

TOWN OF GROTON  
SELECT BOARD MEETING  
July 11, 2017

**In Attendance: Kyle Andrews, John Rescigno and Sara Smith (Administrative Assistant)**  
**Absent: Christina Goodwin**

**Audience Members Present**

John called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**MINUTE APPROVAL**

**John motioned to table the Work Session minutes of June 20, 2017 until the next meeting, Kyle 2nd, so voted.**

**John motioned to table the Non-Public Work Session minutes of June 20, 2017 until the next meeting, Kyle 2<sup>nd</sup>, so voted.**

**John motioned to approve the Work Session minutes of June 22, 2017, Kyle 2nd, so voted.**

**John motioned to approve the Non-Public Work Session minutes of June 22, 2017, Kyle 2<sup>nd</sup>, so voted.**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

*Thank you Letter-Nedeau Lane*

The collapsed building on Nedeau Lane was reported as resolved. The Select Board was supposed to review the location to confirm but wasn't able to, therefore, the letter will be placed on hold. **John motioned to table the thank you letter for Nedeau Lane until the next meeting, Kyle 2<sup>nd</sup>, so voted.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

*Roger Thompson- Pump Stations*

The Town had sent out letters with potential pump station locations to three different property owners which were the McPhersons on North Groton Road, the Pilchers on North Groton Road and Green Acre Woodlands on Halls Brook Road.

- Upon further review, it was agreed that the McPherson's property is not a good location as it would be hard to get a vehicle into the location with it so close to the road.
- Tim Pilcher responded to the Town that he would be happy to help so we can move forward with this location. Roger will contact Tim and set up a time to meet with him regarding this.
- Green Acre Woodlands never responded to the letter so we will reach back out to them. Sara will email Tracey and Roger will work with Robert Berti.

Roger asked about the money that Groton Wind gave for the dry hydrants. The Town confirmed with Groton Wind and New Hampshire Municipal Association (NHMA) regarding using the donation for pump stations and it was confirmed that that the intent was for fire related items.

### *Cut on North Groton Road*

Roger has concerns about the cut on North Groton Road. He feels there is a hazard there where they left what they cut laying around and there are dry leaves there. Roger will be contacting the Ranger and they will be going out there to check it out.

### *Junkyard Licenses*

James Rego and Stephen Bixby submitted junkyard license renewals for their junkyards. James Rego's is located on 1536 North Groton Road and Stephen Bixby's is located on 665 Halls Brook Road. The Town received the background check back and there was no record to report for James Rego. Stephen Bixby just had an old item that has been on there and has been okay in the past. Ken Knowlton reported that both are in compliance and that the licenses can be renewed. **John motioned to approve the junkyard license renewal for Rego and Bixby, Kyle 2<sup>nd</sup>, so voted.**

### *Building Permit – Map 6 Lot 41*

The owner submitted a building permit for an 18x26 garage on a poured slab. **John motioned to sign the building permit for Map 6 Lot 41, Kyle 2<sup>nd</sup>, so voted.**

### *Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) - Map 5 Lot 13 and Map 5 Lot 12*

The Town has received the signed MOU for Map 5 Lot 13 and Map 5 Lot 12 with regard to the bridge project. The other property located on Map 5 Lot 157 met with Mike Vignale over the weekend and will be sending in the MOU any time. **Kyle motioned to sign the MOU's for Map 5 Lot 13 and Map 5 Lot 12, John 2<sup>nd</sup>, so voted.**

### *Septic Plan- Map 1 Lot 54-3*

Bruce Barnard dropped off a Septic Plan and local approval for Map 1 Lot 54-3. **John motioned to sign the local approval for Map 1 Lot 54-3, Kyle 2<sup>nd</sup>, so voted.**

### *Kimball Hill Discussion*

Lou Lieto emailed requesting to be put on the agenda for a presentation/discussion on the Kimball Hill property as there are some new options.

Lou introduced Sally Manikian from The Conservation Fund. She contacted Lou because Timbervest put the Kimball Hill property up for bid. The Conservation Fund purchases land and then invests it to Towns, etc to conserve the land.

Sally explained that she got an email from the company that is putting the property up for bid. She googled it and read all the minutes from the Kimball Hill Committee meetings that were public. Everything that came up from those minutes, talking to Lou, talking to foresters, etc. gave her a crash course on the situation. She stated that it is an amazing piece of land that has a lot of recreation on it, a lot of public use, some extraordinary water, trees, etc. Bob Bradbury who is the Forester that manages the property, talked about the public access that goes over the road and he explained the public takes care of the land that is used. She feels this land is best suited for public use. She said that with all the time and effort that the Town has invested into trying to own it in the past she thought it would be a good idea to reach out to Lou who has been a part of the project in the past, along with Miles, to bring this forward to the Town.

