

Town of Groton
Select Board Work Session Minutes
February 16, 2021

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

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

Meeting with Fire Chief Coursey

The Select Board was supposed to meet with Chief Coursey regarding gas permits. He called and said that he wouldn't be able to make it tonight due to some heating issues at one of his properties. He said he can meet with the Select Board at the next meeting. March 2, 2021. The Select Board will review the draft permits that Sara created before the next meeting. In the meantime, if the Select Board has any questions, we can email him.

Ron asked if the permits will be just going forward or if for everyone that has gas. This would just be going forward.

Tony said that he has been having some issues with the permits and has to go back. Tony thinks we should have the check made payable to the Town of Groton and then have him put his time in. The Select Board agree and will talk to him when they meet with him.

Tony said he wanted to do this because he is on the Fire Department so as a Selectman it can be a conflict of interest so this keeps the Selectmen out of it. Tony said that everyone is changing over to gas.

Public Hearing Items

There were a few items that came up at the Public Hearing on the Proposed Budget and Warrant Articles that the Select Board wanted to follow back up with everyone on.

- The Voting will still be Tuesday, March 9, 2021 from 11:00am-7:00pm but the deliberative session has been moved to May 8, 2021. Sara has posted this at the Town House, Transfer Station, on the website and on the Facebook page and sent it to the Newspaper for posting. The Select Board asked Ruth to add it to her article too.
- As stated at the public hearing, the Town Clerk wage line was corrected to reflect a 3% increase and was changed to \$31,524. This brought the entire operating budget down to \$791,892.00. This change was also reflected in warrant article 3. This was the only change made.
- The other recommendations for raising lines that had overages was reviewed but the Select Board agreed that it is not needed as a lot of the overages were from the way the bills were paid/received and we shouldn't have this issue this year.
- The recommendation to change the Police Budget to get rid of the part time line was discussed but the Select Board agreed to leave this as is and if someone would like to do an amendment at Town meeting they can do so.
- The recommendation to not budget \$25,000.00 for Groton Roads was reviewed but the Select Board agreed to keep in there and someone can do an amendment at Town Meeting if they would like to. However, it was agreed to change the wording of this line to Groton Road Repairs and Maintenance as suggested.
- The unreserved fund balance has \$39,977.
- It was asked at the meeting what the balance for Conservation Fund is and Old Home Day. As of 1/29/21 the Conservation Fund is at \$8,308.20 and the Old Home Day Fund is at \$4,601.10.

- It was recommended that we double check the wording on Article 2 with DRA. Sara did reach back out to DRA, the attorney and the bond counsel and they confirmed that this is the wording that is needed and that as we thought that we have to open and discuss Article 2 first but then can move to discuss and vote on Articles 4 and 5 prior to the vote on Article 2 so that Article 2 can be amended if needed. The bond counsel stated *“the RSA requirement means that action on the bond article “prior to other business” can occur when the meeting takes action to open the bond article prior to other business and then sets aside the bond article for a period of time to address another article, in particular one which has relevance to the bond article. As such, in Groton’s situation, so long as the minutes of the meeting reflect the Town opening Article 2 and then motioning to take up Articles 4 and 5 prior to the vote on Article 2, such sequence of events should not affect the validity of Article 2.*
- We also found out that since we moved the deliberative session to May 8, 2021, we will have to have another public hearing on the bond 15-60 days prior to the meeting. The Select Board chose April 6th as the next date for the public hearing on the bond. It will be the same information that was discussed at the February 3, 2021 public hearing because it is the same thing, just needs to be done again due to timing. The bond counsel did recommend that at that meeting the Select Board discuss the possibility that the amount might be increased by \$100,000 by amendment on the floor. The bond hearing doesn’t have to have discussion of the exact amount of the bond as sometimes that’s not finalized but it does have include discussion of a project amount that is in line with what is approved at the meeting. The February 3, 2021 bond hearing won’t be counted toward the Town’s compliance with the statutory requirements.
- Sara emailed the DRA to see if they could answer how a million-dollar building would change the valuation and how this would affect the taxes. We are waiting on a response.

Next Public Hearing on the Bond

Sara explained that now that the deliberative session was postponed until May 8, 2021, the Select Board will have to have another public hearing on the bond which has to be 15-60 days before the deliberative session. They also recommended at that Public Hearing discussing the possibility that the amount may be increased by \$98,984.00 if Articles 4 and 5 don’t pass. Sara said we have a meeting Tuesday, April 6, 2021 which is a little over 30 days prior. Does the Select Board want to do this date or another one? We will have to advertise this again and this is only for the bond, they do not have to have another one on the budget or on the building. The Select Board agreed that April 6, 2021 would be a good date.

Attorney at Town Meeting

The attorney offered for her or someone else from her office attend the deliberative session to assist with the mechanics of the bond article. The Select Board think this is a good idea.

Studio Nexus will try to be at the May 8, 2021 meeting as well.

Evaluations

The Select Board went over the evaluations and set up meeting dates for reviews.

John motioned to go into non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (c) at 5:15pm, Tony 2nd, so voted.

John motioned to return to public session at 5:45pm, Tony 2nd, so voted.

John motioned to seal the non-public minutes, Tony 2nd, so voted.

Sara- Time off Memo

Sara submitted a Memo for time off. The Select Board approved the time off.

Town Report

The Select Board went through the Town report and pointed out some areas that need to be corrected. Sara will make these changes and see if we can add the photo credit for the cover photo.

Meeting with Bubba

Bubba met with the Select Board to go over the following:

- The Truck is at the shop. It is showing 13 codes. There are 6-7 ground buses so they need to do some tracing to figure out what is going on.
- Bubba was headed to the Hebron Store one morning and Maxam was at the Town Garage loading items from one vehicle to another. No one had given Bubba a heads up. Bubba talked to them and they said they had called to get permission but they never did. Bubba was concerned if something was to spill. Bubba wanted to give the Select Board a heads up because they didn't get permission. The Select Board agreed to send a letter and state that if this is done again the Town needs to be made aware and a member of the Highway Department needs to be on site. This can be sent from Sara on behalf of the Select Board.
- Bubba mentioned that there have been some snowmobiles on Sculptured Rocks Road. They are riding a long way down the road, from Beaver Pond Road to Hardy Country Road. There is concern that we just put a lot of money into the road. Bubba believes the Chief has talked to them. The Select Board thinks that Chief should keep an eye out and talk to Fish and Game about it.
- They have been busy plowing and sanding.

Having no other business to conduct, John motioned to adjourn at 6:50pm, Ron 2nd, so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Smith
Administrative Assistant