

Town of Groton
Select Board Work Session Minutes
May 18, 2021

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

John called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Meeting with Chief Coursey

The Select Board met with Chief Coursey regarding his new position with the Town. His primary position is doing fire inspections, inspecting heating units, and issuing gas permits as the local Fire Chief. The job duties are not limited to those listed on the offer letter due to the event that something else may come up. The starting salary was discussed. This position has no set hours and is on an as needed basis.

The Select Board explained that in the near future, he will need to bring two forms of identification with him for purposes of completing the government required I-9 form at the Town Offices in Groton, to review these forms as well as any other forms required for employment. They asked him to schedule a time to meet with the Administrative Assistant, Sara Smith.

The permits will come here now. We will need to notify all the gas companies that we are doing this now. They will send the permits over and when the Chief meets with them they will give the check to them. We will add to the permit that they need to contact Chief Coursey. He will make three copies of these permits, one for the company, one for the homeowner and one for the Town.

Sara will update the permit and the Select Board will adopt them. This will be added to the website once adopted. We will advertise a public hearing for this when the adoption is done and will let Chief Coursey know when this will take place so he can be here to meet everyone.

John motioned to go into non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (a) and (c) at 6:20pm, Tony 2nd, so voted.

John motioned to return to public session at 6:30pm, Tony 2nd, so voted.

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

Memo from Sara

Sara submitted a Memo requesting to leave early on June 23rd. The Select Board approved the request.

Town Meeting Items

- Ruth reviewed the minutes and at the Town Meeting, when Article 5 was revisited for the last time and was amended, the amendment was voted in favor of but the amended article was never voted on. Sara reached out to the attorney about this and Unfortunately, she did not have such good news on the amended article 5. If there was no vote on the article as amended, the article did not pass. In order to get that money into the Capital Reserve Funds, the Town would need to hold a special town meeting, which requires court approval and then holding an entirely new meeting. This would cost money as it would have to go to court but since it is Disaster Relief money, they may consider this an emergency. The attorney thinks there is a chance this would be considered an emergency but Michelle at DRA wasn't confident that they would. If the selectmen wish to undertake that process, she can get us a timeline. The Select Board decided not to move forward with a special town meeting due to the costs but next year we will have to put the extra money in the Disaster Relief and Assessing Capital Reserve Funds.

- Sara emailed the bond counsel and bond bank to let them know the building bond article failed and to see if there was anything else the Town needs to do. We are all set.
- Sara emailed USDA about the grant money and they emailed back about this. We will talk about this during the meeting with Bubba.
- At Town Meeting a concern about Mold at Highway Garage was brought up. The Select Board would like a professional to come in and check the building for mold and air quality. Sara will look into companies that do this and see what the cost is.
- Memo for closing CRF per Article 4 passing: Sara drafted a Memo to the Trustees of the Trust Fund to discontinue the Fire & Equipment CRF and the Perambulation Non-Capital Reserve Fund and to transfer funds to the general fund. **John motioned to sign the Memo to the Trustees of the Trust Fund, Tony 2nd, so voted.**
- The invitations to bid for the road projects are online and will be in the 5/20/21 edition of the paper.
- We will have to talk to Bubba about the bridge since that warrant article passed.
- Sara emailed Norm to make sure he gets the slabs done this year now that the article for the excavation was approved.
- Sara emailed Jim Gaffey that the cemetery article passed and he can move forward and this needs to be done this year.
- Sara cut a check for the Conservation Commission to get the 3% Timber since warrant article 11 passed.

Property concerns

- Sara reached out to the attorney as requested by the Select Board to let them know the trash is building up again. They want updated pictures first and then called Sara about the next steps. The attorney agrees that the property is getting out of control again and he clearly didn't follow the order with the obligation to keep it clean. So here is what we can do.
 - Move to reopen the case as the order was violated
 - File contempt
 - Town can propose a different contempt order due to failure to maintain which can involve fines, penalties, etc. to be automatic
 - Can make a provision to the clean-up that allows the Town to continue to clean up the property as needed- (not sure if you want this due to the time and money it may cost the town)

It will be a more abbreviated version since we have already started the process and had an order but they are still in "COVID court" which does slow things down. They also recommended that as soon as we can take it for tax deed we should and we should let the attorneys know so they can evict him right away. She is currently behind for 2019 and 2020 but needs to be three years to deed it. Sara did ask if there is anything we can do because he is a "squatter" and there isn't because we don't own the property, that would be up to the property owner.