Sally explained that what makes them different and why they received the invitation to bid is that they do have the ability to act quickly and purchase land in bulk. If the Town found this valuable they could put in a bid and hold it while the Town comes up with the funds. It would be very straight forward and would be dealing with someone who wants the land to go to the Town. If the Town doesn't have an interest then they wouldn't put in a bid but if the Town is interested then they would.

Miles asked Sally to talk about the non-binding letter of intent. Sally stated that what they are asking the Board to do to move forward with a bid is a non-binding letter of intent. The non-binding means there is no legal obligation if something falls through. The letter would state why the Town would want it, uses for the property (hunting, snowmobiling, hiking, etc), that the Town has discussed purchasing it in the past (the ways the Town has tried in the past), etc. Sally said 3% is the cost they would put into the final costs. She would put this in the letter as well. She is here today to see if the Town is interested because there is a small window to get this done before August 10<sup>th</sup>.

John confirmed that they would put in the bid and then the Town would pay back what the bid amount was plus 3%. Sally stated that if the bid was successful then they would come back and meet on this. She said that she tried to get Brian Hotz to come to the meeting. He works for the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests and has worked with the Town and the Kimball Hill Committee in the past. He is very hopeful that The Conservation Fund puts in a bid. She explained that there would be fund raising done by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests and other agencies. She said that knowing the Town cares is worth them taking the risk.

Lou said that a concern is that with it being a Town it could take a few years to come up with the funds and is this okay. Sally said that they understand that and would put that in the agreement to keep in mind carrying costs of property taxes, etc. John said the Town is interested in the land but doesn't have a clear path to the payment.

Lou asked what happens if we do the non-binding letter and then the Town cannot come up with the money. Sally mentioned that since they don't want to hold the land permanently, they would then put a conservation easement on it and sell it to someone else.

Kyle asked if they are trying to auction it off instead of trying to sell it since they have been trying to sell it for years. Sally mentioned that Timbervest was recently acquired by another company and they are liquidating assets. Sally doesn't know the exact reason why. John asked if it is a private auction or public. Sally stated is an invitation only auction.

Kyle mentioned we have been down this road many times. Sally said that she noticed that from the meeting minutes and discussions that she has had. She said when they put in a bid they are serious and they are a known entity to the sellers. They have bought properties from companies like Timbervest before and when they put in a bid they buy it.

John asked what the current value of the property is. Sally doesn't know the current value and didn't want to hire an appraiser until she knew if the Town was interested or not. If the Town is interested then they will hire an appraiser that she works with on a regular basis and this would be part of the bid. Due to the timeframe they might not know the amount until about August 4<sup>th</sup>.

John asked if the Select Board can do the letter of intent or if they would have to have a meeting with the Town. It was explained that the non-binding letter of intent can be done without a Town Meeting but if it goes further than that then would have to bring it back to the Town. Miles mentioned it will be like we did before when we were negotiating with Timbervest on behalf of the Town but would have to bring any agreement back to the Town.

Slim asked what is the difference between Sally's company, The Conservation Fund and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) as it appears they do the same thing. She explained that the TNC works with them a lot and they are amazing with data base science driven research. They are more of a land management company and

her company is like a conservation real estate company. They don't lobby and don't own or manage land. The same founder that founded her company was also one of the founding members of TNC.

Sally mentioned that they also work closely with the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forest so she would work with Brian Hotz and he would be a strong partner in this as well which helps since he had been working with the Town throughout the negotiations with Timbervest.

Elizabeth asked what the maximum number of years they would be willing to work with the Town. Sally said there is not set number but by three years there should be an idea if the Town will be able to proceed or not. They definitely wouldn't go as long as ten years but maybe as long as 5 years.

Kyle asked how they come up with the number to offer at bid time and if they would run this by the Town. She said she would go by the appraiser and use as much info to pull together the offer but she doesn't know how much they can tell the Town. She doesn't think they can give the number in the sealed bid. Lou said she should tell the Board it would be a justifiable and fair offer and she confirmed that it would be. Lou said obviously the Town would want to do it as cheaply as possible. Sally mentioned they would have to put in an offer that wouldn't be too low that they didn't take them serious but not too high that the Town couldn't afford it.

