectman Wood seconded; voted 4-0-1. Selectman MacDonald abstained.

OLD BUSINESS (Unfinished Business):

Selectman D'Amore has concerns about contamination, sounds and public safety regarding the firing range. He said a future motion would require something in writing from every agency involved that would approve the firing range plan, but would be dependent on a detailed plan designed by the police department. He discovered that frangible lead free ammo is made from copper tin composite material; projectiles literally crumble to dust upon impact when surfaces that are harder than themselves hit. He said each officer when training will possibly fire off 100 projectiles. Instead of using lead we are using copper and tin with perhaps some magnesium as well. He read an excerpt from the Minnesota Department of Health regarding copper and drinking water. At the last meeting it was stated that the water table was only 6' deep. He thinks it is extremely important that we ask the Police Department for a detailed plan that brings into focus the realities he found in his research and wants to see a sign-off from Natural Heritage, DEP, and Fish & Game after they have reviewed the plan.

Chair Dunn said he had a conversation with Officer Fournier who said they were going to put down a material on the ground which was not going to let the lead penetrate; it is recycled concrete or hot top, hard-packed; they are going to clean it. Ms. Dembkoski said that is something the board would have to approve

(that they want in writing) before the project moves forward. Selectman MacDonald agrees with Selectman D'Amore in principle but does not know if we will get formal approval since DEP does not have a permitting process. Selectman D'Amore said in the absence of standards, there is nothing preventing this board from imposing high standards. Chair Dunn will forward to Officer Fournier the board's concerns with noise, a plan, contaminates, bullet travel, public safety, written approvals or emails from authorities, and if abutters were notified. He can come back to the board with the answers and we can then hold a hearing to educate the public; we need 100% confidence in the project. Ms. Dembkoski reminded the board that the money approved for the project will go away on June 30th. Mr. Dempsey is planning to contact Natural Heritage and tell them what our thoughts are about Center Street.

Selectman Watson asked for an update on the complaint about the school buses parked at Valley Tree. Ms. Dembkoski apologized but has not followed up yet; it is on her pending list.

Selectman MacDonald asked the status of the Zoning Bylaws. Ms. Dembkoski said she is working on the reformatting and waiting for Jim Freer to provide the table of contents. There are not a lot of legal changes; it is reorganization. If it passes the reorganization, the board can start looking at the sections to make significant changes to the document. Public hearings will be held by the Planning Board. It is on track for the town meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE TO BE REVIEWED:

1. Letter from Kopelman & Paige, P.C. about 1 Holly Lane – Ms. Dembkoski said it was discussed previously (the Building Inspector came before the board asking to fill in the pool). By right we can now place a lien against the property.
2. Letter from Comcast regarding installation costs – Selectman Watson asked if that could be negotiated. Ms. Dembkoski said we could negotiate the franchise fees and types of channels, but not installation costs.
3. Market Analysis on Industrial Zoned Land Parcels by Laurence Marocco – Chair Dunn would like to see it this topic back on as an agenda item.
4. Minutes from February 18, 2016.
5. Town Planner sample job description.

FINANCE DIRECTOR'S TIME:

Ms. Dembkoski said she has concerns that we are spending more than normal for Town Counsel services; there are a few ongoing matters that have taken up considerable time; hopefully it will slow down.

Selectman Watson said there is approximately four months left in the fiscal year and the accounts should be at 60%-65% expended; one is 537% and one is 99.5% expended. Ms. Dembkoski said the 537% is tax title; eventually the cost will be recovered. Additionally, some of the accounts may have contracts that are paid up front. She has been tracking the majority of the deficits and is aware of them. The Veterans benefits fluctuate month to month.

SELECTMEN'S TIME:

Selectman Watson said last week the cable station was out for four days; that is unacceptable and needs to be addressed. Tracy Gilford (Cable Board) said it was a simple mistake. The switch was left on air instead of going back to bulletin board. Chair Dunn said the paid person should be finding the problems before the

Selectmen do. Ms. Dembkoski said when Mr. Liquori was contacted he responded immediately. She also said that in speaking with Mr. Liquori that there is a piece of software that is promoted by our website called Earth Channel. It allows the cable broadcast to be embedded into our website so anyone in the world can watch the meeting streamed live and also the message board channel; there have been requests by people traveling or out of town who want to watch the meetings live that don't have that capability. Mr. Liquori could check from his phone or any computer anytime to see if the channel is up or not; she used that in her prior community because she oversaw the cable. She had the ability to log in and have access as well as watching the meetings. Mr. Liquori needs to bring that to the committee for discussion. She said it should definitely be looked into because it is a benefit to the residents, a benefit to Mr. Liquori, and would make his job a little easier. Selectman Watson would like to see the Whittier School Committee on cable. He has also had people complain about the audio of the Selectmen's meeting; it is very difficult to hear. Mr. Gilford has had no problems. He said they are working on job descriptions; when they have answers they will come back before the board. Chair Dunn said he would like to see them before the next fiscal year.

Selectman Wood asked about the ability to Skype when unavailable to attend a meeting. Ms. Dembkoski said the board would have to accept a remote participation policy. The requirements are that the Chairman must be present and there must be a quorum here in order for someone to participate in any media (Skype, phone, face time). She will provide sample policies at the next meeting. The board only needs to agree to one and vote.

The next meeting will be held Monday, March 7, 2016 at 6:30 p.m.

Selectman Wood made a motion to adjourn; Selectman Watson seconded; voted 5-0-0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

*** Unanimously Approved on March 21, 2016 ****