

*Approved Minutes
BOS meeting 8.2.2021
Unanimous Vote*

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Monday, April 5, 2021
Groveland Town Hall Meeting Room
183 Main St, Groveland, MA 01834**

TOWN OF GROVELAND
2021 AUG -4 PM 12:12

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place. This meeting of the Board of Selectmen will take place without any public present, but we will make every effort to ensure the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time.

This meeting was broadcast live on Groveland Public Access, Channel 9, as well as through Zoom.
To join the Zoom Meeting, visit: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9231328711>

Members of the public are asked to send written comments to kworden@grovelandma.com or submit questions through the Zoom chat window.

PRESENT: Chair Wood, Selectmen Kastrinelis, O'Neil, Naves, Watson
ALSO PRESENT: Kevin Paicos, Interim Finance Director and Katheryn Worden, Administrative Coordinator
Ruth Rivard, Melissa Baker, Sarah McGrath, Theresa Dunn, Finance Committee

CALL MEETING TO ORDER: Chair Wood called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE VOTE:

- **Tasks to be completed before Annual Town Meeting**
Chair Wood brought up foreclosures and noted his desire to not pursue this at this time. Selectman Kastrinelis made a motion to not foreclose on properties but rescinded it after Mr. Paicos explained these unpaid taxes are not due to COVID, they go back years, and he was not sure why the taxes were not collected; he noted this is a bad process and is a dereliction of duty and that the BOS has no authority in this matter, this is exclusively under the direction of the Treasurer by statute. Selectman Naves felt that not going after the tax revenue is a disservice to those in town that do pay their taxes and to the people that are not paying their taxes because it allows them to fall further behind. Selectman Naves asked how long the process takes to foreclose to which Mr. Paicos replied it can take a long time and does not happen immediately. Selectman Watson felt it was unfair to the people paying bills with all of the outstanding bills out there, this could be encouraging people to not pay their taxes and he wants to move this forward and collect the taxes. Selectman Kastrinelis would like this to wait for the permanent staff to be in place to start this process.
- **Capital Budget Discussion:**
Mr. Paicos recommended not spending Free Cash and reported that there is \$50,000 in Bond Premium monies that can be used to fund a Capital item which has a 20 or lesser number of years it can be bonded over and recommended funding a replacement cruiser which is close to that number. Stabilization has \$1.4 million and last year's transfers were not booked so the balance is around \$2 million, and Mr. Paicos did not recommend using Stabilization. Preliminary estimates show the town will receive American Rescue money in the amount of \$2,004,013; regulations are not yet out. Mr. Paicos recommended postponing action on Capital Spending until regulations and final numbers are known and noted that assuming the numbers are correct it is possible that the Town could fund the entire Capital Budget and maybe even some additional things.

A motion was moved by Selectman O'Neil and seconded by Selectman Kastrinelis to follow Mr. Paicos' recommendations with regards to the Capital Budget for FY22, this includes funding of the police cruiser. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to follow Mr. Paicos' recommendations with regards to the Capital Budget for FY22, this includes funding of the police cruiser.

Ms. Rivard noted if the regulations were not received by July 1st she was concerned about the COA van which needs to be replaced and is requested in the amount of \$60,000, although there is an application for a grant, but without a vote there would not be a funding source to cover this; she supports the request and noted that the warrant article can state this will be net of any grant received. Mr. Paicos reported this could end up coming out of surplus monies to cover the van versus stabilization if necessary.

A motion was moved by Selectman O'Neil and seconded by Selectman Kastrinelis to fund the COA new van from taxation and that amount will be net of any grant or subsequent funding that will be obtained by the COA. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to support the COA Van motion as voted by the BOS.

Mr. Paicos asked for a formal vote in support of Community Preservation Articles.

A motion was moved by Selectman Naves and seconded by Selectman Watson to approve the 7 CPA projects being added to the Town Meeting Warrant. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to support the CPA projects.

- **Operating Budget Discussion:**

Chair Wood provided a recap of the conversation from the last meeting. Since the last meeting on March 29th Selectman O'Neil and Selectman Kastrinelis reviewed the numbers that were voted at the last ATM for accuracy because at the last meeting some discrepancies were discovered in the budget worksheets. Selectman Kastrinelis and Mr. Paicos disagreed about what amount should be in the line item for the Conservation Agent. Mike Dempsey joined the meeting virtually and noted the amounts should read \$23,000 from Conservation and \$21,000 from Veasey. Mr. Paicos reviewed the Omnibus Budget Article which will break down where the funding will be coming from.

