

TOWN OF GROTON  
SELECT BOARD MEETING  
March 6, 2018

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

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

**MINUTE APPROVAL**

**John motioned to approve the Work Session minutes of February 20, 2018 as written, Kyle 2nd, so voted. Christina abstained.**

**John motioned to approve the Non-Public Work Session minutes of February 20, 2018 as written, Kyle 2nd, so voted. Christina abstained.**

**John motioned to approve the Select Board Meeting minutes of February 20, 2018 as written, Kyle 2nd, so voted. Christina abstained.**

**John motioned to approve the Work Session minutes of February 27, 2018 as written, Kyle 2nd, so voted. Christina abstained.**

**John motioned to approve the Non-Public Work Session minutes of February 27, 2018 as written, Kyle 2nd, so voted. Christina abstained.**

**CANDIDATE NIGHT:**

Christina explained that each candidate has the opportunity to speak if they wish and answer any questions that may come from the public.

- Selectman for 3 years: John Rescigno. John has enjoyed his last three years and asks for people to vote for him again.
- Town Clerk for 3 years: Ruth Millett. Ruth explained that she had no government experience when she ran the first time, but she really likes the work. She was travelling over an hour before and is enjoying not having to travel. She has enjoyed getting to know the people in Town and that she works with. For the future, there are a lot of changes coming with elections and in the way we process payments. The entire state and DMV did a big upgrade, Avitar, Clerk Works, and everyone seems to be doing upgrades. She is trying to prepare herself for that. It has been a tough year with a lot of losses in Town but the spirit of everyone in the Town is great and she hopes that everyone elects her again.
- Trustee of the Trust Funds for 3 years: Gina Rescigno. She was not in attendance.
- Trustee of the Trust Funds for 1 year: This is an open position.
- Town Auditor for 1 year: Otto Jespersen. He was not in attendance.
- Supervisor of the Checklist for 6 years: This is an open position.
- Planning Board for 3 years: Forest "Ray" Blake and David Labar. They were not in attendance.
- Planning Board for 1 year: This is an open position.
- Zoning Board for 3 years: This is an open position.
- Cemetery Trustee for 3 years: Elizabeth Jespersen. Elizabeth said it has been a pleasure the last three years. They have accomplished a lot and they have done a lot of clean up and have new markers and flags to put up. The biggest accomplishment was to get River Road Cemetery expanded. She is looking forward to being a part of it. Sherry Nelson asked Elizabeth if she remembers the name of the annex. Elizabeth said she has it written down. They wanted to have a sign made. Sara will see if we have the agreement for the annex on file to get the name and what the agreement was.
- Cemetery Trustee for 2 years: This is an open position.

- Library Trustee for 3 years: Elizabeth Jespersen. Elizabeth looks forward to continuing to be a Trustee. Even though we don't have a library here, they have had an extremely successful year contracting with the Hebron Library and they have been wonderful to work with. They are allowed to participate in their meetings and are on the agenda every month. They want to continue the contract again which is in a warrant article. When the library was here there were only a couple people a year using the library but now there is an average of 15 families, of 2-5 people per family, using the library in Hebron. They want to continue to get the Town the library services they want and deserve.
- Library Trustee for 1 year: This is an open position. Ruth Gaffey would like to be a write-in for this. She is a retired professional librarian and is a secretary on the friends of the Hebron Library. Her last position as a librarian was a children's librarian and this year they are going to start working on a nice place for children. She has written successful grants for the library in Connecticut.

If anyone is interested in in any open position they can put sign outs the day of the election requesting to be a write-in. Christina reminded the townspeople that there were a lot of open spots and if you know of anyone interested please encourage them run.

#### School ballot:

- School Board, vote for not more than one from each town:
  - Bristol for two years: Heidi Milbrand, Erin Camire, and John Larsen are the candidates.
  - Danbury for three years: Sharon Klapyk
  - Groton for three years: Jeff Levesque. Slim Spafford reported that Archie Auger, a resident of the Town of Bristol, explained that the School Board messed up. He also sent the Select Board a letter and he believes the default budget has \$712,300 in it that should not be there. He said that on page 21 of the handout under the column labeled 2019 with a total of \$965,493 the only project allowable is the first listed, "Honeywell Contract" all others are invalid because they are not in the previous budget. These funds are requested in the regular budget which is fine but they cannot be in both budgets because if the regular budget is defeated the default comes into play and the \$712,300 will be in. It is Archie's view that this process does not give the voter any choice in the matter of the above expense. Slim said that Jeff is the chair of the School Board and won't have a meeting to address this issue which he thinks there should be. Slim was upset when he heard all of this he thought about running against Jeff. Slim said we can write him in if we want to.
  - Hebron for three years: This is an open position
- Budget Committee, vote for not more than one from each town:
  - Danbury for three years: Ruby Hill
  - Groton for three years: This is an open position. If anyone is interested please be a write in.
  - Hebron for three years: Donald Franklin
- District Moderator, vote for not more than one:
  - Edward "Ned" Gordon

There are also three articles on the ballot to vote for.

- Article 2: Expendable Trust Fund: Building Maintenance
- Article 3: Transfer of Hebron Village School Property.
- Article 4: Operating Budget. If you vote yes the budget totals \$23,813,595.00. If you vote no it will go to the default budget of \$23,535,833.00.

John has been in touch with the Superintendent, Stacy Buckley, about the budget and Stacy is supposed to be getting back to him. Christina said John can also reach out to Mike Limanni.

