

Groveland Board of Selectmen  
Special Meeting Minutes  
March 28, 2016

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

Absent: Selectman Ed Watson

Others Present: Denise Dembkoski (Finance Director)

Recorder: Melanie Rich

The meeting was called to order at 5:30p.m.

**DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE – FY17 Budget Discussion & Vote:**

Chair Dunn wanted discussion on the proposed Planner and proposed Building Facilities person. Sam Joslin (Building Inspector) attended to explain what a Planner does/would do. The town relies heavily on volunteerism. The busier the town gets developmentally and the new laws and regulations put a burden on the volunteers. The current Zoning bylaws are insufficient and need to be changed; a Planner would keep them up-to-date yearly. This Planner will act as a resource for incoming businesses/residents, follow state guideline for deadlines, ensure the changes submitted are legal changes, and perform administrative duties; it is a valuable position. Selectman MacDonald said maybe we should look at the bylaws and delegating tasks to the Planning Board. Mr. Joslin said some of the burden can be shifted to the Building Department, but not all of it. The town is constantly changing as well as the regulations. He thinks it is a potential benefit to the town to have one in place. Selectman D'Amore felt there is the potential for a crisis in town and recommended putting it on a priority list. Selectman MacDonald would like to see a benefit analysis.

Building Facilities Position – As requested by the Chair, Tokala Sage submitted a list of what he does and what needs to be done; it would be more facilities related than janitorial. Selectman D'Amore thought the board would be open to the following concepts: take a portion of free cash and put in into our savings (stabilization fund), and fund future liabilities; we do have a need for capital items. He wants to see the school funded adequately, no increases for salary, no expansion of any position from part-time to full-time, and not adding new positions with the hope that after we put some money away we have a special meeting in the fall.

Chair Dunn, referring to the recommendations from the BOS Chair and the Finance Director, said received \$695,270 in certified free cash. Currently there is \$209,973 in a capital plan; this budget would be to fund the whole amount of money. We talked about putting \$300K in the stabilization account; \$70K in the OPEB trust; and \$75K in the stabilization fund account. We are looking at a deficit of \$35,648 (originally \$117K+).

Ms. Dembkoski would not normally recommend using free cash to balance the budget (unless it is a small amount) because it is a one-time revenue source. She recommended using free cash and not an override for any additional funds after going over the history and found that in years 2009-2012 there were overrides and they all failed. She felt even with a small amount, if it doesn't pass, we have to come back with a contingency budget and make cuts.

Selectmen Budget: \$9,196 is for Ms. Murphy's salary; the consolidation of the Treasury Collection Clerk with the Administrative Assistant. Ms. Murphy can cover both offices for a total of 30 hours/week saving approximately \$16K/year.

Finance Department: Director Salary – Selectman MacDonald asked the Chair for clarification on the dollar amount and the contract. Chair Dunn asked Ms. Dembkoski if she wanted an executive session; she would.

Town Clerk: Office Expense and Supplies. Ms. Demboski said it did not come in with an expense budget request; \$3K was decided to be put in.

Planning: Contract Services of \$2,300.

Municipal Buildings/Custodian: \$18,200 (keeping him at his current hours).

Police Department: Close to the same as last year.

Fire Department: The amount in the recommended column is a 2% increase (\$28,194-no additional hours or salary); his current salary is \$27,641. The Fire Chief submitted a warrant article to increase his salary and his hours, but that is not legal; it was included because it was submitted. Chair Dunn discussed the capital plan of \$209,073; he is not in favor of the radios included in that number (approximately 82K). Chair Dunn felt this year they could do with only the hand-held radios (approximately \$15K). Chair Dunn made a motion to purchase 35 hand-held radios and change the \$209,073 number when the Fire Chief submits his final number; Selectman Wood made a friendly amendment to \$35K; Chair Dunn accepted the friendly amendment; voted 4-0-0.

Education: Pentucket Assessment \$8,357,742. Capital Assessment \$559,388 – Final numbers.

Highway Department: Highway Salary part-time \$6K; Finance recommendation is \$13K. The original \$8K he was cutting was to help fund the facilities position. Now that we are not funding that, he will need additional hours.

