

Groveland Board of Selectmen
Meeting minutes
November 13, 2018

Present: Chairman William O'Neil, Vice Chairwoman Lisa Dube-Carpenter, Selectman William Dunn, Selectman Edward Watson and Selectman Michael Wood

Others present: Denise Dembkoski

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.

RESIDENT/PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVE WARRANTS

PW # 19-19 \$ 193,261.90

Chairman O'Neil made a motion to approve payroll warrant #19-19 in the amount of \$193,261.90; seconded by Selectman Wood; voted 5-0-0; warrant approved.

BW # 19-19 \$295,821.98

Bill Warrant Breakdown:

Town:	\$ 47,842.17
W/S:	\$ 58,852.00
Payroll Withholding:	\$ 22,753.87
Health Insurance:	\$ 32,864.40
Light Bills:	\$ 86,913.57
Grants & Revolving:	\$ 20,588.57
Chapter 90:	\$ 26,007.40

Chairman O'Neil made a motion to approve bill warrant #19-19 in the amount of \$295,821.98; seconded by Selectman Wood; voted 5-0-0; warrant approved.

RECOGNITION

Congratulate and recognize Russell Tine on his retirement from the Groveland Fire Department

Chairman O'Neil presented a certificate to Mr. Tine congratulating him on his retirement and thanking him for his many years of service to the Town of Groveland.

APPOINTMENTS

Appointment of Lorelee S. Pomilla, 290 Asbury Street, Hamilton, MA, as a Reserve Dispatcher/Reserve Officer through June 30, 2019

Selectmen Wood made a motion to appoint Lorelee S. Pomilla of 290 Ashbury Street, Hamilton, MA as a Reserve Dispatcher/Reserve Officer through June 30, 2019; seconded by Selectman Dunn; motion approved 5-0-0.

Appointment of Robert Arakelian, 156 Main Street, Groveland, as the Interim Highway Superintendent, effective November 13, 2018.

Mr. Arakelian will work, on an hourly basis, at \$43.70/hour, until a successor has been appointed. Hours per week are expected to vary, however, it is estimated he will work, on average, 8 to 10 hours/week.

Selectman Watson made a motion to appoint Robert Arakelian as the Interim Highway Superintendent effective November 13, 2018; seconded by Selectwoman Dube-Carpenter; motion approved 5-0-0.

VOTES OF THE BOARD (taken out of order)

Cemetery Reserve Fund Transfer request

The Cemetery Commission is looking to transfer \$825.38 for repairs to their truck.

Selectwoman Dube-Carpenter made a motion to accept the Cemetery Commission transfer request; seconded by Selectman Watson; motion approved 5-0-0.

Highway Department Reserve Fund Transfer request

The Highway Department is requesting a transfer of \$2,899 for an air compressor.

Selectwoman Dube-Carpenter made a motion to accept the Highway Department transfer request dated November 7, 2018; seconded by Selectman Wood; motion approved 5-0-0.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE

Elm Square Committee final report on the gas station property

Mike Dempsey, chair of the Elm Square Committee, presented the final report on the gas station property. Their investigation determined there was no legal access which prevented them from purchasing the property for the appraised value. The property was then sold to another party. The committee would like the Board to consider continuing an Elm Square Committee with a new charge to address needed improvements to Elm Square.

Selectman Wood asked what they were looking to be tasked with. Mr. Dempsey stated they would look at parking and improving the business environment.

Ms. Demboski stated that the town planner, Rebecca Oldham, has applied for a technical assistance grant in the amount of \$15,000 to assess the marketability of the downtown area.

Selectwoman Dube-Carpenter supported continuing the committee as there is no downside to having a volunteer committee explore options.

Selectman Dunn stated that he thought the post office was supposed to be torn down for access. Mr. Dunn suggested allowing the Town Planner to explore the options for downtown.

PUBLIC HEARING

FY2019 Tax Classification Hearing

Chairman O'Neil read the following notice: Notice is hereby given to the Town of Groveland taxpayers that a public hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, November 13th at 7:00PM before the Board of Selectmen, on the issue of adopting tax levy percentages for Fiscal 2019. The Board of Selectman upon hearing data relevant to the fiscal effects of the available alternatives and upon recommendations made by the Assessor's, will decide whether the town will continue with one tax rate for all classes of property or adopt multiple tax rates. The public is welcome to attend and give comments.

