

Groveland Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
January 23, 2017

Present: Chair William Dunn, Selectman Ed Watson, Selectman William O'Neil, Selectman Daniel MacDonald, Selectman Michael Wood-via Remote

Absent: None

Others Present: Denise Dembkoski (Finance Director)

Recorder: Melanie Rich

RESIDENT/PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Anne Brodie, Town Clerk, thanked all the women who volunteered their time for early voting. She had 6 volunteers; 1 was there almost every day. Without them, she would not have been able to do the election without any additional costs to the town. Early voting lasted 11 days with a total of 1,800 people voting. It was so busy, there was no time for anyone to use a town computer (which no one did), or go through any files in the office (which no one did). All early ballots were entered into the state computer by the Town Clerk on the day they were cast; no one else. The person in the unsigned letter stated that one volunteer was using a town computer. Did this anonymous person know this for a fact? Did that person come into the office to see what the volunteer was doing? If any volunteer was sitting in her chair it would have been to answer the telephone only. Early voting had to take place in her office because there was nowhere else to hold it. It was very tight quarters with a booth set up in her office with all the envelopes and ballots that were needed. If this unknown person wanted to have a personal conversation, she would have left the office with that person and the volunteer could have continued to check the people in to vote. The town is always looking for volunteers, but when they do volunteer, they get beat up by unknown people. Early voting could be what we are coming to with future elections. She is hoping that more volunteers will come to help and not be scared off because someone saw them in the Town Clerk's office being accused of doing something other than the work they volunteered to do. Most people know there is only one person in each office and without the help of volunteers or assistants, which the town does not have the money for, sometimes we need an extra set of hands. If this unknown person was bothered by any of the volunteers helping out, then maybe they themselves will come forward and volunteer their time the next time we have an election where early voting is required. Where she can't have an assistant paid for through the town, she would like the volunteers to be appointed so that when they are in her office, nobody can say anything.

Chair Dunn said the complaints he heard were not because they were volunteers, but because they were thought to be using town computers. He said there is no problem having volunteers, but she will need to be responsible for them on the computer and they need to have a CORI check and possibly bonded; that would be the better route. He does not want the townspeople to think we don't need volunteers; we have been working hard on bringing volunteerism up. Selectman MacDonald thinks it is important to volunteer in any capacity. If someone submits something anonymously, we should discount the creditability of it. Selectman Watson said we appreciate the volunteers and if someone has a legitimate complaint they should sign their name to it so we can inform them of the results. Selectman O'Neil said going forward we know we will be dealing with early voting issues and we can factor those issues into the budget and plan for better coverage for the Town Clerk so there are no issues and everything is transparent and planned for ahead of time. Selectman Watson said thanks should go out to the Town Clerk for being able to handle that pre-election with no cost to the town by using the volunteers; she did a great job.

Julie Hauss (10 Merrit Avenue) asked if high school/college students who volunteer would have to be CORI-checked. Ms. Dembkoski said it would depend on the work they are doing and in what office.

APPROVAL OF WARRANTS:

Selectman O’Neil made a motion to approve PW#17-29 in the amount of \$158,930.52; Selectman Watson seconded; roll call vote: MacDonald-yes; Watson-yes; Dunn-yes; O’Neil-yes; Wood-yes; warrant approved.

Selectman O’Neil made a motion to approve DW#17-27A in the amount of \$28,455.25; Selectman Watson seconded; roll call vote: MacDonald-yes; Watson-yes; Dunn-yes; O’Neil-yes; Wood-yes; warrant approved.

Selectman O’Neil made a motion to approve BW#17-29 in the amount of \$481,631.99; Selectman Watson seconded; roll call vote: MacDonald-yes; Watson-yes; Dunn-yes; O’Neil-yes; Wood-yes; warrant approved.

APPOINTMENTS:

Selectman Watson made a motion to appoint Richard McNeil to the position of part-time Van Driver for the Council on Aging at a rate of \$13.94/hour effective January 24, 2017 pending a successful CORI and clean Driving Record; Selectman MacDonald seconded; roll call vote: Wood-yes; O’Neil-yes; Dunn-yes; Watson-yes; MacDonald-yes.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE:

Lynne Stanton (COA Director) Ring & Ride Program Update – Since 2015 when it was changed from fee-based to free there were 149 riders; in FY 2016 there were 123 riders; FY 2017 to date there are 86 riders; they are still under budget. The service is free with curb-to-curb service whenever wanted with a 24-hour notice, and is available to all adults in Groveland, not just 60 and over. It is available from 5AM-7PM seven days/week with modified hours on weekends.

