

TOWN OF GROTON
SELECT BOARD MEETING
February 17, 2015

In Attendance: Kyle Andrews, Robert Ferriere, Christina Goodwin and Sara Smith (Administrative Assistant)

Audience Members Present

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

MINUTE APPROVAL:

Christina motioned to approve the minutes of February 3, 2015 as written, Bob 2nd, so voted.

OLD BUSINESS:

MHF Project Contract

Matt Fysh submitted his contract for the project of the transfer station window and door. The total was \$1,194.00.

Bob motioned to sign the MHF Project Contract, Christina 2nd, so voted.

Land Use Change Tax Form

The Board previously signed the Land Use Change Tax Form for Map 1 Lot 48-9. There was an additional page which required the Board's signature.

Kyle motioned to sign the updated Land Use Change Tax Form, Bob 2nd, so voted.

NEW BUSINESS:

Candidate's Night

Candidate's night is traditionally held during a Select Board meeting. Any candidates that are running for election are given time to speak about why they are running for the position and then answer any questions from the audience. The Board started from the top of the ballot list to allow each candidate their time.

Select Board – 3 year term

John Rescigno

John moved to Groton about 5 months ago. He started coming here to vacation and for hiking. He left New Jersey because the taxes were very high and it is over populated. He likes Groton's lower taxes, the freedom and cleaner environment, but most of all because it is a small town and he has a chance to make a difference. Since he has been in Groton he has become a member of the Conservation Commission, he attends Select Board meetings weekly, went to the State House to watch a bill make its way through the house, and his wife has also taken an active role in the Town. As a Selectman he feels his job will be to listen to the people, make best decisions for the Town and keep the taxes in line.

- *What is your work experience?* Retail management for 25 years with companies such as Best Buy, Home Depot and most recently Dicks Sporting Goods.
- *After a term as a Selectman, what would you consider a successful term?* If I can help with keeping the Town going in same direction, making the Town a better place for the people to live in while maintaining taxes and the budget.
- *How aware are you of responsibilities of a Selectman?* I am knowledgeable and know it is a large commitment, that it is not just Tuesday nights but is a very involved position. I have talked to Kyle about the job responsibilities and he has filled me in that you oversee all departments along with the Town.
- *Did you know there is an online certification that you can take?* No, I did not but it is something that I am definitely interested in.

Otto Jespersen

Otto explained he has lived in town for over a year now. He loves Groton because it is small. It is a great little Town and not a lot happens here which is nice. The people make you feel at home and welcome. Since he moved here he has been to almost all of the Select Board meetings and also attends other meetings. He is on the Conservation Commission. One reason he wants to be on the Select Board is to give back to the community. He was the 4th EMT when it started in the 70's, was a firefighter for 20 years, has a degree in business management, computer science, and has also run retail stores. He wants to keep Groton the way it is now. He likes that it is small and it seems like the people want it this way too along with keeping lower taxes.

- *After a term as a Selectman, what would you consider a successful term?* Getting re-elected, this would mean that the Town thinks highly enough of me and I did a good job to be re-elected.
- *As a member of the Select Board you are considered a leader, providing an example to follow, do you think you can be that leader with following town rules and regs, such as paying taxes and by being an example of how things should be done?* Yes, I would like to think so. I was brought up that way.

William Jolly

Bill stated he was running because he thinks he has stuff to contribute. He bought property here in 1998 and chose this area because it was small town and rural area. At first he lived in a tent on his property, and then he lived in cabin while he built his home. He wanted to get out of the city because he didn't want that for his kid. He is running because he has experience prior to moving to NH. He was a mediator and turn around management consultant to find ways to fix problems, etc. He also has a finance background. He doesn't know all the answers but usually finds the right questions to ask to get the answers that are needed. He has concerns for things that are coming to the Town. He was also in the military, has been a police officer and on the fire department. He has a kid and this is her home and she loves it the way it is. It is safe and he would like to keep it that way. He sees encroachment and would like to deal with that. He would like that the wishes of the Town people are kept.

