

TOWN OF GROTON
SELECT BOARD MEETING
December 17, 2019

In Attendance: John Rescigno, Tony Albert and Sara Smith (Administrative Assistant)

Absent: Ron Madan

Audience Members Present

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

MINUTE APPROVAL

John motioned to approve the Work Session Meeting minutes of December 3, 2019 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted.

John motioned to approve the Select Board Meeting minutes of December 3, 2019 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted.

NEW BUSINESS:

Atwell/Orange Brook- Lee McClain

Lee McClain and Mike Karkheck came in to talk to the Select Board about their concerns with Atwell/Orange Brook. Lee spoke first and said he wanted to find out what is being done with the brook. He said he walked it with John, he has walked by himself and there are many concerns with this. Lee also mentioned that there was a bridge put there by the snowmobile club and he doesn't know if they had a permit to do this. Mike and Lee said that with this last rain storm we had they were concerned again as the river was roaring again and they could hear the rocks rolling. The river is filling in. The swimming hole has filled it. Now the river has no place to go. Lee feels if we have a heavy snow or another storm, they will lose everything. They feel the Town hasn't done anything and neither has the state. Mike also asked why Hardy Country Snowmobile Club is putting in a bridge and dredging. The Select Board explained they aren't aware of this and doesn't have anything to do with what the Snowmobile club has done. We can check to see if the state has any permits. Mike said they have talked to the Governor and he is concerned. Mike said that with everything he went through he didn't get any help from the Town.

John said that the Governor is a yes man and will yes him to his face but then not do anything to help. When we were hit with the July 2019 storm John met with the Governor who gave John his card with this number. John call him many times and didn't receive calls back. It wasn't until John has meetings with Homeland Security and other departments of the state and mentioned this, that the Governor reached out. John mentioned that he got pushed along and it led to nowhere. Mike said that John shouldn't make that comment since the Governor has done more than the Town. The town didn't help him with his home or anything when his house was ruined. John explained that we reached out to many departments requesting something be done about the river. Sara mentioned that her and Bubba made phone calls and sent letters to the Army Corp of Engineers, the State and Fish and Game who owns property there to see what could be done. In these letters we stressed that we have had residents that have been stranded in their homes. We have had residents experience damage to their homes and properties. The Town has lost parts of our roads and we have experienced damage to Town equipment and Town buildings, along with many other damages. We stressed that luckily, we have not experienced any major injuries or deaths at this point but we are afraid that there is a chance that this will happen as the storm damage continues to get worse each time as it has been.

No one responded to these letters until Sara and Bubba contacted Senator Guida's office and then the Senator set up a meeting. On October 22, 2019 Sara, Bubba, John and Tony met with Rene Pelletier and Craig Rennie from DES, Rick Kristoff from Army Corps of Engineers, Glenn Normandeau from Fish and Game and Senator Guida. They walked parts of Atwell/Orange Brook and asked what could be done. Every Department agreed something should be done but they couldn't do it themselves as they don't have manpower or money to do so. All they offered us with either land access through Fish and Game's land to do the work or permitting to do the work. It kept getting pushed back on the town who doesn't own this land and who also doesn't have the manpower or the money. John and Tony mentioned that DES said that the debris in the spots we pointed out was good by slowing the water down. John stressed that the town didn't agree and thinks it will cause more damage when it lets through. The Town asked if they can make Fish and Game clean it out since it is their property but they were told they can suggest it but cannot make them do it. Another recommendation they provided was digging ponds and then keep cleaning them so the water can run there. Tony explained again that all we were offered was permits but not help or money and we don't have the funding for it. Mike said this isn't being addressed. The Select Board stated that they are trying. Tony mentioned that there was some work done in the river and they did what they needed to in the time of the emergency to stop the water from causing more damage. Tony explained that this work does cost money and the town doesn't have money. Any money we had, we had to put the money into the roads.

Mike Ethier stated that we should reach out to NLRA and explain what is happening. The Select Board said we will try reaching out to them. Tony mentioned every time it rains the clay is coming down even if it's not hard rain. The Select Board is aware of the issues and have been asking for something to be done. Mike Karkheck said there was a brook by his house that is all plugged up and is ponding. Tony and John said that they understand that they are frustrated and explained that they have tried and will try again. John said that he would reach out to Chris again. Mike K said he probably shouldn't because he will tell Chris what John thinks of him. John said that if they want to work together, they can get more done so he will reach out to Chris and they should continue to. John and Tony stressed that it's not that there is no concern for our residents because there is and we have fought for our residents and have reached out to everyone that we can there just hasn't been any help or results. Tony mentioned that Army Corps used to have funding for this which is why we reached out to them but they haven't had any funding for years.

Lee, Mike K and Mike E all stood before the Select Board as residents who have been affected by the floods and who have experienced loss or damages due to it. They are concerned that if we don't do anything someone is going to lose their lives. The Select Board said that is what we are concerned about and that is exactly what we have said in the letters and in the meetings.

Mike K mentioned that Casey Kuplin was out there working in the water and they are not sure what was done won't cause more damage. John mentioned that he asked the Engineer that was there from DES if this work was done properly and he said that it was. Tony mentioned that they did what they had to do to get the water diverted to stop the issue. Tony mentioned again that the Select Board has been fighting for this and that all the rivers need to be dredged.

Mike K said he called the lawyer about the loggers there and his concerns with that. They have also been talking to Dave Vaillancourt, who has been very helpful, and Governor Sununu. The Select Board asked what the Governor said he would do for them. Sara said she has been in contact, the soonest was Monday, with an assistant to the Governor to discuss the concerns with the rivers and brooks. She mentioned that letters that the Town has sent and the concerns not just for the Town roads but also for our residents. Sara gave the date of the meeting in October to the assistant along with the names of everyone in attendance and explained that no one offered help, only permitting or access. She took down a lot of information and said she would pass it on to the Governor. She did say the Governor didn't promise he would do anything, just that he would look into it. Sara told her something needs to be done as each storm seems to be getting worse.