Meeting with Newbury Town Planner to discuss a Town Planner’s Role in the Town and Community – Sam Joslin (Building Inspector) introduced Martha Taylor to speak to the board to explain what the roles of a Town Planner are, the benefits, and to answer any questions the board had. Ms. Taylor said her primary role is to assist the Planning Board in carrying out their roles and responsibilities under Mass General Law, specifically administration of the Subdivision Control Law, Zoning Amendments, and updating the Master Plan. She also takes the meeting minutes, prepares the annual budget, meets with residents on a regular basis to talk about projects they may be thinking about, whether it is a subdivision or an Approval Not Required plan. Where the Subdivision Control Law is concerned, there are two primary parts: ANR plans, or subdivisions (where they are proposing to put in a new road to create a number of lots; whether conventional or something being done under the Open Space Residential Development Bylaw). She encourages people to come in before they start drawing anything up. She meets with the Building Inspector, Conservation Agent, and other town departments and boards as necessary; they try to streamline the process as much as possible to try to save time and money for all involved. Once the application is submitted, she draws up a timeline data sheet for the board which outlines all the critical dates in the process; in particular, the end date. The Zoning Amendments have a strict set of requirements that need to be followed in terms of presenting to the Selectmen and have them referred back to the PB for public hearings. They are in the process of updating the Master Plan. She also attends Merrimack Valley Planning Commission meetings and works with the Stormwater Committee. Other responsibilities include grant writing, working with the Assessor’s office to update the maps annually, and she is the point-person for the “My-Map” program through MVPC.

Chair Dunn asked her to explain the Master Plan. She said it a document that does an analysis of the town as it is right now; the end goal is to develop a document that covers a number of different elements; community facilities and services, natural resources, historic and cultural resources, housing, transportation and economic development. There is an implementation plan that sets out a series of goals and strategies.

Selectman MacDonald asked if her position was a replacement or a new job created. She said she took it over. He asked in terms of the Master Plan, is it the vision of the town as created by the people or the feedback from the surveys; how did they create a Master Plan for the Town of Newbury. She explained that through the survey process it became clear that they do have a full spectrum of opinions from the residents. They try to make it clear that there are different opinions in general, but for the most of the elements it is not a consensus, but a majority opinion on things that need to be done. It does go through a process; there is a survey, working groups, focus groups, and at least one public meeting for input from the people. Selectman MacDonald asked what types of businesses did Newbury see as beneficial with low impact? She said because they don't have very much infrastructure, they need to look at businesses that don't require a lot of infrastructure. Because they have natural resources there has been interest in businesses that want to appreciate those resources; mostly low-impact services industries. Selectman O'Neil asked how much a town should spend yearly on a salary. She said it's hard to say depending on experience, possibly \$55-\$75/year. He asked how many years down the road it would be before the town would see a benefit from the cost of having the planner. She said the return they had in their town was 6-7 years. Chair Dunn asked if she had the time could she bring in grants for Newbury? She said that would be the hope. She was thanked for coming in and giving the board insight.

Electric Light Commissioners and the Water & Sewer Commissioners to discuss the 23 School Street Building – Chair Dunn asked the Light Dept. to give an overview of the new building and how it is proceeding. Michael Cloutier, former GM of the Light Dept. introduced the new Manager, Kevin Snow. Mr. Cloutier was thanked for his time at the Light Dept. and was wished the best. Mr. Snow said currently they are in the final phase of construction at 944 Salem Street. The biggest obstacle holding them up from moving in is the Occupancy Permit; they are working on the issues. Once they have the Occupancy Permit they will have a date for moving the operations staff. The biggest issue with that is moving the IT and telephone system; they need to coordinate schedules. They are hoping for March 1st or sooner and hoping for complete cessation of operation at 23 School Street in May. Once moved, they will ask the Board of Light Commissioners to declare 23 School Street surplus. He will notify the BOS and Finance Director.

Jim Sheehan (Water & Sewer) said they had no plans until they knew what the timeline was for the Light Dept. He said the building is perfect for them. They would like to swap it out with the building on Washington Street which is contiguous with the land that was purchased; it would be a benefit to the town. The Light Dept. building is valued at approximately \$339K; the Water Department building is valued at \$277.5K. The Water Departments owns their building. The Light Dept. owns their building, but the town owns the land. The Light Dept. pays the town \$35K/year for municipal services.