Ms. Rivard called the Finance Committee meeting to order since a quorum of members were present and stated that she agreed with this number but noted that the way the article is being presented is different than the Town is used to and felt the discussion and concern was valid.

- **Moderator Budget:**

A motion was moved by Selectman Kastrinelis and seconded by Selectman O'Neil to approve the budget for the Town Moderator at \$100.00. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to approve the budget for the Town Moderator at \$100.00.

- **Select Board Budget:**

The Board discussed the budget request for the Administrative Coordinator position which is proposed to be increased from 19 to 25 hours per week. Selectman Kastrinelis would like this to be reviewed by the new Town Administrator when they are on board. Selectman Watson noted that the minutes clerk salary of \$3,000 is shifting to the Administrative Coordinator position and felt that this is not that big of a difference. Selectman O'Neil agreed with the amount being at \$26,272 and letting the new person decide. Selectman Naves felt it should stay the way it is written in the proposed budget. Selectman Kastrinelis noted that she did not want to hinge this decision on the minutes but rather wants to give the new Town Administrator the flexibility to make the decision. Mr. Paicos argued that the Board is debating \$2,500 and reiterated that he felt this would increase efficiency by having the secretary present at the meeting and doing the minutes. Ms. Rivard noted that this year is unusual due to the pandemic as well as staffing changes and that in the

past, the minutes clerk has worked out and is inexpensive and this system gives the Administrative Coordinator time to work on the day-to-day duties; Ms. Rivard supported leaving things the way they were and not increasing the hours. Mr. Paicos referred to the full-time clerk that the Town used to have, and Ms. Rivard explained the full-time clerk split their time between a few departments and did not work exclusively for the BOS.

A motion was moved by Selectman Kastrinelis and seconded by Selectman O'Neil to approve the line item for the Select Board at \$26,272.00. Voted: 3-2-0. Selectman Naves and Watson voted against.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote the line item for the Select Board at \$26,272.00.

Breakdown for the Expense line: Expenses = \$1,000, Association fees = \$1,500, Town Reports = \$1,850, Minutes Clerk = \$3,000, Reserve = \$30,000, Audit = \$25,000.

A motion was moved by Selectman Kastrinelis and seconded by Selectman O'Neil to approve the total Select Board budget in the amount of \$88,622. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to approve the total line item for the Select Board at \$88,622.

- **Board of Assessors Budget:**

Selectman Kastrinelis asked about the hiring salary for the Assessing Manager and requested that the amount be verified. Ms. Rivard responded that this person was hired at a different rate than what was voted last year in the budget but suggested voting on this and verifying the information and changing if necessary.

A motion was moved by Selectman Kastrinelis and seconded by Selectman Naves to approve the total line item for the Assessors budget in the amount of \$123,480. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to approve the total line item for the Assessors Budget in the amount of \$123,480.

- **Town Counsel/Legal Budget:**

Based on previous expenses the Board discussed cutting this slightly. Mr. Paicos expressed concern during the discussion that numbers were being "pulled from thin air" and did not feel this was the place to cut.

A motion was moved by Selectman Kastrinelis and seconded by O'Neil to approve the total line item for the Town Counsel/Legal budget in the amount of \$72,000. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to approve the total line item for the Town Counsel/Legal budget in the amount of \$72,000. Voted: 5-0-0.

- **Technology:**

A motion was moved by Selectman Kastrinelis and seconded by Selectman Naves to approve the total line item for the Technology budget in the amount of \$63,000. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to approve the total line item for the Technology budget in the amount of \$63,000. Voted: 5-0-0.

Mr. Paicos expressed concern that there was not a plan in place to replace equipment over a period of time.

- **Town Clerk:**

Ms. Rivard talked with the Town Clerk who is comfortable with hiring an Asst. at 10 hours a week to start and then gauge this going forward. The budget request is at an hourly rate of \$23.00 per hour and the Board discussed the amount. Selectman Kastrinelis suggested starting at \$19.00 per hour for 10 hours per week. Mr. Paicos disagreed with the amount and did not feel that someone qualified could be hired for that amount. Selectman Watson did not support \$19.00 and felt it was an insult; he was worried this would be a training ground. Selectman Naves agreed and supported \$23.00 per hour.

