

TOWN OF GROTON
SELECT BOARD MEETING
December 1, 2020

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

Audience Members Present

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

MINUTE APPROVAL

John motioned to approve the Work Session Meeting minutes of November 17, 2020 as written, Ron 2nd, so voted.

John motioned to approve the Select Board Meeting minutes of November 17, 2020 as written, Ron 2nd, so voted.

NEW BUSINESS:

HealthTrust Medical Coverage agreement for 2021

HealthTrust sent the yearly agreement for the Health Insurance for 2021. The medical rates increased 6.8%. The dental rates stayed the same. The short-term disability increased 4.0%. The long-term disability stayed the same. The life coverage stayed the same. **John motioned to sign the HealthTrust Medical Coverage agreement for 2021, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Avitar 2021 Terra Mapping Agreement

Avitar sent in the Terra Mapping Services Agreement. This is sent in yearly. The Town does the 1 year for \$1,660.00 and it did increase this year by \$150.00 but covers everything it did in the past. **John motioned to sign the 2021 Avitar Terra Mapping Services Agreement, Ron 2nd, so voted.**

Miles- Alexandria Perambulation

Miles asked to meet with the Select Board. He is looking to set the record straight for what was done and what wasn't done with the Groton/Alexandria perambulation. It was awarded to Alan Barnard back in 2013. Miles had some suspicions as to what actually took place. Miles has done other perambulations and in 2018 we had early snow which kept him from doing perambulations which he ended up doing last year. This year he was able to walk the Alexandria line on November 13th. He doesn't claim to be a surveyor just a navigator. When he walked the line, he used a compass and his hand-held GPS. He is not claiming that he stayed exactly on the line but he was pretty close. It is about 2-2.2 mile and he was about 100 feet off. He came across some old draper blazings which are yellow. When they did the Hebron/Groton line they found some of those as well and having talked with Bob Berti, they used to use lead paint so they lasted longer. On an old draper line, you usually just see the outline and no paint in the middle on the trees. When you are walking in the woods like that, it is easy to lose the line and with this line there isn't many blazings to begin with but there were some. One of things he had issues with is that Alan performed the walking of the line on 11/3/2015. In his report he dated pictures he took of the monuments at both ends. What jumped out at Miles when he read the report is that Alan talks in language about perambulation records that have been done historically by other selectmen or people like Miles. It lacked any reference to an actual survey. Miles wanted to review the estimate that has services to be provided which at the top states "line to be surveyed and marked will be between Groton, Alexandria on the common line with Hebron thence running northwesterly approximately 12,000' or 2 ¼ miles to the corner of Alexandria and Orange

on the Groton line. Said line crosses Hardy Country Road and Spruce Ridge Road. It says services to be provided if estimate is accepted:

- 1) Proper research will be conducted at the Grafton County Registry of Deeds, The Town of Groton Town Office, The Town of Alexandria Town office and any state resources to ensure the record information in accordance with the Town line.
- 2) Total station traverse running from corner to corner to determine the direction this would be tied to the same coordinate system as used for the Plymouth/Groton line using survey grade GPS for the determination.
- 3) Blaze and paint the entire line as good as can be done as a lot of the areas has been cut over. Miles stated that when he did the perambulation somewhere between 70-80% is mature forest. There were some areas where there have been cuts and when the new growth returns it is hard to get through it sometimes but its not to say you can't get through it. Where they do these cuts, it is not clear cuts but there are spaces between them so he feels the blazing could still be done.
- 4) Setting of monuments or markers at each of the road crossings to aid in easier recovery of the line in the future. Miles said that in his opinion there is no indication that this was done. In order to do this and do it properly you have to formally survey the line and put the markers on the exact point on the line where they belong.
- 5) Delivering copies of the survey plat of the findings on the ground along with a description of all monuments found or set. Miles said this wasn't done either because he never did a formal survey.
- 6) A report of findings/research to support the plat information including pictures of the monuments and the areas of interest along the line. Miles said he did take pictures but there is no research that supports the plat information because he didn't do a formal survey.

