

**TOWN OF GROTON
SELECT BOARD MEETING
February 22, 2011
7:00 PM**

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

Audience members present

Miles called the meeting to order at 7:05pm.

Miles announced that there will be a benefit to help Buddy Lane on Saturday, March 5 at the Stinson Mountain Grill beginning at 4:00pm.

Miles made a motion to accept the minutes of February 15 as written, Christina 2nd, so voted.

Paul Hatch from the New Hampshire Department of Safety, Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division presented an award letter to the Town for a grant for the repeater system and radios for emergency management. This will help to improve the communications in town in the event of an emergency. Mr. Hatch then reminded the Board that the Hazard Mitigation Plan will expire on November 20, 2012 and it will have to be updated prior to that time. He said that FEMA will want to know what kind of issues the Town has faced in the last 5 years and any projects listed in the current plan that have been accomplished. He believes the project can be accomplished in possibly 90 to 100 days during 4-6 meetings. Chuck Stata said that he along with Department Heads and several members of the community including Dave and Judy Demers, Paula Stata, Bonnie Lane, Mike Lemieux, Norm Blanchette, Jo O'Connor, Slim Spafford and one representative from the Select Board worked with the North Country Council to draft that Plan. Paul Hatch will work with the Town on this project. He also stated that the Town should plan to have it completed to allow enough time for FEMA to review and sign off on it. FEMA usually takes two to three months to sign off on a plan. This project will be done at no cost to the town. Miles then asked Mr. Hatch about the COOP (Continuity of Operations) template for emergency management. He replied that the State is still working on their draft.

Miles updated the audience regarding proposed legislation, House Bill 622, which would allow the Select Board to spread the possible increase in school funding the town might have this year over both tax billings instead of raising the entire amount in the final tax billing. This increase is due to a possible change in the way school funding is figured. Groton stands to lose approximately \$130,000 in state aid.

The Town has had three total contacts with We Log regarding the damage that was done on Sculptured Rocks Road and is still looking to be reimbursed for that damage.

The Town's insured vehicles are covered regardless of whether they are inside or outside of the Town Garage should something happen to them or the building. The Board agreed that the level of coverage suggested by the appraiser for the building and the contents was appropriate. The Local Government Center (LGC) suggests that tax deeded properties that can still be redeemed by the former owner should be insured as the Town is liable for these properties. The cost to insure the buildings on two recently tax deeded properties is approximately \$100 based upon the Town's current assessed value. The Board can choose to insure for the assessed value or an agreed value. The Local Government Center (LGC) would send an appraiser at no cost to the Town to look at the properties in the spring should the Board decide to assure for the assessed value.

Miles made a motion to have a policy issued based upon the assessed value, Christina 2nd, so voted.

LGC also recommends that these properties be posted. **Miles made a motion to table the discussion regarding the posting of Town properties until next week, Kyle 2nd, so voted.**

Due to time restraints, the Board is fine with Miles and Pam reviewing the proof of the Town Report so it can be submitted by tomorrow.

Miles spoke with Chief Fischer who assured Miles that Hebron Rescue would take the ambulance over the Jewel Hill Bridge.

Regarding Dave Leone's Intent and Report of Cut, he did not remove the timber from his property for land conversion issues or for personal use. Pam will draw up a warrant for the tax.

Lewis Albert asked about the right of way on Province Road that was cleared in 2009. He maintains that the Town should not have allowed those trees to be cut as this was his tax dollars. Miles said this issue has been discussed with him at previous Select Board meetings. He admitted that the Board made some errors in this and has tried to go forward correctly. They are still working with Mr. Yetman about this. Nothing was taken from the town but it was taken improperly from the property owners. Dave Leone said that had the wood been legally cut and intents filed by the property owners the town would have gotten the tax revenue. Christina responded that intents are not needed for clearing rights of way. Miles said that this happened a year and a half ago. The Board admits that they have made a mistake and they are moving forward. An insurance claim has been filed with the Local Government Center (LGC). The LGC's position is to wait for Mr. Yetman to pursue a claim. If the LGC needs him to take some kind of action Miles would like to let Mr. Yetman know this. Christina agreed that they should contact him and let him know the status and what he needs to do to proceed. Mr. Albert said that it was the Road Agent's idea to do this cut; that he had approached the Board claiming that a friend of his would do the work for free. Glen Hansen responded that this issue was brought before them by Gordon Coursey and former selectman Mike Brogna. The Road Agent did not field that. He had been entertaining hand cutting the area as there was a need to do some clearing before ditching and to allow some sun to hit the road. Ditching takes place every year a section at a time. The first year he opened up water bars that had not been opened up in years. They had trees three and four inches in diameter in them. Miles said that everybody who was involved in the decision making process regarding this issue is at fault. There are minutes for every meeting that took place regarding this issue. **Christina made a motion to send a letter to Mr. Yetman advising him of the status of the claim, Kyle 2nd, so voted.** Pam will include a copy of the notice of claim that was filed.

Pam Yinger, on behalf of the Groton Historical Society (GHS) made a request to use the Everett Hobart Memorial Park for a Veteran's memorial picnic on Saturday, May 28. Before granting use of the park, the Board wanted to know GHS' specific plans for the event. Ms. Yinger responded that they are planning a Veteran's memorial program and parade which would include special speakers, music and food, possibly a pig roast. The event would be free. Ms. Yinger said she has visited and spoken with a number of people in Groton and Hebron regarding the program and the response has been favorable. Christina is fine with the current plans but if those plans change the Board would like to know prior to the event. GHS will be responsible for everything associated with this event; it will not be subsidized by the town.