The Select Board agreed to want to move to reopen the case, file the contempt and would like to revise it so that the Town can clean it up as needed. Sara told the Select Board that the attorney did say it will cost a couple of grand, but he doesn't know exact costs as it will be about 1-2 court appearances depending on the judge.

- Also, Plymouth Law reached out to see if the Health Officer visited 158 River Road to check out the concerns of no electricity and no water. Sara explained that she told them the Select Board hasn't met yet so she wasn't sure. They are moving forward with some things on their end so they were just

checking in on what the Town was doing. Tony has driven by a few times and can see the junk on the property which will be checked at the junkyard inspection but from the outside couldn't see that there is no electric or water. He will call Patti Bailey to set up a time to visit the property while someone is there.

- Sara asked Tony if he has been out to check out 401/405 Sculptured Rocks Road concerns that came up before winter so needed to be put off until snow melted. Tony drove by but the property is now posted with no trespassing signs so he cannot go on it. He will come up here to call to make an appointment.

Junkyard Date for inspections

At the last meeting, the Select Board said that they would come up with a date in June to do these inspections since Ken Knowlton isn't doing them anymore and it looks like most towns are doing it themselves. Sara will have to send letters to let them know these inspections will be happening and when. There are 10 properties total so it was agreed to split this between two work sessions and do five on June 15, 2021 at 4pm and do the other five on June 22, 2021 at 4pm. Sara will look at the properties and try to schedule them by location and will put the letters together.

Safety Inspections

Sara mentioned that the Select Board needs to set up a date to do the safety inspections of the park, the Garage, the Transfer Station and the Town House. The Select Board agreed that since the junkyard inspections are in June, we should do the safety inspections during the first work session in July, which is July 6, 2021 at 5:00pm.

Meeting with Bubba

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

- Email from Eric Law: Sara had emailed USDA to let them know that the building and the bond didn't pass. Eric emailed back that they know Sara and others on the board and public works staff worked hard, really hard, on making the case. Their obligations can be good up to five years so in this time of increased public financing there may likely be other opportunities to leverage additional grants. He wanted to schedule a Zoom or teleconference to brainstorm next steps. Sara didn't want to schedule anything without talking to the Select Board about this first. John thinks that we shouldn't tie the money up since our Town voted it down and thinks the money should go to another town. Tony doesn't know when we will get another chance with a building this low so he doesn't know when we would bring another building before the Town. Sara said that she would like to recommend that at least Sara and Bubba do a call with him to see what he wants to discuss and since we did the work for the grant and put a lot of time into, it would be worth at least hearing what they say. Tony said it may not be a bad idea to sit on it for while if we have it for five years. Sara said there could be a different Select Board within that 5 years that wants to bring the building forward again and it would be nice to have this grant already in place and not have to do the paperwork all over again. The Select Board agreed that Sara and Bubba can set up a call to see what USDA has to say.
- Bridge to Town Pond: This article passed and Dave Leone said he would donate the hemlock. We need to get this project scheduled. Sara will reach out to Dave to see when the wood would be ready. Bubba said that he put the plywood down today but would like someone else to look at it before we use it for the Fishing Derby. Tony said he would go look at it.
- June 22nd is the site visits for both River Road and Province Road. One is at 8:00am and the other is at 1:00pm. Sara and Bubba will be working on this so Sara will be posting the office as closed all day since she doesn't know when she will actually be in the office and will be in and out all day. The Select Board agreed that it should be posted for all day since we don't know how long the site visits will take.
- Bubba is getting prices together to for culverts on River Road but these have gone up as well, like everything else. There are 9 culverts that they wanted to replace so if the prices are too high, we may

have to wait on the ones that still have a few years left in them. Tony will take a ride with Bubba to look at them. Bubba said the ones that need to be replaced are all metal. The prices he got is based on upsizing each one which increases the price as well. We are only putting 1 ½ on the road so if we cannot do them all it will be easy enough to replace and fix the road. John thinks that even though it is only 1 ½ then we should replace them all first, unless they are in really good shape. Tony and Bubba agree and will look at them and stated that not all culverts are replaced every time road paving is done. The Select Board agreed that it would be better to do 2/3 of the road if we have to and then the rest the following year. It was agreed to see what the bids come in at, what the culverts look like and then do what can be done from there.

- They got all the sander chains lubricated today. They may want to think about putting the older sander out for bid. The Select Board agreed to do this.

Having no other business to conduct, John motioned to adjourn at 6:59pm, Ron 2nd, so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Smith
Administrative Assistant