

# SELECTMEN'S MINUTES

## June 8, 1999

**Present:** Herman Kabakoff, F. Dore' Hunter, Peter Ashton, William Shupert, Wayne L. Friedrichs, and the Town Manager. (The meeting was televised)

### CITIZEN'S CONCERNS

### PUBLIC HEARINGS AND APPOINTMENTS

None Scheduled

### SELECTMEN'S BUSINESS

**61A Choate Land Newtown Road** –DORE' HUNTER - Moved not to exercise the Town's Option to purchase this parcel. PETER ASHTON – Second. UNANIMOUS VOTE.

**Site Plan Special Permit Decision Eastern Road #3/8/99-369** – DORE' HUNTER - Moved to approve the decision which funds sidewalks at another location. - PETER ASHTON - Second. UNANIMOUS VOTE.

**Suburban Coalition** - DORE' HUNTER - Moved to continue to participate and to fund the dues for the upcoming year. TREY SHUPERT - Second. Peter noted that he would be willing to go to a few meetings. The Board assignments will be updated to reflect Peter as the Selectman Assigned to SC.

**Cohasset Petition** - DORE' HUNTER - Moved we join in the Petition with the wording changed to better reflect our community. TREY SHUPERT - Second. UNANIMOUS VOTE. Dore' suggested that the Fourth paragraph, first sentence may need to be changed. The Town Manager noted that when he reviewed this it was not asking for new monies. His fear is that we may ask them for what we want, but find it taken out of our Cherry Sheets. Peter suggested that the second paragraph needed to be changed if the Board were to sign off. The Senior Tax Relief Committee and other groups may be willing to sign the petition. Peter would bring it to the Senior Tax Relief Committee. Trey felt PTO's should also be asked to sign this and to be included. He suggested that it might be re-drafted. Dore' suggested that we have a letter go out under Herman's signature to the Cohasset Board and legislators informing them of our forthcoming participation and then work on the petition to make the changes needed and to get other groups to sign on.

## **Other Business**

**Sewer Action Committee** - Dore' updated the Board on the upcoming SAC and Andrew Gotlib's most recent letter about funding. He felt this was a good sign for the project.

**School Building Committee** – Dore' reported that the bid will probably go out in July.

**Re-Engineering Committee** - Peter Ashton asked for approval to go ahead with the formation of the Acton Reengineering or Efficiency Committee. He feels we are ready to proceed and would like the approval to get an understanding of the scope of both town and schools prepared. He hopes to move forward within three months time and explore how we can operate in a more efficient manner. Herman discussed his meeting with the School Chair's and he felt they all had agreed to move forward. Bill Mullin has offered to contribute to the project. It was suggested we take Bill up on his offer. It was noted that he would be a good choice with his background to assist with this. Bob Miller will be the Representative from the Fin Com. Herman was not sure if the School would have one or two participants. Peter has offered to serve on the committee. John Penderville has stated to Herman that everyone has to come to this with an open mind and good faith for it to work. Herman felt that this would be a good way to approach the issues of shared services and efficiencies. DORE' HUNTER - Moved to proceed with the Committee – WAYNE FRIEDRICHS - Second. UNANIMOUS VOTE. Peter was asked to establish a committee name.

**Senior Tax Work Program** – Don will come to the Board at the next meeting to ask for funds from the Audubon Hill Trust fund to fund the Work Program. Don said he has asked staff for input and expects they will be getting back to him before the next meeting with those needs.

**Citizen's Police Academy** - Dore' felt this was a good program. It was noted that this program should be mentioned in the paper.

**Personnel** - Herman discussed several personnel achievements within the organization. First, the promotions to Captain and Lieutenant in the Fire Department. Carl Robinson and Robert Vanderhoof were promoted to Captain. Firefighter Kevin Lyons and Fire Fighter Michael Lyons were promoted to Lieutenant. Herman congratulated them on their career advancement.

In the Police Department, Mike Cogan has been named to receive an award in conjunction with the rescue from the Fire of a Parker Street resident. This is a nomination by American Legion for the award to be given on July 18<sup>th</sup> in Springfield, MA.

John Murray received a letter in regard to his activities with NESWC from Ruth Fitch commending he and Bob Moroney for their work on getting the contact approved.