- *After a term as a Selectman, what would you consider a successful term?* When I leave here I want to know that I left behind things that are not seen, that the books are in order and that in 10-20 years the Town is in a good place.
- *It is fair to say that anyone who knows you knows that you are a person of strong opinions, how do you propose to deal with these opinions when the Town doesn't agree*

with you? I don't represent myself, I represent the people and I would be compelled to work in their interest not my own.

- *As a Selectmen because we have limited Town government the Selectmen are in charge of enforcing different areas as well such as health concerns, building permits, etc, how do you support this? I was a firefighter and a police officer and there are laws on the books that I didn't like but I took an oath to enforce these laws and do a job and when I take an oath I take that seriously and would in this case as well.*
- *Sometimes legal advisement is against what we wish. How would you handle this? I would talk to the attorney to see where they got the information and may get another opinion to see if they match up.*
- *Are you a paralegal? No but I did paralegal work as a mediator.*
- *As a Selectman you are leader in community and being an example before the residents. RSA 74 is the inventory taxable property that is sent to every home owner and needs to be sent back by April 15th. In 7 years it was questioned that it was only sent in once by Bill. In addition, the Select Board makes decisions on the ones not received when someone asks for the penalty to be waived. How can you make these decisions when you did not send them in? I got hit up financially. I lost my company, had family court issues, almost lost my house, and had no income for about a year. I have been behind on taxes and know how tough it can be. I have since paid three years of taxes in the last year but when people get in trouble sometimes you need to be lenient.*
- *It is the responsibility to make sure the people are taxed appropriately which is what the inventory is used for. Another way to know is with building permits. Bill built his house without a building permit. I did get taxed on current use and I got residential taxes which shows the Town was aware and that I had a permit. It was also pointed out that the Town lost records in the flood, and that Bill believed that he filed for a building permit.*
- *It was questioned that Bill lives on a class VI road and per RSA 231, every spring the Select Board sends out letters regarding class VI road maintenance and he only responded one time? I only responded one time because I only did maintenance one time. I thought it was only needed to send in if work was being done.*
- *Your platform states you plan to lower taxes and lower spending; the local part of tax rate was .43 so how can you lower that anymore? My platform states to maintain or lower the taxes.*
- *A former Select Board member apologized for the need to go where he is going but he believes that sometimes there is a candidate that is ill suited for the position and it is necessary to make others privy to that information. Past performance should be considered. Bill Jolly and another resident offered to be auditor, the previous Administrative Assistant had to continually ask for the audit to get done and the deadline was missed. The form was not completely filled out and there were sections that were left blank and incomplete. The next election Bill ran again and sat in this room and stated how important that the function was and again the audit was not done in time, it was submitted 6 months late, and was not complete when it was submitted. Also, the auditor is supposed to submit a report for the Town report, which was never done. Bill also wanted to join the Kimball Hill Committee. The Committee appointed Bill to the position and he never attended a single meeting. If he changed his mind he should have made the Committee aware along with the Select Board which he didn't do and this is unacceptable. The responsibilities of the Select Board are of many and you need to be*

responsible, committed, have integrity, be a problem solver, be thorough in work efforts, and based on this information and some additional information he feels Bill does not pass. One of the biggest responsibilities is to help create, oversee and manage the Towns budget. Bill mentioned he fell on hard times and his property has been in lien since he purchased. There was only one year in 2006 that he did pay on time and one year it was almost taken by tax deed. What do you bring to the table when you cannot even manage your own budget, cannot solve his own problems so how can he solve the Towns? Why should any of us believe it will be any different going forward? As far as the local audit, the Town got blindsided to do an audit, another unfunded mandate required of the State. This was the first year and there were a lot of documents missing. I do not remember any reporting being missed or incomplete. (the other person involved spoke up and stated that there were parts that were missed and had to be done again.) The second year I sent the documents when I was in the military. As far as the taxes, I already addressed the tax issue. As far as the Kimball Hill meetings, I didn't attend because of someone else on the Committee that I don't get along with and we are like oil and water. I did tell the Chair of the Committee at that time.

