

Town of Groton  
Select Board Work Session Minutes  
November 17, 2020

**In attendance: John Rescigno, Tony Albert, Ron Madan and Sara Smith (Administrative Assistant - AA)**

**John called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.**

***Budget Meetings***

Since all first budget meetings have been completed, Sara put together the proposed budget. The few areas that were decided to change were as follows:

- Under other general government: decrease the grants/engineering line to \$5,000.00 since we do not see any large projects coming up
- Under Sanitation Monitoring: decrease the landfill monitoring to \$5,000.00 since we do not think there will be the extra testing being done.
- Under Health: it was agreed at the last meeting to decrease the water testing to \$100.00.

It was agreed that once the Select Board looks over warrant articles and has the 2020 actual information they can decide if more changes will be needed.

***Tax Rate***

Now that the DRA has set the tax rate and the Select Board have signed the warrant, Ruth will start working on the tax bills. Sara asked the Select Board if they would like to bring the tax rate up tonight under Select Board items and they agreed. In the past when the tax rate has increased, the Select Board puts out a letter explaining why. Sara drafted a letter. The Select Board reviewed the letter and think we should put this online and put this out at the offices. Sara caught a typo that she will correct and then will put this online and make copies.

***M.E. Latulippe Bill***

Sara explained that M.E. Latulippe submitted a bill for \$280,982.54. We do not have the funds right now to pay this entire bill so Sara reached out to Michelle, our contact for the grant at North Country Council (NCC) to see what we can do. She then reached out to NBRC who said that if the Town submits the invoice and proof that we made payment for our half of the bill for the \$140,491.27, they will send the other half which is also \$140,491.27. This payment will be made from NBRC to the Town and then we can cut the check to M.E. Latulippe. Usually we have to pay it all and then they reimburse us for half but they were willing to do it this way due to cash flow issues. So, per our emails with NCC and NBRC and our phone discussion with NCC, Sara submitted the invoice and proof of our payment today so we can request their payment asap, which usually takes 10-14 days. Sara did let M.E. Latulippe know about this and they understood. They should be paid it all within the 30 days from when we received the invoice from them.

We know other bills will be coming in for this project and the rest of the culvert project as well. Sara and Bubba will be meeting with FEMA to see where our money is that we are owed and explain the urgency of this. We will also be getting in tax money soon and Sara sent Groton Wind another invoice.

***USDA Truck Grant money***

Sara had emailed Mark at USDA to see if we can submit a request for the grant funds now or if we have to wait for everything to be paid for since funds are tight right now until tax bills start coming in. Right now, everything is paid for except for the tires, which will be paid for next week, and the sander which will be a few weeks. Mark responded with that he will leave that decision up to us. Their preference is to only order funds once, but

if cash flow won't allow for this to happen, they can certainly order what you have submitted thus far, or wait for the rest. Sara asked the Select Board what they think she should do. The Select Board agreed to wait another week to see if we can get the tire invoice and sander invoice and then submit the reimbursement request so that we can follow USDA's preference to order funds once.

### ***Winter Plowing***

John asked for this to be put on the agenda because there are three properties that continue to violate the right of way letters that we sent out. With winter coming this is a concern for plowing and he wants to make sure there are ways to enforce this. Sara brought the parking ordinance and the winter letter that we put on cars if they are parked in the way of plowing for the Select Board to review. The Town Parking Ordinance states under Parking Restrictions, section D: *"Snow Removal: No vehicle shall be parked on any street maintained by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation or the Town of Groton in such a manner so as to impede snow removal. No person shall stop or cause to be stopped, or park any vehicle, so as to impede or interfere with the proper snow clearing operations of the NH DOT or Town, when snow removal operations are in effect."*

The parking ordinance also states under towing that all vehicles found in violation of this ordinance may be removed (towed) at the discretion of the Police Department and costs of such removal and subsequent storage of removed vehicles shall be at the expense of the owner of the vehicle. It also states under fines that any violation listed in parking restrictions D will result in a fine of \$50.00.

The winter reminders reference section D of the parking ordinance and states *"As you are aware, snow removal operations are currently in effect and your vehicle is found in violation of this ordinance and will be removed (towed) if it is not moved immediately. Any costs of such removal and subsequent storage of removed vehicles shall be at the expense of the owner of the vehicle."*

The Select Board agreed that the parking ordinance covers vehicles being towed or given parking tickets of \$50.00 for vehicles parked in a manner that impedes or interferes with snow removal.

The other concern is other equipment, items, wood that will be in the way. Since the snow removal section of the ordinance states *"No person shall stop or cause to be stopped, or park any vehicle, so as to impede or interfere with the proper snow clearing operations of the NH DOT or Town"*, the part that states *"no person shall stop or cause to be stopped"* would cover someone leaving equipment or other items in the way that would impede or interfere with snow removal.

The Select Board asked Sara to make another winter reminder to cover items in the right of way that are interfering with plowing. The Select Board said that Bubba will hand these out and if it doesn't improve, he will need to let the Police Chief know.

### ***Highway Department concerns***

At the last meeting Bubba asked the Select Board to consider raises or other options for the Highway Department for this time of year. There have been discussions with Towns and Cities State wide about how hard it is to keep municipal highway department employees, especially for plowing, as they can go work for other places making more than what the Towns can pay. Bubba would like to do something for the guys if possible, to show them they are appreciated so they won't look elsewhere to work. They work very hard, come in whenever they are needed and are dedicated to the Town. It is hard to find help like this.

The Select Board agrees that they are a benefit to the Town and are very hard workers. The Select Board agreed that they deserve the raises but those should wait until March when the evaluations are done like all employees. It was decided that if they get called out, they should be paid for a minimum of three hours. It was

also agreed that Bubba should look at an on-call schedule as discussed last year and then the Select Board and Bubba can look into pay while on call.

***Holiday Luncheon date***

The last few years the Town has done a Holiday Luncheon for the employees. Last year the Holiday Luncheon was on Friday, December 13<sup>th</sup>. It was agreed that due to COVID19 it would be better to cancel it this year. Sara will send something explaining that this is cancelled but the Select Board wishes everyone Happy Holidays and appreciates all they do.

***Thanksgiving Baskets***

Sara explained that we haven't had any residents reach out with donations of turkeys this year like we have in the past but we have had a few companies reach out to us, like the Lions Club. Ruth is the one that usually gets contacted about this so Sara gave her the list of people that we have given baskets to in the past for when these companies reach out. Sara mentioned that she also posted something in town, on the website and on the Facebook page that the Plymouth Area Community Closet is doing grocery cards this year instead of food baskets due to the pandemic. She posted the information for anyone interested in it.

***Evaluation Memo went out***

Sara explained that she handed out the evaluation memos and made sure the deadlines and requirements were clear. She also put these in the Selectmen's folders.

***USDA building grant update***

Sara mentioned that she emailed USDA to follow up on the email she sent two weeks ago to find out about the obligation the funds for the building grant. Mark from USDA emailed back today and said that the request to obligate is being reviewed by the State Office. Once permission has been granted, Mark will send the obligation paperwork to the Town. He should be able to get back to us within a week or two.

**Having no other business to conduct, John motioned to adjourn at 6:45pm, Ron 2nd, so voted.**

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Smith  
Administrative Assistant