**TAC MEMO** – TAC would like to solicit the Board of Selectmen's feedback with regard to their recent memo about the Commuter Lot. The Board decided that they should ask TAC to attend an upcoming Board Meeting to discuss their memo. Peter agreed it would be wise to have them come in to have questions answered and discussed. Don said he had already begun this scheduling and is waiting to hear from the TAC about their availability to attend a Selectmen's Meeting. The residents and commuters should be informed through the newspapers. Staff will get the notice out when the time and date is established.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

DORE HUNTER - Moved to approve. – PETER ASHTON - Second -  
UNANIMOUS VOTE.

### **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

#### **YEAR END PROGRAM:**

Don outlined the proposed Year-end budget spending. He has identified some solid numbers and knows we will have additional funds in the Insurance Trust.

Don explained the situation in the Finance Department. They anticipated advertising in the Wall Street Journal with hopes of obtaining a qualified person/s to fill the vacancies.

They have identified \$574,000 which they are firm on and have suggested uses for some of these monies. The first suggestion was for the purchase of GUI and the Electronic Bulletin Board as discussed at the Annual Town Meeting. The Recreation Commission has identified the need for funds for removal and replacement of equipment at the Elm Street Tot lot.

Dore' discussed his GUI suggestion for funding and that he is extremely concerned about the current staffing level in the Finance Department. He suggested bringing a revised compensation figure for next year to attract and bring in new people. He really wanted the GUI in place and felt that it would help efficiencies in that department. He felt the purchase of the software would help with the workload.

He did not feel that the Electronic Bulletin Board would be an appropriate use at this time.

He also wanted the Playground at Elm Street improved. He asked that the structures currently in place be removed at once to minimize the risk of injury.

Peter agreed with Dore' on the issue of short staffing and felt we needed a more realistic salary offering to resolve it. He also agreed that the removal and replacement of the Elm Street Playground was worthwhile. He agreed to delay any action with regard to the Electronic Bulletin Board. The GUI was a little more concerning to him as Town Meeting voted against that article.

Trey wanted the unsafe playground equipment removed. He supports GUI and he agreed we need to do a better job with presentations, but felt GUI should not have gone to Town Meeting in the first place. He felt it should have been part of the operational budget. He feels the delay in getting this will result in wasted time and productively and we need to get this in place.

Wayne asked about the Health Insurance. John noted that the insurance covers Water, School and Town employees. They have purchased Stop Loss insurance for large claims, as this coverage has become very inexpensive in recent years. John noted that we have adequate reserves to cover anything that might come up.

Wayne asked about removal with no replacement at Elm Street. He wanted to support the Playground. He thought that the Electronic Bulletin Board was something Pentimation was to install at the Library for citizen use. Don noted that this would be a dial in verses dead terminal.

He is in favor of GUI and agreed with Trey on it not being brought to Town Meeting. He would have a hard time since Town meeting voted it down. He did support it though.

Trey felt that GUI is a tool that is added to our existing system, and did not know why it was brought to Town Meeting as a capital item.

Herman noted it is the Board's experience to bring capital spending to Town Meeting. He felt that this is the case where town and private companies differ in their operations. He noted that next time when GUI and GIS is brought to Town Meeting that the presentation will be better prepared, but for now, we need to live with the voters wish. The Electronic Bulletin Board is something he feels might be done for less than \$70,000. It will need more research to implement an effective Bulletin Board. He asked that we remove the equipment at the playground ASAP. He wanted the funding request for the replacement equipment brought to a Town Meeting. He feels we have to live with what is voted and not have a double standard. He feels we need to defer these items and let the money go back to free cash.

DORE' HUNTER – Moved to appropriate \$60,000 for GUI program as outlined in his memo. TREY SHUPERT- Second. - Dore' withdrew his motion until the next meeting at this time. Trey withdrew his Second. Dore' said he wanted to move forward with this and said he could tolerate the heat since he feels responsibility for the Finance Department.

Herman asked if the Board of Selectmen were convinced to approve the GUI expenditure on June 22, 1999, would there be time to bid it and encumber the funds before the end of the fiscal year? Don said we could do this by June 30<sup>th</sup> because it is a sole source Bid. He also said that the next meeting would not be too late to follow-up. Herman was still concerned about Town Meeting action and felt we needed to get public support and support of the Finance Committee. He felt it would preserve our credibility.

Trey said he is coming from the understanding that the voters have elected us to make prudent financial decisions. He again said he would not want to loose additional financial personnel because of the delay in purchasing GUI.

Herman again stressed his reasons for not supporting it as the voters said no at Town Meeting, and that was the will of the voters. Even if we messed up, he said we could not have a double standard. He felt we need to abide by the vote already taken, and take opportunity to again place it before the voters.