- *I know that you really want to be a Selectman but I don't feel you are qualified to be a Selectman and I was hoping that you would voluntarily step down. Then don't vote for me because that is not going to happen.*
- *Are you employed now, are you still in the Military, a Police Officer, a Fireman? And if you were to come here can you still obligate yourself as a Selectman and fulfill your obligations elsewhere? I am assuming if you are in the guard you may have to go away for this. At this time I am a full time student at Norwich in Vermont which is a program for soldiers. As far as the Military obligation goes, I am an infantry guy and still active guard but since the cold weather affects me I now have a desk job and I teach some classes but it is a weekend program. I am no longer a certified Police Officer or a Fireman.*

Town Clerk/Tax Collector – 3 year term

Laura Hauser is the current Town Clerk/Tax Collector and is running again.

Trustee of the Trust Funds – 3 year term

No one is currently running. If anyone is interested they should add themselves as a write-in candidate.

Planning Board – 3 year term

Mark Watson

Mark explained he has lived in Groton for 5 years. He would like to take a position on the Planning Board. He tries to keep his eye on what is going on around Town. He stated that he and his wife are building a house on their property. He wants to help be a part of the future of the Town. He also explained that he went to Concord and got the book on Planning Board and Zoning Board so he can learn about it and he feels that he can handle the positions. He grew up in upstate NY, spent 30 years at sea, is now retired and has time to devote to the community.

- *With how opposed you and your wife are to Wind, how would you stand if a wind related issue comes up? People may think that I am one dimensional but I am not. I am a member of AFC, I love the outdoors, and I have a lot of different perspectives. If it is a valid with the ordinance and passes then I would support it. I know you think I am anti-*

wind but that is not the case. I am anti-wind installation without proper siting which are totally different things.

- *Can you give the applicant a fair hearing and set aside your own personal feelings?. You do drive a vehicle that has a vanity plate that says “No Wind” and my perspective would be that it would be difficult for you to claim that you could give a fair hearing with your involvement in the SEC, NH Wind Watch, and your personal opinions. In my opinion would it would be appropriate for you to conflict out because if you don’t the Town can be subjected to needless litigation from a potentially biased issue. I wouldn’t be running for this position if I couldn’t and I am insulted that you asked this question and wish you would have asked the people that are pro-wind the same question.*
- *Sorry you are insulted but it is a legit question. Would you recuse yourself if this was the case? If I were running for Planning Board and something wind related came up I would recuse myself because I work for a Wind company. Even if I felt I could go by what the ordinance said I would still recuse myself because it wouldn’t look good and that is all he was asking. It doesn’t mean you cannot write ordinances or anything else wind related but the concern is if a case was brought in front of you. I understand what you are saying and I understand your position because obviously you have monetary interest for the wind company therefore by the regulations you have to recuse yourself so there is no question in your situation. My situation is different and you are being hypothetical years down the line. I’m not going to say I would recuse myself because everyone has feelings and opinions on issues and you cannot just recuse yourself because you have an opinion. I believe I can listen to the people and the applicant and make a decision based on that.*
- *You have been to Concord and helped write legislation on it, which is different than having an opinion. You are right, everyone has an opinion but it is the appearance of it. I feel I can do the job and if my appearance of how I go through life offends people then I am sorry but if I feel strongly about something I am going to pursue what I want to do. However, if I am on a board and need to be objective then I will be objective. It goes back to taking the oath, and when you take that oath you have to do what you have to do to stand by that. I am not a person who runs away from anything but I will be objective and that is all I can say.*
- *Personal belief is Groton is naïve about a master plan and the direction going forward. Our master plan is from 2007 and doesn’t have wind in it. How do you feel about master plans? I feel it is important and I cannot wait for the new master plan to be finished.*
- *Kudos to you for actually getting the Planning and Zoning binder – you are the first person who has run for this position who has done that.*

Forest Blake

He was not in attendance but will be at candidate night next week.