John asked if Miles is thinking this wasn't done. Miles said it is clear that a survey wasn't done and a formal survey was supposed to be done which is why the Town hired him as a surveyor to do it. It was also listed that there was a meeting where the Alexandria Board of Selectmen were participating, he believes it had to do with the EDP proposal to put a wind farm out there, the Alexandria Board of Selectmen wanted a formal survey as well because there were questions of issues with this at those meetings. Sara did some searching through old emails and minutes and couldn't find anywhere that the Board of Selectmen agreed to forego a formal survey, there was no record of a vote by the Selectmen or anything else stating this. It appears he took it upon himself at some point to not do the formal survey and just do a walking perambulation instead.

If you look in his perambulation all you are going to find is reference and copies of a 1946-1947 formal survey that was done. Then he came before the board on April 4, 2016 submits the report indicating that the only thing that was left to be done was to blaze the line, which is taking a hatchet to make marks on the tree and paint that area. Since then it was excuse, after excuse, after excuse, as to why he didn't get it done. Miles reached out and Sara periodically to check on this and Sara would reach out to Alan, which was multiple times which went through 2017 and 2018. Then Sara sent him an email stating that the Board of Selectmen stated this needs to be done by June 30th. Alans response to that was that it would be done and invoiced by June 30th. Then on June 27th he sends another email stating that it's not worth the time and effort to do it because the area had been too heavily cut. Miles said he know how cut that area was when he walked the line on November 3, 2015. Miles said that based on what he saw when he walked the line it hadn't changed much.

Miles thinks that the Town didn't get what they had paid for. John said that the town looked into this before and we didn't pay him the full amount and the Select Board was okay with what was paid even without the blazing since he didn't charge for the blazing. Sara explained this was before Miles researched and realized that the survey was not completed. Miles said that to be fair, the report Alan submitted is thorough and comprehensive but its not a survey, it is just a perambulation report much like what Miles has done for the other lines. He decided on his own what to do and what not to do and didn't follow the estimate and plan that he submitted.

Miles doesn't think its inappropriate for the Board of Selectmen to reach out and ask him why the formal survey wasn't done and give him the chance to explain himself. If the Board wanted to move forward legally, which Miles isn't telling them to do, but statute of limitations on civil matters is three years so the town could file a small claims action since the last contact was June 27, 2018. Miles feels Alan didn't do what he was hired to do, he misrepresented things, he was very disingenuous with all the actions that he took.

Miles wanted to bring this to the board and it is clearly up to them with how they want to move forward. John asked if it goes to Court if Miles would speak to his findings. Miles said he would and he said if Alan comes to meet with the Board that he would be willing to attend that meeting as well to help clarify any issues that may come up with that discussion.

The Select Board agreed to reach out to him and let him know this concern was brought to the Select Board and we wanted to look into it and make sure the Town got what they paid for. Sara will reach out to Alan.

Miles said there is also an issue with the Plymouth/Groton line. There were some minutes about a notch in the Plymouth/Groton Line and the notes state that the Select Board opinion after reviewing this is that they felt that there is a notch there. Miles can state from the perambulation records in Town that there is no notch. There is a map that shows it. There are four monuments and there are no notes in the perambulation about a notch. It reads that when it gives the measurements and locations and his findings are that there are no notches. Miles thinks that unintentionally the Select Board made a mistake agreeing there was a notch. He thinks the problem is when you deal with overlays, maps on top of each other, it is due to overlays where maps are on top of each other. Miles showed an example of where the overlay is shown on the Map in the perambulation for Alexandria. There is a red line vs. a dotted line. In Miles opinion, and in the 1998 perambulation, it shows there was no notch. The Select Board agreed that they will look into this more.

The Select Board thanked Miles for meeting with them and bringing these concerns forward. They assured him that they would look into these.