Christina explained last year there was \$800,000.00 that was voted in at the deliberative session to fix the High School building's roof. They left the \$800,000.00 in their default budget which ended up inflating the budget as Slim mentioned earlier in the meeting. When they had the deliberative session this year they said they level funded which technically they didn't because they added in the teachers' contract money for last year and this year and they left the roof money in there. So now there are questions if what was done for the default budget is legal. It was asked if the Select Board recommends the Town votes for it or not. It was explained that the Select Board cannot tell anyone how to vote. An audience member mentioned that there is an article and that article recommends that you vote for the default budget so they can proceed.

Christina thanked the candidates for coming out.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### *2017 Annual Town Report*

The Select Board informed the Town that the 2017 Annual Town Reports are available to be picked up at the Town Offices or the Transfer Station. This year's Town Report was dedicated to Bea Fligg. There was a comment about how the cover photo is beautiful but there wasn't a Groton in 1761 as we were still part of Cockermonth and became Groton in 1796. It was explained the picture is from Al Paladino's home in Groton.

### **SELECT BOARD ITEMS:**

#### *Elections/Town Meeting*

The Select Board asked Tony if he needed anything before elections or Town Meeting. He just needs to get in on Monday to set up. Sara will be here on Monday until about 5:15 pm. Elizabeth said she thinks she is all set for food for the Town Meeting on March 17 at 9:00am. Elizabeth will also run the coffee as she always does. The Select Board will see everyone at the elections on March 13 with voting from 11:00 am to 7:00 pm and then at Town Meeting on March 17 at 9:00am.

#### *Road Bans*

The roads have been posted as of February 26. The State and Town roads are posted with weight restrictions until further notice. Also, because of the bans the Transfer Station will not be taking construction debris until the road postings are lifted.

#### *Budget Public Hearing Updates*

Public hearing on the budget was February 6. The Select Board had a deliberative session during that meeting but most people left when the budget presentation was completed. There were two changes that were made that the Select Board wanted to update the public:

- The Town Clerk/Tax Collector salary line was revisited since there was no increase submitted and the concern was raised by the public during the hearing. The Select Board agrees she should get an increase and gave her \$0.50/hr., which will be an additional \$800.00 per year. This increased the Town Clerk/Tax Collector salary line to \$28,848, and increased the overall total for the Election/Registration budget to \$56,107.
- The Police Chief wages were revisited after a concern was raised that budget increase reflected a 5% increase and it should only be 3%. A 3% increase would be \$1,691.25, which brought the wages to \$58,066.25 per year, so the budget line was changed to \$58,067 and decreased the overall Police budget to \$122,065.

A few other things that the Select Board wanted to clarify from the meeting:

- There was a comment that the Administrative Assistant wages were 3.7% but it was recalculated and it was only 3%. There was no change to that number.

- There were some concerns about money budgeted for different organizations and the Board wanted to remind the public that if you feel strongly about something in the budget you can put in an amendment to the budget for the moderator to read. Although specific line changes are advisory and at the Board's discretion to where the money is removed, the Board would take those concerns into consideration.

Slim asked about the dues we pay to North County Council. He feels that they haven't helped the Town lately and that they are more beneficial as far as funding and such for Towns more North. Sara explained that the Town hadn't used them as much as they should the last few years and that was because Sara was not aware that they were a resource and what they could be used for so she reached out to them and got a big list of what they can be used for. Since then Sara has reached out to them for some grant ideas and other ideas for the Town. Michelle from North Country Council came out and met with Sara and helped her with some grant paperwork, is looking into grant options and is setting the Town up with a road surface management study to help the Town put a maintenance plan in order to see what work needs to be done and prioritize the work. She was really quick to set up the appointment and came out soon thereafter.

#### *Old Home Day*

The Committee is asking the Town to consider moving Old Home Day from the third Saturday to the first Saturday or the fourth Saturday. The first Saturday which is August 4 would work best so it was agreed August 4 will be Groton's Old Home Day. If anyone is interested in serving on the Committee please let the Town know.

#### **DEPARTMENT ITEMS:**

##### *Police Department Updates*

- Chief EJ Thompson said there is a big storm coming tomorrow into Thursday. The Newfound Area School District has already cancelled after school programs for Wednesday but that is all at this time.
- EJ also warned that Belknap County Sheriff's Department is being used for a scam. It is a phone call saying there is a warrant for your arrest but you can settle the payment over the phone. If the sheriff has a warrant for you they are not going to call you, they will come to your house.

##### *Highway Department Updates*

- Bubba said there is not a lot that can be done on the side roads with the mud right now so he asked for everyone's patience. Once they can work on them they will.
- The dump has been cleaned up and they have a dumpster there from Gilpatric's for metal.
- The fuel cell has been placed into a container and is set up at the garage, which will eliminate any possible future fuel spills. There is also a roof over it to help keep the water out.
- Bubba warned everyone to be careful in the snow tomorrow and Thursday.

#### **COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

##### *Groton Historical Society*

Slim mentioned that the Groton Historical Society will be having a ceremony on Memorial Day again. There will be more information to follow as it gets closer.

#### **QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:**

##### *Transfer Station*

Elizabeth said that she heard the Transfer Station was closing early tomorrow due to the weather. Richard told her to be there before 4:00 pm. The Select Board was not aware of this. It is a decision for Norm to make but

he would let the Select Board know if it was the case.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Sara Smith  
Administrative Assistant