David Labar

He was not in attendance.

Town Auditor – 1 year term

No one is currently running. If anyone is interested they should add themselves as a write-in candidate.

Library Trustee – 3 year term

No one is currently running. If anyone is interested they should add themselves as a write-in candidate.

Cemetery Trustee – 3 year term

Elizabeth Jespersen

She was not in attendance but will be at candidate night next week.

Zoning Board – 2 year term

Mark Watson

Mark has already spoken under the Planning Board but the same information is true for the Zoning Board position.

Nancy Watson

Nancy has lived in NH over 30 years and has been married for 30 years. Over 20 years she has been apart from her husband and took care of everything at home on her own. She lives in Groton and is a retired dietician so she has time for the Town. She has been on the Conservation Commission, and is newly on the Groton Historical Society. She works well with people and wants to know what is going on in Groton. She understands not everyone gets along and has the same opinions but that causes dynamics which are important. Her position on the board is to look at anything that is brought forward and following the laws and making sure what is important for the Town is being done. If she wasn't sure she would bring it to NHMA or look to the other members of the board. Nancy feels she can be objective and the goal is to be transparent to Groton.

- *Do you feel you answered the question I asked Mark? Yes I feel that I did.*
- *When the Conservation Commission was created they wanted it so that no spouses are on same board. So as a voter how can I be assured that you and Mark will not share the same opinion and will have your own if you are both on the board? Mark and I do not agree on everything. We do have our own opinions and we will speak as individuals not as a couple.*

Chuck Stata

Chuck stated he is running because he likes to be involved, to contribute, and wants to point out that zoning is created by the Planning Board. The Planning Board creates a warrant or ballot to increase ordinances, etc. The Zoning Board makes exceptions to the rule, which is a variance. Right now Groton has zero in the ordinance that states what they cannot do. He is knowledgeable about Zoning and would like to continue.

- *I thought that you moved to Concord and you need to be a resident of Groton to be on the board. I thought this is why you resigned as Health Officer. To be a Health Officer you only have to be a resident of NH so that had nothing to do with it. I am a voting resident of Groton.*
- *How can the people in Town be confident that you are not easing your way out of Town? I am the president of Hardy Country Snowmobile Club and commit many days a week to this. I still have a residence here just rent a place in Concord as well.*

School Budget Committee – 3 year term

Gina Rescigno

Gina wanted to get involved in the community and feels she can budget and work with others. She is an alternate on the Conservation Commission and feels she would do a good job.

- *Historically NH has had a tough time with this. How would you handle keeping budget and education priority?* I have been looking into this, have spoken to Lou, and have been working with Sherry Nelson who said she will help me and I will do the best that I can.

School board – 3 year term

Jeff Levesque

Jeff said he is currently the School Board member and is up for election again. He is a NH native, has lived in the Lakes Region his entire life, been involved in the community for 25 years. He came here not for candidate's night but for School Board issues.

- **The Teacher's contract:** He would like to encourage everyone to support the teachers' contract. We are losing good teachers and cannot replace them because the neighboring districts pay more.
- **Hill students coming to our District:** He feels that having them coming in will bring revenue in and stop the declining numbers. This could help us for awhile and majority of School Board supports it.
- **Full Day Kindergarten issue:** Speaking personally and not representing the Board, he supports it but feels it is not the time to do it this coming year. The \$250,000 exceeds the tax cap which is why the School Board cannot approve it or pass opinion. He feels the problem with Kindergarten now is the timing, between the end of school year and start of new year is not enough time to prepare school, curriculum, etc. He also feels the \$250,000 is not enough money as previously research shows that it will cost \$500,000-750,000 to implement. If this warrant passes then we will only have \$250,000 to implement, which means the rest of the funds would have to come out of regular budget. If it doesn't pass then it means no full day Kindergarten in any town in the district which means they are prevented from having a full day Kindergarten class in places such as Danbury.