A motion was moved by Selectman Kastrinelis and seconded by Selectman O'Neil to approve the total line item for the Assistant Town Clerk at an hourly rate of \$21.00 for ten hours per week for a total of \$10,920. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to approve the total line item for the Assistant Town Clerk in the amount of \$10,920. Voted: 5-0-0.

Selectman O'Neil asked about the poll workers line item. Ms. Rivard noted that she talked with the Town Clerk and was informed the early voting and mail-in voting rules have not yet been determined so it is unclear what the total cost will be and felt it best to not reduce this line at this time.

A motion was moved by Selectman Kastrinelis and seconded by Selectman O'Neil to approve the total Town Clerk budget in the amount of \$98,605. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to approve the total line item for the Town Clerk budget in the amount of \$98,605. Voted: 5-0-0.

- **Economic Development and Planning and Conservation:**

A motion was moved by Selectman O'Neil and seconded by Selectman Naves to approve the total budget for Economic Development and Planning and Conservation in the amount of \$113,621. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to approve the total line item for the Economic Development and Planning and Conservation budget in the amount of \$113,621.

- **Municipal Buildings:**

Selectman Kastrinelis asked about the Public Relations town wide budget line item which was not in this request and the Board discussed reinstating this.

A motion was moved by Selectman Kastrinelis and seconded by Selectman O'Neil to approve the total budget for Municipal Buildings in the amount of \$242,215 which would include a Public Relations town wide budget to be used by all Town departments of \$7,200. Voted: 3-2-0. Selectman Watson and Naves voted against.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to approve the Municipal Buildings budget in the amount of \$242,215.

- **Insurance:**

Mr. Paicos reported that the renewal numbers came in today from MIAA for the Property Casual Insurance Program which has increased from \$211,500 to \$238,000. This is a quote, and this number could change. Selectman O'Neil suggested raising this to \$240,000 to which Mr. Paicos was agreeable. The employee group life insurance is \$3,000 and is a good number. The health insurance number is not ready yet, the rates are in and the exact budget depends on increase percentages and how many employees are on which plans; this will be known after the open enrollment period which will be taking place over the next two weeks. Selectman Watson asked if bids come in lower on the Property Casual Insurance Program if this could be amended on Town Meeting floor and Mr. Paicos responded yes.

A motion was moved by Selectman O'Neil and seconded by Selectman Kastrinelis to approve the total budget for Insurance in the amount of \$778,500. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted by roll call vote to approve the Insurance budget in the amount of \$778,500.

The total General Government line item without the Finance Department is \$1,879,421.

- **Finance Department:**

The Board spent time discussing the various positions and salaries. Mr. Paicos reminded the Board what they already voted on hiring the Treasurer/Collector position.

A motion was moved by Selectman Kastrinelis and seconded by Selectman O'Neil to approve the total budget for the Finance Department salaries in the amount of \$238,042. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to approve the total budget for the Finance Department in the amount of \$238,042.

A motion was moved by Selectman O'Neil and seconded by Selectman Kastrinelis to approve the total Finance Department budget in the amount of \$267,342. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to approve the total budget for the Finance Department in the amount of \$267,342.

- **Town Accountant:**

Selectman Kastrinelis agreed with the Government Study Group on the Accountant salary and recommended going with the current salary with a 2% raise, consistent with everyone else and no additional hours. Mr. Paicos noted that the proposed budget includes an increase in hours from 30 to 37.5 and an hourly increase as well. A survey was done, and this proposed increase is consistent with other surrounding communities. The additional hours are proposed in anticipation of hiring a Town Administrator and losing the Finance Director position. Mr. Paicos cautioned the Board against losing this key position and encouraged them to support this increase because this person is the "single most critical position". Selectman Watson and Naves agreed with the increase. Ms. Rivard encouraged easing into this and expressed that the Town is appreciative of the employees and the town offers flexibility and "soft benefits" and that is hard to quantify. Chair Wood would love to give everyone an increase but cannot and felt this was a drastic increase. Selectman Kastrinelis asked about increasing the hours and providing the 2% salary without the increase in salary as a compromise.