Board of Health: Finance recommends \$2,500; BOH requested \$5K. Ms. Demboski said in the past they have not spent more than \$3K. After May 2<sup>nd</sup> there will only be one member. There are some sections under the law that in certain capacities the BOS can function as the BOH because it cannot function as a board of one.

Cemetery Commission: Chair Dunn said under the initial capital plan they were asking for a new vehicle. In the past they had \$8,500 for part-time wages and it was cut to \$6K because their budget was primarily funded through receipts of the cemetery, not the general funds, which was not legal. They were given a general fund budget. They expressed the need for part-time help; the recommendation is for what they submitted. Ms. Demboski is waiting to hear on their fuel line because they level funded it and it has decreased.

Library: The library currently has an interim director; she should not get an increase because she is an interim. When a director is hired, they will be hired at the \$61K salary. Regarding the other two numbers, the staff wages were at \$101K; they are requesting \$107K (significantly higher than the 2%; same with the part-time wages). The \$103,433 and \$6,842 represents 2% more than it is this year.

Unclassified: The only change is the street lighting budget; originally the number was \$40K; it is more close to \$38,500.

Selectman D'Amore asked for a perspective on the overlay surplus. Ms. Demboski spoke with Debby Webster and she feels comfortable that the \$195K is a good number; it leaves us with \$470K of overlay surplus, not counting future appropriation of \$135K.

Selectman MacDonald asked if the Essex County Retirement contribution was an actual figure; yes. Regarding the OPEB fund, shouldn't we have a permanent line item in the budget similar to the retirement benefits obligation? Ms. Demboski said we can put an OPEB trust appropriation under the unclassified budget, but then the free cash transfer would be deficit plus whatever you want to put in there because we

are still short that money. Selectman MacDonald made a motion to add the OPEB trust into the unclassified budget line item at \$85K. Ms. Dembkoski said we have an unfunded liability of \$3,965,043. We are contributing roughly 35% of the required contribution per year and it has escalated dramatically; this year we should have paid \$300K into it. Selectman MacDonald asked why are we not paying what is required; she said because it is \$433K. Selectman D'Amore seconded Selectman MacDonald's motion; voted 4-0-0.

Chair Dunn asked those present if they had any questions, Chief Lay questioned the \$35K. Ms. Dembkoski said they have not voted; they recommended \$35K based on previous discussions. Chief Lay said he has 35 firefighters who are fully engaged and he never knows what 15 will show; he does not only have 15 that are engaged. He said the truck radios are not critical and hopes to get grants. Chair Dunn amended his original motion and made a motion to approve \$40K for the portable radios; Selectman Wood seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Andy Wildes from the Finance Committee said it is not good fiscal policy to use free cash for ongoing operations.

Selectman Wood made a motion to approve the budget for a total of \$15,726,670 which represents the final column of the budget dated 3/28/16 as amended with the OPEB trust line item of \$85K in the unclassified budget as read by Ms. Dembkoski; Selectman D'Amore seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Chair Dunn wanted to finalize the capital plan which is \$167,973. He said we are good with putting \$300K into the stabilization and \$85K in the OPEB, leaving \$75K for capital stabilization. The deficit of \$35,648 will now be \$120,648. Using Free Cash to cover the deficit of \$120,648, put \$300K into stabilization, \$167,973 into capital, and \$75K into capital stabilization, will leave \$31,649 as surplus which Ms. Dembkoski would recommend leaving in the event it is needed in the fall town meeting. Selectman D'Amore made a motion to accept the capital plan as amended at \$167,973; Selectman Wood seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Special Town Meeting Draft Warrant:

The warrant has not been finalized by town counsel; wording may change.

Article 1 – Land Sales (valued at approximately \$373,500). She wanted to clarify it does not sell or give away all town owned property. There is still some land left should the town need it for expansion.

Article 2 – Ms. Dembkoski explained the budget neutral transfers.