Lewis Albert addressed the Board. He said that at a meeting Miles had said the Town was broke. He wanted to know if the Town had to borrow money. Miles responded that he did not say the town was broke but they were concerned about a possible cash flow issue due to the amount of delinquent taxes owed. The Town finished the budget year not expending all that was appropriated and did not have to borrow money.

He then said that this Board had appointed an assistant road agent. Miles said this Board did not appoint an assistant road agent, and no assistant road agent has been appointed since he has been on the Board.

Finally, Mr. Albert said that he had told the Board that too much money had been spent on North Groton Road and nothing on Sculptured Rocks Road. Finally the Highway Department did some ditching and hauled all of the excess dirt to Giovanna Road. This was Town dirt, and all of it was paid for by the Town. Glen Hansen said the materials that come out of the ditches is basically garbage: leaves, dirt, twigs, pieces of asphalt, etc., and it is give to anyone who wants it. Ron Madan said he got some of this particular dirt but still needs to put gravel over it as it is not good material. Glen continued to say that a number of Town property owners have received this material including John Faucher, Kevin Maass, Kyle Andrews, Steve Pilcher and others. They try to find the closest place to get rid of it as the material is not good. Christina stated that she has previously asked to be on this list for fill as well. Mr. Albert said that years ago there was a vote by the Town to stock pile this dirt behind the Town Garage. He also said that they used to dump it over the side near the S curve on North Groton Road as it is a straight drop. Glen responded that they already have dirt stock piled behind the garage. Slim said that those who ask for it have to accept some kind of responsibility for the material knowing that there is broken bottles and trash in it. Kyle said he understands that trucking it from Sculptured Rocks Road up to Giovanna Road is not efficient, and that if there was a vote taken the Board should look into it. However, if the fill comes from River Road should it be brought to the garage? That also is not efficient. Christina asked if it was efficient to stock pile in a flood zone. Board will look into this and check the vote to see what the intent was. They will get back to Mr. Albert. Dave Leone said he was not aware of any vote to stock pile this material at the Town Garage and it has always been common practice to try to get rid of it at the closest place. This material is a byproduct of cleaning the side of the road and the easiest place to get rid of it is the cheapest for the Town. When he was Road Agent he would have handled it in a similar fashion as what Glen currently does. Glen said the guys at the state garage do the same thing; the closest guy gets the stuff. They do have a document, a waiver, that the land owner signs. Gary Easson said he would love to have some of this fill. He also wanted to know if there is anything the Road Agent does that Mr. Albert likes.

Mr. Albert then accused the road department of plowing down to the Hebron Store and getting coffee. Glen replied that occasionally the state requests that he plow that area if there is a truck broken down and yes he will pick up a coffee if he is down that way. He does not plow that area unless that state has requested. Finally, Mr. Albert wanted to know why the Road Agent is still getting paid \$400 a week if he hasn't been doing anything. Miles responded that in the past Mr. Albert has asked for and received copies of the Road Agent's time sheets. These sheets include the number of hours worked each day and the project done. He is free to request copies again. Chuck Stata pointed out that the Road Agent has been instrumental in the Town receiving thousands of dollars in grant and FEMA money.

Mr. Hansen said that Mr. Albert claims that he has pictures of them hauling fill. He would like to know who took the pictures, when they were taken, what times and for what purposes because if they were taken in a manner that is construed as harassment then he has been advised to move forward with that. Mr. Albert did not respond directly to this question.

Senator Ayotte sent a letter to the Town letting them know of proposed public hearings on the Northern Pass process. The closest meetings are in Franklin and Lincoln. Information is available in the office.

Christina made a motion to fill out the US Department of Energy card requesting that the Town continue to receive information regarding the Northern Pass project via mail, Kyle 2nd, so voted.

The Board changed the time of the March 1 work session to 5:30.

Pam asked about reusing the cassette tapes as she has boxes of Select Board meeting tapes. The Board believes the heart of the matter is how long the tapes should be kept once they have been transcribed. The Board is not ready to make a decision on this yet.

The Board reviewed the 2010 abatement requests. **Kyle made a motion to sign the Brown abatement denial for Map 7 Lots 12,13,14,15, Christina 2nd, so voted.** There will be changes made going forward to the value of this land due to access issues that have come into play since April 1, 2010

Miles made a motion to sign the Hesselton's abatement denial for Map 1 Lot 38, Christina 2nd, so voted.

The Town received a check from a property owner for reasons that are not at all clear. The check memo says 'for appropriate town use'. It was enclosed in a copy of a letter to the Hardy Country Snowmobile Club regarding the snowmobile trail that crosses his property. Miles is willing to call him to clarify the reason for sending the check. Miles made a motion to table this until they get the additional information, Christina 2nd, so voted.

Avitar requested an estimate of how many miles of road we have in town as they prepare for the telecommunications assessment. The Board estimated 50 miles or less.

Miles made a motion to approve the current use application for Watson Map 6 Lot 22-3, Christina 2nd, so voted.

Christina reminded the audience to call first before coming to the library to assure that it is opened.

Kyle made a motion to adjourn at 9:25pm, Christina 2nd, so voted.

Respectfully Submitted,
Pamela Hamel
Administrative Assistant