John stated that last time we were going to look into grants and he asked if the Town would still be able to in this case. She said yes. Lou asked if she would help sell off the easements and she said she would.

Slim asked what their most recent work is. She stated they have done a lot in Coos County. They are in the final phase of a multi-phase 24,000 acre project in Success Township. They are also working with Town of Gorham with similar project to this one to add to their Town Forest. Another project is with the White Mountain National Forest. Lou mentioned that their website [conservationfund.org](http://conservationfund.org) has a lot of good information on it.

Bubba asked if it is bought if it could be used to ride ATV's on it. Sally said this would be up to the Town. Miles confirmed that their easement wouldn't prevent it and Sally said it wouldn't and that there are a number of easements that allow ATV use.

John asked when they would need the letter by. Sally would like one by the end of next week. Sally can offer models to the Town as well. She would like to vote to consider drafting the letter to intent. John and Kyle said they would consider it but the Select Board Chair is not here and they would like to discuss it as a group.

Miles stated that she thought when they talked earlier that there is an opt out clause if we get the winning bid that would be within the 30 day period. Sally didn't know and didn't want to be quoted on that. She said there are ways to back out of a bid but if they got the winning bid she thinks they would move forward, they wouldn't want to back out because they would want to be known as a verifiable buyer. Miles wanted to confirm that if the Board thinks the cost is too high that her company came up with then the Town would be able to opt out. She did confirm this.

John stated the Town would love to own the property but it is a big financial decision the Town would have to take into consideration since there are other projects and costs that Town has to worry about. The property would be of no value to the Town if the Town could no longer support itself.

Sally has some examples of letters. Sally will send these to the Town within the next few days. Sara confirmed that she had the email address. Lou will send it to her so she has it. We would have to run the letter of intent by the Towns attorney.

Lou wanted to let everyone know that they don't have to go with the lowest bidder. They can pick anyone if the bid is close. They could be influenced by other reasons.

The Select Board thanked Sally for coming.

### **SELECT BOARD ITEMS:**

#### *Granite State Power Link*

John informed the Town that Granite State Power Link is planning on having an open house on July 19<sup>th</sup> from 6:30pm-8:00pm here at the Groton Town House. Sara explained they will be handing out postings and flyers in the near future.

#### *Building Permit – Map 1 Lot 51*

The owner submitted a building permit previously for a 1350 square foot workshop/garage with slab foundation. They had checked off that it will be heated or cooled but didn't supply the PUC approval. This was tabled at the last meeting until this information was supplied and they have since supplied the information.

**John motioned to sign the building permit for Map 1 Lot 51, Kyle 2<sup>nd</sup>, so voted.**

#### *PA-28 Inventory of taxable property forms for 2018*

Sara explained she received the form to fill out to request these forms as we do every year. She included last year's form and requested the same amount of forms for 2018. **John motioned to sign the PA-28 Inventory of taxable property forms for 2018, Kyle 2<sup>nd</sup>, so voted.**

#### *PA-16*

Sara explained that the Town received the PA-16 which is the Application for reimbursement to Towns and Cities in which federal and state forest land is situated. They receive this every year. Sara filled it out with the new Valuations from Avitar and included last year's form to be compared. **John motioned to sign the PA-16, Kyle 2<sup>nd</sup>, so voted.**

### **QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:**

#### *Dehumidifier*

Elizabeth mentioned that the dehumidifier in the basement isn't working. Sara will look into getting a new one.

#### *Driveway question*

Ann asked if someone has a driveway permit on the state road, but the driveway was extended do they need a new permit. It was explained that would be a question for the state.

#### *Atwell Orange Brook Bridge update*

Bubba asked for an update about the Atwell Orange Brook Bridge. Sara explained that nothing could be done until the Memorandum of Understandings were sent back and signed. We have now received two out of the three back and once all three are back they will be able to move forward.

#### *Building Project Update*

Bubba asked for an update regarding the Public Works building project. It was explained that the Select Board chose a company but is not announcing which one until after they meet with them. They are scheduled to meet with them on July 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm. Sara asked the Select Board if they agree that the Building Committee should attend. It was agreed. There were a few members of the committee in attendance so they were informed but Sara will let the rest of the committee know.

**Having no other business to conduct, John motioned to adjourn at 7:52pm, Kyle 2<sup>nd</sup>, so voted.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Sara Smith  
Administrative Assistant