

**TOWN OF GROTON
SELECT BOARD MEETING
January 11, 2011
7:00PM**

In Attendance: Miles Sinclair, Kyle Andrews, Christina McClay, Pamela Hamel (Administrative Assistant)

Select Board member Christina McClay joined the meeting at 7:55pm.

Audience members present

Miles called the meeting to order at 6:59pm.

Miles made a motion to accept the minutes of January 4 as written, Kyle 2nd, so voted.

The Board discussed the draft language for the building permit guidelines. There are some grammatical changes and clarifications. **Miles made a motion to table this until Christina has an opportunity to look at it and until the Board can agree on final language, Kyle 2nd, so voted.**

The Board discussed a number of things regarding the current junkyard license regulations and policy. One issue was the background check fee, which up to this point has come out of the application fee. However, if the applicant is denied a license, state statute requires that the fee be returned. Thus the Town would end up paying for the background check. The regulations do not address the background check fee. Another concern deals with whether or not a special exception and site plan review are required for those junkyards that are not operating as a commercial business and/or had received letters of a possible junkyard violation from a former Board. Pam stated that the Zoning Board had granted a Certificate of Location to all property owners who had received that letter. She has a copy of the letter and all who received it. The certificate is required for licensing. She also said that the current licensing application does not mention anything about best management practices. She has been working on a new application for the Board's review. Last week the Board made the decision to send a letter and junkyard application to Bixby and Greenwood. Since the Board does not have the answers regarding a special exception and site plan review, Miles would like to forward this to the Town's attorney for comment before sending anything out. **Miles made a motion to table this in the hopes it can be addressed later in the meeting once Christina arrived, Kyle 2nd, so voted.**

Kyle made a motion to sign the letter to Mr. Yetman, Miles 2nd, so voted. The letter makes reference to their past conversations with Mr. Yetman regarding compensation for the trees that were cut on his Province Road property when the right of way was cleared in 2009. The Board is asking if he has any additional proposals for their consideration. If not, they will turn this over to the Town's insurance carrier. At this time Mr. Yetman has posted the snowmobile trail that passes through his property as closed.

Miles reported that the Town has received a PILOT proposal from Groton Wind. The Company has asked that at this time the percentages remain proprietary. Discussions will include whether to be paid a set amount per megawatt with an annual adjustment or have the amount based upon a percentage of the wind farm's net. There is volatility in the latter proposal. The Board would like Avitar to become involved in the process. Avitar is the assessing company used by the Town of Lempster as well, thus they are familiar with what is involved in determining the value of the project. **Miles made a motion to involve Avitar in the process of determining the estimated value of the wind farm as proposed, Kyle 2nd, so voted. Miles made a second motion to try to identify the equivalent of a George "Skip" Sansoucy to determine the value of the project, Kyle 2nd, so voted.**

Sharon Nelson gave the Board and audience a summary of the School Budget Committee's work. They did a number of comparisons including:

- teacher/student ratios at each school in order to determine if combined classes were possible,
- teacher/student ratio compared to other districts
- principal's and administrator's salaries compared to other districts,
- cost per pupil, etc.

Ms. Nelson stated that if there are a lot of students in the district that have special needs this increases the cost per student. The Newfound School District (NFSD) has a high cost per student. Franklin has the least cost per student yet 75% of their students go on to a two or four year college compared to NFSD's 62% going on to a two or four year college. The Budget Committee also looked at the steady decrease in enrollment with no comparable decrease in staff and listened to a lot of public comment this year. She reported that in many communities in the district welfare has increased. The Town of Danbury had to borrow money to make the most recent school payment, and they have 62 houses going into foreclosure. Originally the School Board was recommending a 7% increase. This was decreased to 3.9%. In a recent meeting the Budget Committee voted 4-3 for a 0% increase and presented this to the Board. Ms. Nelson said they cannot recommend to the School Board or administration any particular area of the budget to cut. They can only speak in terms of generalities. Ms. Nelson reported that at last night's School Board meeting it was learned that the proposed teacher contract is for one year with no proposed increase. The Board also discussed personnel cuts and maintenance. The budget hearing is set for January 13 at 6:30. Ms. Nelson also pointed out that the default budget is higher than the proposed budget. She concluded by saying that the Budget Committee is not anti-teacher, but as the enrollment and needs change, the school must also change to meet the needs of the students and the taxpayers.

Christina joined the meeting at this time (7:55pm).

The Board reviewed the letter from North Country Council (NCC) regarding Northern Pass (Quebec Hydro project). NCC will be filing as an Intervener representing the district and they are asking the Board to fill out a survey regarding the project so they can better represent the needs of the communities in their district. **Christina made a motion to fill out the NCC survey, Kyle 2nd, so voted.** The Board will spend a few minutes during their upcoming budget work session to take care of this.

Pam Yinger spoke on behalf of the Groton Historical Society (GHS). They would like the Select Board to consider a warrant article to make some improvements and additions to the Veteran's monument. Miles asked Ms. Yinger to explain the specific purpose of the article. She replied that they are not asking for money but would like public input regarding any changes. Christina said that originally there were some things that were to be done with the monument and she does not feel that a warrant article is necessary. The GHS had mentioned some granite posts for fencing and darkening the letters. They have money that was originally donated for the monument which has not yet been expended. Miles does not think they need to take this to the Town as the Board has the authority to okay these improvements. As the GHS gave this monument to the Town they should have any changes approved by the Board prior to making them. Ms. Yinger said that GHS president Roland Bixby will appoint a committee to look into improvements. Christina suggested that two or three veterans be on the committee.

Miles read the list of Town offices that will need to be filled in March. The filing period runs from January 19 through 28. The Board discussed the local auditor position. The term is for one year. Some of the terminology in the statute regarding the adoption of a local auditor instead of using a CPA for the audit is confusing. **Christina made a motion to contact the Local Government Center regarding the last sentence of RSA 41:31-b, Kyle 2nd, so voted.**

Miles made a motion to approve the building permit for Hansen, Christina 2nd, so voted.

Christina signed the letter to Yetman.

Miles gave Christina an update on the junkyard issues discussed early. **Miles made a motion to forward these issues to the Town's attorney for legal opinion and delay sending those letters until they hear back, Kyle 2nd so voted.**

The Board quickly reviewed the building permit application and guidelines changes, and the Groton Wind proposal. Christina will contact general appraiser George Lagassa. Although he has done some utility appraisal she does not know if he does wind farms.

Candidate's night is scheduled for February 15 at 7:00pm. The budget hearing is scheduled for February 8, snow date will be the following day, February 9. The Select Board's meeting will also take place on same night.

Pam Yinger said the Groton Historical Society has a photo of the old Peppersass that they would like to be considered for cover of next year's Town Report.

Kyle made a motion to go into non public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (b) at 8:45pm, Christina 2nd, so voted.

Miles motioned to return to public session at 8:57pm, Christina 2nd, so voted.

Kyle motioned to adjourn at 8:58pm, Christina 2nd, so voted.

Respectfully Submitted,
Pamela Hamel
Administrative Assistant