Selectman Wood made a motion to open the public hearing; seconded by Selectman Dunn; roll call vote- Watson- yes; Dunn- yes; Dube-Carpenter-yes, Wood-yes; O'Neil-yes; motion approved 5-0-0. Debby Webster of the Assessor's Office presented the information regarding the tax rate shifts. The Board of Assessors recommends staying at one tax rate due to the fact that there are not many commercial properties and the shift would be a significant increase to commercial taxpayers. The average residential tax increase would be around \$200 with the proposed tax rate of \$14.35. Ms. Webster stated that with a 1% shift, the average residential savings would be \$47/year but the commercial tax bill would increase \$820.

Chairman O'Neil asked about what relief is available to seniors. Ms. Webster stated they have implemented all the allowable exemptions for seniors, including the tax work off program. Due to income limits, very few qualify for the exemptions. Chairman O'Neil suggested they schedule a workshop to explain the exemptions and help people apply.

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Selectwoman Dube-Carpenter made a motion to accept the single tax rate as recommended by the Board of Assessors; seconded by Selectman Wood; roll call vote- Watson-yes, Dunn-yes, Dube-Carpenter-yes, Wood-yes; O'Neil-yes; motion approved 5-0-0.

Selectman Wood made a motion to close the public hearing at 7:20PM; seconded by Selectman Dunn; roll call vote- Watson-yes, Dunn-yes, Dube-Carpenter-yes; Wood-yes; O'Neil-yes; motion approved 5-0-0.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE (continued)

Elm Square Committee final report on the gas station property

Mr. Dunn stated he would like to have businesses represented on the committee and would not want to purchase anything until they have all the information.

Greg Stark explained that the business community would be involved with the committee. Mr. Stark also stated that he was asked to attend a meeting with the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission about what towns are doing to improve their downtowns and he was surprised at how aggressive other towns are in exploring potential.

Selectman Watson asked about a ramp that was supposed to be built onto the bridge. Mr. Stark stated that there was a proposed curb cut on the plans but no ramp.

In response to a question by Selectman Watson, Mr. Dempsey stated that they had an investor ready to buy the property and who would then convey a portion to the town but it sold before that could happen.

Chairman O'Neil was not opposed to an exploratory committee but would want the charge defined and a time limit to complete.

Selectwoman Dube-Carpenter made a motion to establish an Elm Square Committee with a minimum of five members and a maximum of nine members with the charge as the four bullet points outlined in the document provided by the previous committee with a two year time limit and with the recommendation that they collaborate with the town planner and possibly make her a member; seconded by Selectman Watson; motion approved 5-0-0.

Town Manager Discussion

Selectman Dunn explained he met with Selectman in West Newbury and felt it was time Groveland consider hiring a town manager. Groveland and Merrimac are the only towns that have a Finance Director form of government. Mr. Dunn suggested adding this topic to the survey and educating the public on the benefits of having a town manager. It took approximately four months to get through the legislature. Selectman Wood suggested sending out educational material rather than including in the survey.

Selectwoman Dube-Carpenter made a motion to continue to explore the possibility of a town manager by including questions in the survey; seconded by Selectman Dunn. Selectwoman Dube-Carpenter withdrew her motion.

Selectman Wood made a motion to follow the template provided by West Newbury and use as a guideline to move forward with the Town Manager position; seconded by Selectmen Dunn; motion approved 5-0-0.

Town Survey Topics

Selectman Dunn suggested topics should include Center Street use, the Pines projects, town parade, senior center, how to spend CPA money (on land sales or infrastructure and new town projects).

Selectman Watson suggested topics should be whether they should have a Town Manager, and if so, should the Town Manager be an attorney to save on legal costs. Should there be a department of public works, electronic voting at town meeting, what capital projects are most important (senior

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center, water filtration plant, town hall addition for storage, generator for Bagnall school, library addition)

Selectwoman Dube-Carpenter stated that if they are pursuing a Town Manager, they should explore going back to a three member Board of Selectmen.

Establish Sewell Street Redevelopment working group

Ms. Dembkoski spoke with Town Council who recommended the Board vote to direct Ms. Dembkoski to form the working group to investigate and report to the Selectman on what is needed to make this a cooperative project and to authorize Ms. Dembkoski to seek assistance of town officials as needed to formulate recommendations to the Board. Ms. Dembkoski would ask one board member to be on the group. The group would not be subject to the open meeting law which would allow the group to have candid discussions about the development to see what would make the most sense. Town Counsel stated that the public should not be involved at this point as it would interfere with trying to come up with a collaborative working process between the town and the developer.