2021 Holiday schedule

Sara submitted a Memo to the Select Board as she does every year which breaks down when each Holiday actually is and when it is observed and the offices are closed. This year most of the holidays fall on the same day that they are observed but some do not. There are two holidays which fall on a day the Transfer Station is open. These are Independence Day which is Sunday, July 4th, Christmas Day which is Saturday, December 25th, and New Year's Day which is Saturday, January 1, 2022. Sara will talk to Norm and ask if the Transfer Station will be open, closed or closing early these days. **John motioned to approve the holiday schedule for 2021, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Newfound Area School District's SB2 Meeting Dates and Deadlines

Below is a list of the upcoming Newfound Area School District's SB 2 deadlines and meeting dates.

- **Petition for Warrant Articles** due by: January 12, 2021 3:30 pm
- **Budget Hearing** January 8, 2021 6:30 pm at Newfound Regional High School
 - **Snow date** January 9, 2021 10:00 am
- **First Day to file for District Positions** January 20, 2021
 - School Board positions to be filled this year
 - Danbury 3 – year term
 - Groton 3 – year term
 - Hebron 3 – year term
 - Budget Committee positions to be filled this year
 - Bridgewater 1 – year term

- Danbury 3 – year term
- Groton 3 – year term
- Hebron 3 – year term

Moderator 1 – year term

- **Last Day to file for District Positions** January 29, 2021
- **First Deliberative Session** January 30, 2021 10:00 am at Newfound Regional High School
 - **Snow date** February 1, 2021 6:30 pm
- **Voting Day** (Second Session) March 9, 2021

Inventory Abatement request- Map 1 Lot 97

Mrs. Jones submitted a request to have the inventory penalty removed from her account. Every year they fill this out and send it in on time but this year with everything going on with COVID they didn't notice that they never received it. They are thinking it may have been not forwarded to their other home even though it was supposed to be. With all the worries of COVID they were more concerned with staying well and didn't think about not receiving this. Sara did confirm that every year they do fill this out and send it back well before the deadline. **John motioned to approve the inventory abatement and to sign the abatement form and letters, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

SELECT BOARD ITEMS:

Building Permit Map 2 Lot 6

The owner submitted building permit for their property on North Groton Road for a 30x40 garage. They also submitted the PUC approval and the DES septic approval. **John motioned to sign the building permit for Map 2 Lot 6, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

DEPARTMENT ITEMS:

Highway Department

Bubba went over the following

- Bubba said that the Town was close to another disaster the other night. He said it really tested the new culverts, road work, and ditching and they all worked great. The water was at the Town garage again and they were close to getting flooded out again but didn't. The rain gauge at Johns house was at 2.43 and at Tony's was 2.94. Tony said the roads would have washed out again if the culverts weren't replaced.

Police Department

- Chief reached out for an update on the status of the radar signs. They were shipped out so we should expect to receive them soon.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

Hardy Country Snowmobile trails

Slim asked Tony if he knew what was going on with the Hardy Country Snowmobile Trails. He said that he had heard originally that Maxam closed Hardy Country. Tony said he doesn't know and isn't involved with the snowmobile club. From what he has heard, this has gone back and forth but the last he heard is that the trail will be open now. Apparently, they found something in some email train or letters so they are going by that. Slim said that two days ago four people from town walked see notes and there is a trench that a groomer wouldn't get through and it went on for 300 yards.

Sara mentioned that Slim could talk to someone at Hardy Country Snowmobile Club to find out for sure if the trail will be open or not.

Meeting with NLRA

Tony mentioned that he met with Rebecca from Newfound Lakes Region Association (NLRA). They went out to Atwell/Orange Brook and he showed her the banks, the debris, and the damages from the last storm. They are going to see if they can get any grant money to help with this. She said she is going to try hard and will let the Town know what she needs during the process. She has some funding for the Spring so hopefully some of the funding can go towards this.

Slim asked who paid for Orange Road. Tony explained that the state did some work and gave material since they own land on the road.

Having no other business to conduct, John motioned to adjourn at 7:35pm, Tony 2nd, so voted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sara Smith
Administrative Assistant