Charlie Kadlec felt we needed to convince the Finance Committee and felt that we should not overturn the Town Meeting Vote. He urged the Board to return the excess monies, and not to expend them on the mentioned items.

Dore' agreed but felt he has a job to see that it gets done even if he takes it on his political back. Dore' said that if we hired the necessary staff this week he would withdraw his request.

Charlie asked if GUI was what they really wanted to make their job easier. He felt we should investigate other things that don't have that name attached to it.

Peter wanted to know the Manager's opinion. He said part time people would not be very helpful. The long-term 5-year plan said we needed a unified system and one that would cross-reference items. The objective in the finance office was to get more efficient use of the people who are not in the finance department. To spread it out and decentralize the inputting by having all departments share in the clerical inputting.

He is very uncomfortable with Herman taking heat for the failure of GUI, and he feels we did not support Herman well enough. He feels we did not give him the tools to see it through Town Meeting successfully. His objective has been to have

the Finance Dept. check and review data instead of inputting all the data.

Peter asked if there were any hard numbers in productivity savings. Don said no, they tried to obtain them for the April Town Meeting, but couldn't. Peter asked about how much time the staff spends doing data entry. John said at least 75%. Tess as well as the rest of the financial staff is doing a good job. He thinks we could get other things done if we had GUI, as it would free them up to produce other reports that they don't have time to do currently.


Herman wanted to prepare and send our arguments to the Fin Com to make our case as well as send a public letter in the Beacon outlining the merit of GUI. Peter felt that the Fin Com was meeting tonight and that something in writing should be prepared and put in the Beacon to make it known that this is an issue that will be discussed in two weeks time. The Town Manager has been asked to draft the memo. Trey offered to assist in the drafting.

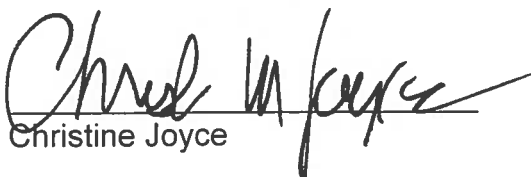
PETER ASHTON - Moved to appropriate \$45,000 for Elm Street Playground equipment removal and replacement. WAYNE FRIEDRICHS - Second. Trey asked if we could review in two weeks. Peter wanted the equipment removed and to let them know we would be replacing it. The motion and second were withdrawn.

The consensus was to not do the Electronic Bulletin Board firewall. And to get the notice out to everyone about the upcoming discussion of expending Year-End Funds to fund the Playground and GUI. Trey is willing to write a letter to the Beacon inviting the public to the meeting.

**ALG Meeting** – Dore' reported they have had the first meeting. Dore' said it was a continuation of the discussion at 2020. Minutes were taken and they will reflect the action and decision at that meeting.

PETER ASHTON - Moved to go into Executive Session to discuss Litigation and only to return to adjourn. TREY SHUPERT – Second. All members Aye.

  
Clerk  
August 2, 1999  
Date

  
Christine Joyce

June 4, 1999

TO: Board of Selectmen  
FROM: Herman Kabakoff, Chairman  
SUBJECT: Selectmen's Report

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**AGENDA**  
June 8, 1999  
7:30 P.M. - Room 204

**I. CITIZEN'S CONCERNS**

**II. PUBLIC HEARINGS & APPOINTMENTS**

*NONE SCHEDULED*

**III. SELECTMEN'S BUSINESS**

1. **61A – CHOATE LAND** – Enclosed please find a request to remove a parcel of land from 61A and offering the Town the right of first refusal under Chapter 61A. Staff comment has been attached to this information for Board review.
2. **SITE PLAN SPECIAL PERMIT - #3/8/99-369 – EASTERN ROAD** – Enclosed please find two draft decisions for Board review and action.
3. **SUBURBAN COALITION** – Enclosed please find materials for Board consideration.
4. **COHASSET PETITION** – Enclosed please find a request from the Town of Cohasset regarding a petition to the Governor for Board consideration.
5. **OTHER BUSINESS**

**IV. CONSENT AGENDA**

6. **ACCEPT MINUTES** – Enclosed please find Minutes for April 27, 1999 and May 11, 1999 for Board Acceptance.
7. **ACHC** – Enclosed please find a request to sign and send the required notification to DHCD that the LIP homes on file in Acton have not been resold and are still occupied by the original purchasers.