Selectman D'Amore made a motion that the board vote favorable action for Article 1; Selectman Wood seconded; Selectman D'Amore made a motion that the board vote favorable action for Article 2; Selectman Wood seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Draft Annual Town Meeting Warrant:

Article 1 and 2 are standard language. Article 1 states that we will petition the state for Chapter 90 funds; Article 2 authorizes to spend those funds. Article 2 will most likely be amended; we do not have a final number. The \$213,162K represents this current fiscal year. Selectman Wood made a motion to accept Articles 1 & 2 as written; Selectman D'Amore seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Article 3 – we provide \$900 for the VFW for heat, electricity, and maintaining the meeting place. Chair Dunn made a motion to accept Article 3 as read by Ms. Dembkoski; Selectman MacDonald seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Article 4 – to accept the amount from the Groveland Municipal Electric Light Department. Selectman Wood made a motion to accept Article 4 as read by Ms. Dembkoski; Selectman MacDonald seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Article 5 – budget; voted earlier.

Articles 6 and 7 – Water & Sewer. Article 6: Water Department; Article 7: Sewer Department – as presented by the Commissioners. Selectman MacDonald made a motion to limit the payroll increase to 2%; Selectman D’Amore seconded. Changes: Article 6-\$885,271.32 with the Superintendent’s line \$64,327.32; Article 7-Superintendent’s line \$27,506.334 for a total of \$530,571.34. Selectman Wood made a motion to accept the changes to Articles 6 & 7 as presented by Ms. Dembkoski; Selectman MacDonald seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Article 8 – to affix the salary as indicated in Articles 5-7. Chair Dunn made a motion to accept Article 8; Selectman MacDonald seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Article 9 – the overlay surplus. Selectman D’Amore made a motion to accept Article 9 as written; Selectman MacDonald seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Articles 10, 11, 12 & 13 were discussed on the recommended page. Article 10 will be changed to represent the \$85K to \$126,048 which covers the deficit including the adjustment to OPEB. Article 11 will be \$300K. Article 12 will be removed because it is covered in Article 10. Article 13 will be adding \$75K into Capital Stabilization. Selectman D’Amore made a motion to accept Articles 10, 11 & 13 as amended and Article 12 is removed; Selectman MacDonald seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Article 14 – Water and Sewer Department Capital Plan (\$1,500,000 for financing the water mains). Selectman D’Amore made a motion to accept Article 14 as written; Selectman Wood seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Article 15 – Water and Sewer Department to move \$50K from available funds into replacing the water main. Selectman D’Amore made a motion to adopt Article 15 as written; Selectman MacDonald seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Article 16 will be amended to reflect \$167,973 as a total. Selectman D’Amore made a motion to adopt Article 16 with the following amendment: Fire Department portable radios line is reduced from \$82K to \$40K; all other items as written; for a total of \$167,973; Selectman Wood seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Article 17 – request for Whittier School District to create a stabilization fund. Selectman Wood made a motion to accept Article 17; Chair Dunn seconded. Selectman D’Amore said according to Section 16g ½ of Chapter 71, we have no way of knowing if they would compel us to add to that fund. Ms. Dembkoski will meet with the new Superintendent and clarify; it will not be voted on until Monday.

Article 18 – request from the Conservation Commission to transfer \$15K from the fees account into the expense account. Selectman Wood made a motion to accept Article 18; Selectman D’Amore seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Article 19 – request from the Planning Board to transfer \$5K from the fees account into the expense account. Selectman D’Amore made a motion to accept Article 19 as written; Selectman Wood seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Article 20 – to reauthorize the Veasey Memorial Park revolving fund for a maximum not to exceed \$90K. Selectman D’Amore made a motion to accept Article 20 as written; Selectman Wood seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Article 21 – to reauthorize the Pines Recreation Boat Ramp revolving fund account not to exceed \$5K. Selectman D’Amore made a motion to accept Article 21 as written; Selectman Wood seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Article 22 – to reauthorize the ZBA revolving fund account not to exceed \$5K. Selectman D’Amore made a motion to accept Article 22 as written; Selectman Wood seconded; voted 3-0-1.