A motion was moved by Selectman Naves and seconded by Selectman Watson to approve the total budget for the Town Accountant in the amount of \$92,450. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted by roll call vote to approve the total budget for the Town Accountant in the amount of \$92,450. The motion failed: Ruth; No, Melissa; Yes, Theresa; No, Sarah; Yes.

Ms. Rivard did not support the salary survey being done by an employee and would like this to be re-evaluated.

The total General Government number is \$1,939,935.

- **PUBLIC SAFETY:**

- **Police:** There was no discussion on this budget.

A motion was moved by Selectman O'Neil and seconded by Selectman Kastrinelis to approve the total Police Budget in the amount of \$1,575,780. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to approve the total budget for the Police Department in the amount of \$1,575,780.

- **Fire:**

Robert Valentine, Fire Chief was present and addressed the Board.

The Board appreciated the work being done by the Fire Chief especially in the area of grant funding.

A motion was moved by Selectman Kastrinelis and seconded by Selectman O'Neil to approve the total budget for the Fire Department in the amount of \$367,140. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to approve the total budget for the Fire Department in the amount of \$367,140.

- **Building Department:**

A motion was moved by Selectman Kastrinelis and seconded by Selectman Naves to approve the total budget for the Building Department in the amount of \$93,386. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to approve the total budget for the Building Department in the amount of \$93,386.

- **Emergency Management:**

A motion was moved by Selectman Kastrinelis and seconded by Selectman Naves to approve the total budget for Emergency Management in the amount of \$4,311. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to approve the total budget for Emergency Management in the amount of \$4,311.

The total budget for Public Safety is \$2,040,617.

- **Education:**

The Pentucket final assessment was lowered due to the ESSR II money which is not revenue coming back to the town, this is a one-time relief. Mr. Paicos noted he is waiting for legal verification on whether or not this should be listed separately or as one item and recommended the Board approve the budget as is tonight with the understanding the numbers might need to be adjusted after he receives the response. Ms. Rivard asked for an increase from \$179,084 to \$200,000 to the Essex Tech budget just in case another student goes there, this will leave a bit of a cushion.

The Board of Selectman voted favorably the total budget for Education in the amount of \$13,401,615 with the understanding that this may be adjusted. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to approve the total budget for Education in the amount of \$13,401,615.

During the meeting and after the Cemetery Budget, Mr. Paicos reported that he texted Greg and learned that the ESSR II money was available to the School not the Town; they reduce the assessment and give the town the net difference. The Pentucket base assessment is reduced from \$10,218,373 to \$9,967,462 (-\$250,911). Capital stays the same at \$2,335,085 and Essex Tech (including adjustment) is \$200,000. The total budget is now \$13,150,704. Mr. Paicos recommended re-voting this.

A motion was moved by Selectman Kastrinelis and seconded by Selectman O'Neil to approve the total budget for Education in the amount of \$13,150.74. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to approve the total budget for Education in the amount of \$13,150.74.

- **Public Works:**

Renny Carroll joined the meeting via Zoom.

- **Tree Warden:**

The Board of Selectman voted favorably the total budget for Tree Warden in the amount of \$27,500. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to approve the total budget for Tree Warden in the amount of \$27,500.

- **Highway:**

The Board asked about the increase for sick pay buy back and Mr. Carroll explained there is another employee gaining seniority who will be eligible; this is in the contract. Selectman O'Neil noted his concern with the fuel line running short due to increases in gas prices, Mr. Carroll he is on budget this year and noted he could move money later to which Selectman O'Neil suggested now might be the time to add money and Mr. Carroll reminded the Board the cost is for diesel gas which has remained higher than gas prices anyways. The Board agreed to fund this in the amount \$15,000 which is a \$1,500 increase.

A motion was moved by Selectman O'Neil and seconded by Selectman Kastrinelis to approve the total budget for the Highway Department in the amount of \$859,107. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to approve the total budget for the Highway Department in the amount of \$859,107.

- **Rubbish and Collection:**

Chair Wood asked if the contract was settled yet. Mr. Paicos responded that he has the five-year proposal but has not had time to review the information; he will try to work this out this week. Recycling prices have changed. The budget includes a proposed 5% increase.