Questions for Jeff:

- *Can't they be making decisions all year and do the planning this year for the following year?* Jeff said yes and that is the plan. They have been mandated to move the 6th grade into the elementary school which costs to move materials, get new materials, etc. They were told that full day kindergarten will cost jobs in other areas such as day care, etc. He attempted to get article that a smaller amount of money was raised. A lot of issues are facing the district. They have put some money back in. He is running because no one else wants the job and he cares about the children, the community, etc.
- *It seems we need to choose b/t the lesser of two evils. What would Jeff encourage? Is it better to let the warrant fail or pass it and make due as best as we can with what we have?* Jeff said it is hard to answer because he supports full day Kindergarten and NH is the last state to do this. It is something he wants and we need but he would rather do something in the full effect.

- *We appreciate him wanting to do the job and endorsing full day Kindergarten but next year will still have the cap so where will they get the money?* Jeff mentioned that they have some revenue that if all comes in will offset it. Another option is charging for Kindergarten which is done elsewhere.

Reminders

- Next Tuesday February 24th is another candidate night so same people can come back and speak.
- Elections ballot is March 10th from 11:00am -7:00pm
- Town Meeting is March 14th at 9am.

Candidate's Night was closed and the Select Board moved forward with the remainder of their meeting.

EJ's Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Employment Verification Form

EJ is applying to have his Student Loans forgiven under the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program. In order to do so the Select Board needs to sign off on his Employment Verification form.

Kyle motioned to sign the PSLF Employment Verification Form, Bob 2nd, so voted.

Special Operations Unit (SOU) Training

Police Chief Joe Pivorotto explained that Sargent Thompson is part of the SOU and this Thursday February 19, 2015 from 8:00am to 4:00pm there will be Training at a house that is on the corner of Nadeau Lane and North Groton Road. He explained that there will be a large police presence in Groton but it is just Training and nothing for the residents to be concerned about.

Groton Historical Society - Election Day

The Groton Historical Society asked how the Board would feel about them running the food for the day of the elections. Christina had originally asked for volunteers for food and if people would still like to they can but it would benefit the Groton Historical Society. It will be donations only and they will not charge for the food. The Board is okay with this. Nancy Watson spoke up to explain Sherry Nelson or Nancy can be contacted if there are any questions or concerns.

Town Report

Christina explained that a draft of the Town Report has been submitted and we will have a proof soon. Sara will let the Board know when the proof is in to review. Last year we ordered 250 and there are none left, but there is no extra amount in the budget. The Board agreed to keep it at 250.

SELECT BOARD ITEMS:

2015 Warrant

Christina explained no changes were made from the Public Hearing. The Board needs to sign for final approval.

Bob motioned to sign the 2015 Warrant, Christina 2nd, so voted.

2015 MS-636

The MS-636 is the full report for the Town's budget including proposed Warrant Articles. Sara submitted the MS-636 online to the Department of Revenue (DRA) for review. This needs to be signed and posted per statute. Sara will post in house and online.

Christina motioned to sign the MS-636, Kyle 2nd, so voted.

Christina mentioned that Laura will finalize the ballot and this will be posted online as well.

Heating issue

The Library area, which is utilized as a meeting room for the Select Board was obviously not heating during the meeting tonight. Kyle will look at and if needed will have Sara call Dead River to come out and fix the issue.

Timbervest

Dave Daut from Timbervest called and wants Christina as the Chair of the Select Board to call him. Christina said she doesn't mind calling but wanted to see how everyone feels or if we should do this as a group. Kyle doesn't think one member of the Board should do this. Miles, as a member of KHPAC, thinks we should do a conference call or ask if he can come in and meet with the committee next Tuesday. Sara will update the Committee.

Kyle motioned to adjourn at 9:40pm, Christina 2nd, so voted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sara Smith
Administrative Assistant