Article 23 – Selectman D’Amore made a motion to accept Article 23 for the Bagnall School Summer Program to see if the town will vote to reauthorize the Bagnall School Summer Program revolving account \$130K (1% of the tax levy). Selectman Wood seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Article 24 – new revolving account for the Council on Aging to bring them into compliance. Selectman D’Amore made a motion to adopt Article 24 as written; Selectman Wood seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Article 25 – new revolving account for the Fire Department to collect and spend fees for the Heart Start Program; it is limited to \$6K the first year. Selectman D’Amore made a motion to adopt Article 25 as written; Selectman MacDonald seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Article 26 – Community Preservation Committee -\$55,300 for the purpose of development of Phase 3 of the Groveland Community Preservation Trail. Selectman D’Amore made a motion to adopt Article 26 as written; Selectman Wood seconded; voted 3-1-0.

Article 27 – Community Preservation Committee -\$73,650 for the purpose of improving access, passive recreation, fishing and boating in Johnson’s Pond. Selectman D’Amore made a motion to adopt Article 27 as written; Selectman Wood seconded. Selectman MacDonald is against dredging and feels it will be detrimental to the environment. Mike Dempsey (Conservation Commission) explained the hydro-raking process; public hearings would need to be held. The BOS does not recall seeing the article; they want more information. Ms. Demboski has the articles, but not the full presentation. Tabled to Monday.

Article 28 – Community Preservation Committee-\$42,251 for the purpose of preservation and management of historical documents by the Town Clerk. Selectman D’Amore made a motion to adopt Article 28 as written; Selectman MacDonald seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Article 29 – Community Preservation Committee -\$12,000 for the purpose of a historic property survey by the town Historic Commission. Selectman D’Amore made a motion to adopt Article 29 as written; Selectman Wood seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Article 30 – Community Preservation Committee to move recommended amounts in specific categories for appropriation. Selectman D’Amore made a motion to adopt Article 30 as written; Selectman Wood seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Article 31 – (Fire Truck) rescind the bond authorization that was made at last year’s town meeting which covered borrowing which would be incorporated into the general budget. Selectman D’Amore made a motion to adopt Article 31 as written; Selectman Wood seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Article 32 – to fund a fire truck with a capital exclusion which is a one-time payment by the taxpayer.

Article 33 – to authorize a debt exclusion which is a period of twenty years principal and interest. Ms. Dembkoski said after speaking with Bond Counsel and Town Counsel, it is recommended against taking this approach (having both). They feel if you present two questions on a ballot authorizing spending, people will say no to both questions because they will be confused. They recommend the board chose one option. Selectman D’Amore made a motion that Article 32 is rescinded; Selectman Wood seconded. Selectman MacDonald said Article 32 is a one-time payment vs. a twenty-year debt payment; he thinks the people should choose. Chair Dunn said he advocated for both and wanted the fairest option for the people. Ms. Dembkoski explained that a special town meeting is needed if one of them should pass at the ballot. Selectman MacDonald said if it passes at town meeting and fails at the ballot, that’s it. Before town meeting, you should discuss publicly the two questions and why we are asking Town Meeting to pass both, but voters to only vote affirmatively for one. They are two completely different authorizations. We will need to confirm with Town Counsel how to determine which question wins if both pass successfully. Selectman D’Amore made a motion to adopt Articles 32 & 33 as amended with the two words “up to” on each of those articles before the \$750K; Selectman MacDonald seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Article 34 – Selectman D’Amore made a motion to rescind Article 34 which is a request to convert the Fire Chief’s position into a full-time position; Selectman Wood seconded; voted 4-0-0.

Article 35 – to see if the town will vote to repeal the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 48, Section 42 (Strong Chief Law) and accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 48, Section 42A (reinstate Weak Chief Law); Selectman D’Amore made the motion; Selectman Wood seconded. Chair Dunn would like more information; the board agreed to table it.

Article 36 – Zoning Bylaw reorganization.

Article 37 – Election warrant. Selectman Wood made a motion to approve; Chair Dunn seconded; voted 4-0-0.

The next regular meeting will be held Monday, April 4, 2016 at 6:30 p.m.

Chair Dunn made a motion to adjourn; Selectman MacDonald seconded; voted 4-0-0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

\*\*\* Approved on Tuesday, May 3, 2016 with a vote of 3-0-2 with Selectmen Watson and O’Neil abstaining. \*\*\*