A motion was moved by Selectman Kastrinelis and seconded by Selectman O'Neil to approve the total budget for Rubbish and Collection in the amount of \$599,711. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to approve the total budget for Rubbish and Collection in the amount of \$599,710.89.

- **Cemetery:**

Selectman Kastrinelis recused herself before the start of discussion and left the meeting.

Selectman O'Neil asked about the 22.4% increase in salary in full-time wages. Mr. Paicos reported this was a salary adjustment proposed by the Cemetery Commission for their employee. Ms. Rivard felt this should only be a 2% COLA increase to be fair to town employees as a whole. Selectman O'Neil stated he would like to see 2% over the budgeted FY21 number. Total salaries would then be \$67,860 and a total Cemetery budget of \$85,060. The full-time wages line was reduced from \$63,672 to \$53,060.

A motion was moved by Selectman O'Neil and seconded by Selectman Naves to approve the Cemetery budget in the amount of \$85,060. 4-0-0. Selectman Kastrinelis did not vote.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote, 3-1-0, Theresa Voted against, to approve the total budget for Cemetery in the amount of \$85,060.

Selectman Kastrinelis returned to the meeting.

The total budget for Public Works is \$1,571,378.

- **HUMAN SERVICES:**

- **Board of Health:**

Selectman Kastrinelis asked about the expense line increase. Ms. Rivard explained that there was an incorrect beginning number, the actual number should be \$2,805 for a total budget of \$72,457.

A motion was moved by Selectman Kastrinelis and seconded by Selectman Naves to approve the Board of Health budget in the amount of \$72,457. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to approve the total budget for the Board of Health in the amount of \$72,457.

- **Council on Aging:**

Selectman Kastrinelis asked about the upcoming retirement of the current Director in April and if the line item should be level funded and not include the 2%. Ms. Rivard responded she felt it was okay to leave the number in as requested.

A motion was moved by Selectman Kastrinelis and seconded by Selectman Naves to approve the Council on Aging budget in the amount of \$141,531. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to approve the total budget for the Council on Aging in the amount of \$141,531.

- **Veterans:**

Mr. Paicos reported that the town does not currently have a Veterans Agent, the shared one with Haverhill has not shown up and this needs to be rectified because claims are not being handled.

A motion was moved by Selectman Kastrinelis and seconded by Selectman O'Neil to approve the Veterans budget in the amount of \$39,000. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to approve the total budget for the Veterans in the amount of \$39,000.

The total budget for Human Services is \$252,988.

- **Library:**

Darcy Lepore, Library Director joined the meeting via Zoom.

Selectman O'Neil asked if there was adequate funding to keep accreditation and was told yes by Ms.

Lepore. Ms. Rivard noted that the pages have been increased to account for the increase in minimum wage.

A motion was moved by Selectman O'Neil and seconded by Selectman Kastrinelis to approve the Library budget in the amount of \$278,975.44. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to approve the total budget for the Library in the amount of \$278,975.44.

Ms. Rivard noted that the Pages salaries have been increased to account for the increase in minimum wage.

- **Debt Services:**

A motion was moved by Selectman Kastrinelis and seconded by Selectman Naves to approve the total budget for Debt Services in the amount of \$328,462.50. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote for Debt Services in the amount of \$328,462.50.

- **Unclassified:**

A motion was moved by Selectman Kastrinelis and seconded by Selectman O'Neil to approve the total budget for Unclassified in the amount of \$783,051. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted favorably by roll call vote to approve the total budget for Unclassified in the amount of \$783,051.

Selectman O'Neil came up with a total of \$20,346,111, or a 7.33 % increase year over year, take out Mr. Paicos number of revenue number of \$20,879,056, pull out \$250,911(ESSR II) and \$30,000 for water and sewer will leave a net \$2,628,145 and net the two together it looks like there is a surplus of around \$252,000. Mr. Paicos will adjust the budget after tonight's discussion and will add additional articles to the warrant and will share the draft warrant with the Board and the Board will vote on everything next week.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was moved by Selectman O'Neil and seconded by Selectman Kastrinelis to adjourn the meeting at 10:25 pm. Voted: 5-0-0.

The Finance Committee voted by roll call vote to adjourn the meeting at 10:25 pm.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be Monday, April 12, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Katherine T. Ingram