Chair Dunn said if they were to do a building/land swap it could free up town hall space and free up storage to the existing Water Dept. building. Selectman Watson doesn't think it meets the needs for storage. He said prior to discussions, the board should tour the building. Kermit Cross said it is in tough shape. There has been some work done on the building structurally. It's not a great building. The building is weather-type. Chair Dunn wanted to discuss the swap. Selectman MacDonald said money is important. Mr. Sheehan said they are an enterprise and keep their reserve funds to put back in. He believes it is an even swap; some revenue will be lost from the Electric Dept., but to take and put the burden on the ratepayers to pay that to the general fund, he finds that to be ridiculous. Ms. Dembkoski clarified that to date there has been no discussion that the Light Dept. is not going to continue making the PILOT payment even though they are in a new building. The understanding is that they are going to continue to make that payment. Selectman O'Neil asked about the upgrades needed at the Light Dept. building. The electric heat needs to be changed and possibly the air conditioning. They will put a plan together to make it functional but do not currently have an estimate.

Chair Dunn asked if the board was in favor of the Water Dept. taking over the building when the Light Dept. vacates it; he is in favor of the moving. Selectman MacDonald thinks it's the thing to do at a

reasonable cost. Selectman Watson asked if there would be an increase in personnel with the move. Mr. Cusick said they won't have the help of the office staff when they leave, but don't anticipate additional personnel at this time. Selectman Wood is good with it. As a board there is a consensus to move forward with the Water Dept. taking over the building and will do some more due diligence. The board will visit the building before the next meeting.

VOTES OF THE BOARD

Selectman Watson made a motion to approve the December 12, 2016 Meeting Minutes; Selectman O'Neil seconded; roll call vote: MacDonald-yes; Watson-yes; O'Neil-yes; Wood-yes; Dunn-abstained.

Selectman Watson made a motion to approve the December 12, 2016 Executive Session Meeting Minutes; Selectman O'Neil seconded; roll call vote: MacDonald-yes; Watson-yes; O'Neil-yes; Wood-yes; Dunn-abstained.

Selectman O'Neil made a motion to approve the December 27, 2016 Executive Session Meeting Minutes; Selectman MacDonald; seconded; roll call vote: MacDonald-yes; Dunn-yes; O'Neil-yes; Wood-yes; Watson-abstained.

OLD BUSINESS (Unfinished Business):

Selectman O'Neil asked the status of the library issue. Chair Dunn said the last he heard they were in litigation; there has been no other info. Rec Committee-do we have any ledgers or statements that they are using the town's Tax ID number. Ms. Dembkoski said she is still waiting on clarification as to whether or not they are using the Tax ID number. She has sent notification to the bank, but has not received an answer yet. She will ask them as signators on the account to go to the bank and find out. Trash-there was a delay in service because of the storm; is it a one-time occurrence or will it happen again. Ms. Dembkoski said part of the issue is that the streets are narrow and because we have a smaller Public Works Dept. plowing, they deal with the main streets first. When the trash truck came out that first day, they weren't getting down the roads and determined it was better to postpone it a day. She thinks we have those types of situations depending on when the snow falls and when the roads are plowed.

Selectman MacDonald said if we are going to have a public hearing on the medical marijuana dispensary, we need more notice than the required 48 hour notice. Chair Dunn said the hearing is set for February 6th at 7PM. Ms. Dembkoski said it will be on the website. The abutters will be notified and it will be advertised in the paper. She said there is not a requirement in the bylaw to send the abutter notifications by certified or return receipt, but she asked the company to do it.

Selectman MacDonald talked about the new Zoning Bylaws. He said the ZBA discussed the draft bylaws and want another joint meeting with the BOS. He thinks the board should review it. Ms. Dembkoski will follow up.

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. January 9, 2017 Meeting Minutes.
2. Letter from HUD regarding the Groveland Housing Authority.

FINANCE DIRECTOR'S TIME:

Ms. Dembkoski talked briefly about the budget books and the handouts that were provided for the members. The Finance Committee is meeting with departments so that when the board is ready to make recommendations they will be ready. Debt exclusions were discussed. Mike Dempsey thinks the difference

on debt exclusions is because it requires the voters to vote on it specifically. Chair Dunn said we should inform the people at our meetings so they understand what is going on. Selectman MacDonald feels the exclusions give the power to the people; the budgetary process is decided on by the Finance Committee and the BOS through a warrant process.

SELECTMEN'S TIME:

Selectman Watson read a notice that the Winter Festival will be held on Sunday, January 29th from 1PM-4PM at Veasey Memorial Park, 201 Washington Street. It is free of charge though donations are gladly accepted.

The next regular meeting will be held Monday, February 6, 2017 at 6:30 p.m.

Selectman O'Neil made a motion to adjourn; Selectman MacDonald seconded; roll call vote: MacDonald-yes; Watson-yes; Dunn-yes; O'Neil-yes; Wood-yes. The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

*** Unanimously Approved on February 21, 2017 ***