The residents said they will be doing more complaining and will not stop. The Select Board said that they have to keep complaining and the Select Board will contact them as well. Mike K said that if something doesn't get done by then he will get an excavator and do it himself and then he will deal with the State after if he has to.

Tony said that there is no money in any of the departments that they reached out to and the Town doesn't have money. Mike K said that they found money for Bills road. John explained that the Town didn't give Bill money, it was the state from Bill calling the governor. It was explained that they didn't give him money but since the state abuts Orange Road, they are allowed to do maintenance to the road and they reached out to the Select Board to let them know what they were planning to do. This is only because they own land that abuts the class VI Road and they also use this road.

The residents explained they just wanted to bring these concerns and the concerns about the Hardy Country Snowmobile Club putting in a bridge to the Town's attention and this needs to stop if it can. There are three bridges that they worked on including one on Province Road where they left material there and in the river. Tony explained the snowmobile clubs get all funding and permits from DRED and Tony told them to call DRED. He explained that nothing goes through the Town for this, it is all through the snowmobile club, the land owner and DRED. Tony and John explained that Sara will contact DRED to see about the work done on Spruce Ridge Trail from snowmobile trail, the three bridges that are being put in to make sure the state is aware and did the permitting and explain we have some concerns but the Select Board's hands are tied. The residents said that the work is causing the water to run from Spruce Ridge into Orange Brook.

Mike K said the Town needed to be aware. John and Tony explained that they are aware now and we will reach out to see what we can find out. The Select Board said the towns hands are tied but they won't stop trying we just don't have the money to do it ourselves. The Select Board thanked Lee, Mike K and Mike E for coming out and bringing these concerns to their attention.

Land Use Change Tax, Map 6 Lot 63-10

The Select Board received recommendations from Avitar on a land use change tax that was submitted for Map 6 Lot 63-10. This 2.86 parcel was assessed entirely in current use but as a result of a sale of this property, the property is no longer contiguous with other property with significant acreage to qualify to remain in current use. The estimated market value is \$23,000.00 which results in a land use change tax of \$2,300.00. **John motioned to sign the land use change tax for Map 6 Lot 63-10, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Twin Rivers Office Machines 2020 agreement

The Select Board received the contract from Twin Rivers Office Machines, Inc covering 1/1/20-12/31/20. This contract covers the same details as last year and is for the same amount. **John motioned to sign the Twin Rivers Office Machines, Inc contract, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Junkyard License Renewal- 155 Bailey Hill Road

George Kirk at 155 Bailey Hill Road submitted a junkyard license renewal for his junkyard. We received the background check with no records to report. Ken Knowlton reported that he is in compliance and that the license can be renewed. **John motioned to approve the junkyard license renewals for 155 Bailey Hill Road, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Intent to Cut- Map 2 Lot 27

Kevin Lemire with FORECO submitted an Intent to Cut for Green Acre Woodland's property on Map 2 Lot 27, on Old Rumney Road for a 35-acre cut. No timber tax bond is required and all information is correct. **John motioned to sign the Intent of Cut for Map 2 Lot 27, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Intent to Cut- Map 10 Lot 31

Charlie Coursey submitted an Intent to Cut for Lois Smith's property on Map 10 Lot 31, on Halls Brook Road for a 50-acre cut. No timber tax bond is required and all information is correct. **John motioned to sign the Intent of Cut for Map 10 Lot 31, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

MS-60A

Each year the Town submits an MS-60A after the MS-60W has been submitted. These are forms pertaining to the local town audit completed by the locally elected auditor. **John motioned to sign the MS-60A, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

SELECT BOARD ITEMS:

Sand Policy

It has always been known at the Highway Department that each residence is allowed to take three 5-gallon buckets (15 shovels full) of sand to be used at their residence in Groton only. It was agreed this was per storm. Also, use of Town sand for commercial sanding of driveways, for use in mechanical sanders, or for residence outside of the Town of Groton is not allowed. There are some old policies on this but the Select Board wanted to update the policy with current signatures. **John motioned to sign the updated sand policy, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Town Clerk/Tax Collector Office Hour Changes

Ruth sent the Select Board an email which stated that effective of January 1st, 2020 she would like the Town Clerk Office hours to be Monday 9am to 4pm, Tuesday 12pm to 7pm, Wednesday 9am to 4pm, and Thursday 9am to 4pm. The Clerk's Office will be closed Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The Select Board is good with the hours. **John motioned to approve the Town Clerk/Tax Collector office hour changes effective January 1, 2020, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Ruth will post it in her column and at her office and Sara can put it online and in the town report.

DEPARTMENT ITEMS:

Highway Department

Bubba went over the following items regarding the Highway Department:

- They have been busy plowing and taking care of the roads.
- The sand for the residents has been moved by the old library. There are signs pointing out that this is the sand the residents should take from.

Police Department

Chief Bagan explained that there is not much going on yet as he is still getting acclimated but the cruiser should be here in a few weeks which will allow him to get out and patrol.

COMMITTEE UPDATES:

Road Committee

Bubba mentioned that the next Road Committee Meeting will be Tuesday January 14, 2020 at 6:00pm.

Building Committee

Bubba mentioned that the next Building Committee Meeting will be Thursday January 16, 2020 at 6:00pm.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

There were no questions or comments.

Having no other business to conduct, John motioned to adjourn at 7:55pm, Tony 2nd, so voted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sara Smith
Administrative Assistant