Selectman Watson is not in favor of the idea and stated that the meetings should be public.

Selectwoman Dube-Carpenter made a motion to direct Denise Dembkoski to establish a Sewell Street Redevelopment working group to investigate and report to the Selectmen on what is needed to make this a cooperative project and authorize Ms. Dembkoski to seek the assistance of town officials as she deems necessary in order to formulate recommendations; seconded by Selectman Wood; motion approved 4-1-0. Selectman Watson opposed.

Selectman Wood and Selectman Dunn were interested in being part of the group.

Security Camera expansion project

Selectman Wood made a motion to accept the security camera expansion project in the amount of \$78,190.94 to be funded from the cable franchise fee fund; seconded by Selectwoman Dube-Carpenter; motion approved 5-0-0.

Comcast Cable Contract

Selectman Wood explained that they received a letter from the Massachusetts Department of Telecommunications and Cable that the current contract expires next November. Selectman Wood asked if the process has been started by the cable committee and have they looked into live streaming services. Selectman Wood would like permission from the Board to investigate what they have to do to get Fios in town so residents will have another option for internet, television and phone service.

Selectman Watson stated that he was told that Fios would have to be in Haverhill before it would come to Groveland due to the cost and suggested Groveland electric provide cable. Selectman Watson also stated this is a charge of the cable committee. Selectman Wood asked what the cable committee has done. Selectman Watson stated they have not met in a while.

Selectman Dube-Carpenter made a motion to allow Selectman Wood to pursue options for internet/television service providers in town; seconded by Selectman Wood; motion approved 4-1-0. Selectman Watson opposed.

Chairman O'Neil asked for the cable committee to be on the December 10th agenda to give the Board an update.

OLD OR UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Selectman Dunn stated that the town is still looking for an 18-20 foot tree to be donated or information on a place to purchase one this size.

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Chairman O'Neil asked about the personnel handbook. Ms. Dembkoski stated that the group is meeting twice in the next week to finalize their proposal. She also stated it is a struggle to find employees when there is no vacation time for a new employee.

Chairman O'Neil as if the markings at the Pines were for the speed bumps. Ms. Dembkoski stated that they are digging for the asphalt speed bumps tomorrow.

Chairman O'Neil asked to have the boats removed as they could be a hazard for kids.

OTHER ITEMS NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATED AT TIME OF POSTING

None

SELECTMEN REPORTS

None

CORRESPONDENCE

Minutes from October 15, 2018

Minutes from October 29, 2018

Thank you letter from the Conservation Commission to Larry Kelley of Kendall Construction
Additional information from Water & Sewer Superintendent, Tom Cusick regarding 23 School Street project

FINANCE DIRECTOR'S TIME

Ms. Dembkoski stated that the land sale and land swap were completed on November 1st. November 15th from 9am-11am is the flu clinic and November 26th is Special Town Meeting at 7:00pm at the Bagnell School.

SELECTMEN'S TIME

Selectman Watson complemented the lights in the Veto room and hoped it continues to be lit up at night.

Selectman Dunn asked about the football fields at the Pines and the pump system. Ms. Dembkoski stated the proposals for the irrigation system came in significantly higher than the estimates mostly like due to prevailing wage requirements.

Selectman Dube-Carpenter attended the Veasey Art and Wine fest and thanked all the volunteers. She also thanked the town clerk and volunteers for their efforts on Election Day.

Selectman Wood thanked Mr. Tuttle for the great Veterans Day services. Selectman Wood has been working with Representative Mirra on getting lines painted on 113/Main Street.

Chairman O'Neil thanked the residents for their generosity for the fill the cruiser campaign. Town offices will be closing early on November 21st and will be closed on November 22nd and 23rd for Thanksgiving.

Selectman Wood made a motion to adjourn at 9:22PM; seconded by Selectman Dunn; motion approved 5-0-0.

The next regular meeting will be held on **Monday, November 26, 2018** at 6:30PM.

Respectfully submitted by: Laurie Burzlaff, minutes clerk.

*** Unanimously Approved on December 10, 2018 ***