

TOWN OF GROTON
SELECT BOARD MEETING
October 5, 2021

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 September 21, 2021 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted.

John motioned to approve the Select Board Meeting minutes of September 21, 2021 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted.

NEW BUSINESS:

Ten-Year Plan Support Letter

Sara drafted a letter as suggested by Senator Giuda to express our support for the Ten-Year Plan's funding for paving North Groton Road under project #16162L. The letter also explained that it is our understanding that the 2023 Proposed resurfacing program shows that it is planned to have paving on about 4.8 miles of North Groton Road in 2023 from West Shore Rd northerly to Halls Brook Rd. This paving is greatly needed. We were hoping that it would be done before this date but we are happy to see that it is a project that is planned to be completed in the next two years. We support this project and strongly recommend that this project stays on the Ten-Year Plan and strongly request that this project not be delayed any further.

Bids for sander

The Town received one bid for the sander for \$700.00 from Robert Ellis. **John motioned to award the sander to Robert Ellis, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Forester Contract

The Forester sent an updated contract based on the rates the Select Board discussed at the last work session. **John motioned to sign the Forester Contract, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Building Permit Map 5 Lot 146

The owner submitted a building permit for their property located on 10 Patterson Lane for a 10x14 wooden deck. This is on a private road so this permit did go before the Planning Board. The Planning Board reviewed the permit, the deed and any plans we had on file. They are okay with the Select Board approving the permit. He did submit the release of municipal liability form as well. **John motioned to sign the building permit for Map 5 Lot 146, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Building Permit Map 5 Lot 160-6

The owner submitted a building permit for their property located on Vignone Hill Lane for a 2,144 square foot home with a walk out basement. This is on a private road so this permit did go before the Planning Board. The Planning Board reviewed the permit, the deed and any plans we had on file. They are okay with the Select Board approving the permit. He did submit the release of municipal liability form as well. **John motioned to sign the building permit for Map 5 Lot 160-6, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

ServPro Agreement

ServPro dropped off the agreement for the work to replace the walls, ceiling, insulation, etc. for \$13,480.82. Bubba said they started today. **John motioned to sign the ServPro Agreement, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Local Septic Approval- Map 2 Lot 96

The septic designer mailed in a septic plan and local approval for Map 2 Lot 96. All information is correct. **John motioned to sign the local septic approval for Map 1 Lot 96, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Trick or Treat Hours

Halloween is Sunday, October 31st. The Select Board agreed the trick or treating hours would be the same as last year which was 5:00pm-8:00pm. Sara will post this online and on the Groton Facebook page.

Richard Cross

Richard Cross, the Transfer Station attendant, passed away on Sunday, September 26, 2021. The wake is Thursday, October 7, 2021 from 4:00pm to 7:00pm at Mayhew Funeral Home in Plymouth. Richard will be missed!

DEPARTMENT ITEMS:

Highway Department

Bubba went over the following

- River Road is almost done, just needs shoulder gravel.
- Sara reached NHMA and the Town is allowed to put up private road signs as long as it in the Towns right of way. Bubba ordered the signs that were missing or for new roads.
- Starting to get plows ready.

Police

Chief Bagan went over the following:

- The cruiser was serviced with brakes.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector

Ruth shared that 1214 North Groton Road has cleaned up the property and it looks nice. The taxes have also been caught up.

COMMITTEE UPDATES:

Conservation Commission

The Conservation Commission did their fall clean-up last week. They had six people and they did a good job. People are noticing it.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

Drone

Slim said there was a drone over his house and wanted to know if people are allowed to do anything about this, like shoot it down. Chief said it is a grey area and since it is new and there are no ordinances on it makes it hard. If it is looking in windows or there are privacy concerns then you can press charges. This is a new area of concern. Senator Giuda said that the State is looking at it since the concerns of privacy are in play. He is not sure what will come of it but it is on the radar.

VISIT FROM SENATOR GIUDA:

Senator Giuda visited the Town to discuss any budget concerns or any other concerns that the Town may have. He said it is good to be here in person. He said it was a very busy year last year.

The Select Board had previously sent information that they wanted to discuss with the Senator so he wanted to address these items first:

- The Select Board was concerned and sent support letters regarding the Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid (LRMFA) compound. Senator Giuda said this is a very high priority item. He has heard from many Towns regarding this. This will be a big concern as to whether they will keep it where it is or give funds to move it but they would rather not move it. Tony said that they had a board of directors meeting recently and they were told that they have to move but were told not to worry because they will be relocated at potentially no cost to them since they just put a lot of money into. Tony said if the Senator could encourage no cost to move that would be great. Tony told Senator Giuda that John Goldman would love to talk to him about this if he wanted to reach out to him.
- The next item is that concern with republic efforts against Bidens path out of the pandemic plague. He asked what specifically on that plan is the Select Board asking about. John said the mandated vaccines, the schools, and other concerns. Senator Giuda said he wasn't elected to take an oath to protect our health, he took an oath to protect our constitutional rights so he will not support a mandate of any kind. He finds this unconstitutional. He has people losing their jobs and lives being destroyed for not a vaccine, for gene therapy that is experimental for a virus that was weaponized with funds from the United States Treasury. That is the problem. If an individual wants to get the shot that is their right and if they don't want to that is equally their right. Just like the 2nd amendment is your right to own a gun if you want but we can't tell you that can't have one. This is a state that is live free or die.
- Paving on North Groton Road Project # 16162L is on the Ten-year Plan and is scheduled for 2023. He strongly encourages that the Select Board and any residents attend the GACIT hearing on Monday, October 25, 2021 at 2:00pm at the Plymouth Town Hall. He said that the Town will want to be there and if they are not there this project will get overrun by people who are there for other projects. He also encourages them to send letters and emails with support. These can be sent to Bill Watson and Councilor Kenny. Sara explained that the Town signed a letter today that they will be mailing and emailing. He said that he would stay away from using the same wording and recommend that each person uses their own words as it carries more weight.
- The Select Board would like to know if there are any other grant opportunities for the new Highway Garage. This is still in the flood zone and needs to be moved. He had his researcher do some work and wishes he was the barer of better news but there are not a lot of options out there right now. They don't think NBRC will work because they are for economic development and look at how many jobs the project will create so he doesn't see that happening. They did the Sculptured Rocks Road project because it is a State Park. We pushed the tourist aspect. He is not sure if ARPA funds can be used towards this. He doesn't think so but we could look into this but he doesn't think it will work. Bubba asked if the parameters will change for this. He doesn't think so but said it is federal so he isn't sure.

Senator Giuda wanted to discuss some other items which were:

- Meals and rental tax: For decades the state has been collecting this tax with the promise to send 40% back to the town. His knowledge is that this has never exceeded 17%. This year they reduced it to 30% and the Towns are going to get 30% of those funds. He will share these numbers with us later.
- School funding: This will be a significant increase over the last year. This is the bulk of taxes and he will give these numbers as well. They are increasing funding over 102 million from the prior year.
- He wanted to talk about the tax policy. They continue to reduce taxes and this year they reduced the business enterprise tax, the business profits tax, the meals and rentals tax and the interest dividends tax (IND) tax. The IND tax is an income tax and their plan is to get rid of it in 5 years, so 20% down each year so the end of 5 years there is no IND tax. Even with reducing these taxes, revenues continue to

increase. We are averaging 25-30 million dollars a month above planned even through the pandemic. They are helping businesses keep their money so they can invest it in new equipment, new products, new employees, etc. New wealth is being created every day and is showing up on the revenue and there is no lull in site. We may see some things flatten out. Inflation of course is the unseen but growing spectrum. You can't keep printing money without result. Also, natural gas is increasing which affects places down south more. Fuel costs and transportation costs are going up, we see the price of gasoline which is up over a dollar in one year. We will probably see heating oil go up.

- ARPA funds: This will be coming out. Sara said that we received our first payment already and have scheduled a public hearing to accept the funds. The first payment was a little over \$31,000. Bubba asked the Senator what his town is doing with this money and he didn't know.
- They increased permanent adequate grants by 4.3%. There was 35 million to state schools in need, 30 million in additional funds to school building aid, this was a program that had been suspended because it had built such a deficit but we are almost caught up now, 6 million in governor scholarship fund, 1.9 million in additional funding for schools that switched to all day kindergarten, 3 million dollars for Highschool students get credit for college STEM programs. Plymouth State is financially upside down. They have had some discussions with them about cyber security which started over two years ago. The Governor tried to merge the community college with the university systems but he doesn't think they should ever be merged. He mentioned that because of COVID our school enrollment is way down and that is the basis for determining aid. They legislated to use the numbers from before COVID. There are also education freedom accounts which have caused a lot of controversy but they allow a family roughly \$4500 to put their child in a private school of their choosing since some kids are not getting results from public school. There are transition grants. This will turn out to be net revenue positive for the schools but will take some time to get there. He believes the Claremont decisions were a mistake and were unconstitutional.
- He is working on new legislation right now for election integrity. Really good research has been done on just the recount attempts. He believes there were 10 or 11 Towns that were recounted in 2020. There was 8% disparity between the machine count and the hand recount so he is cosponsoring a bill to get rid of the machine. If Australia can do theirs by hand, then NH can do them by hand. We will hear the big towns don't have the ability but this is why you have precincts and wards and could use citizen participation. This may seem extreme but the only way to ensure machines are accurate is to not use them The Town has the ability to put in a warrant article for this to get rid of machines. Groton doesn't use machines. The consequences on machine mistakes go further than the town so he wants to get rid of them. There is also the issue of inhabitancy. He is bringing legislation to address that. The same piece of legislation will address the issue of same day registration which will establish provisional ballots which we don't have right now since we have to count votes the same night. If voting ends at 7pm for those that have been here and have proof to vote then it should for those that don't. That person should have until polls close to come back to prove who you are. If you don't have an ID at time of vote, these should go into a different box. This will be controversial. No matter what side you are on, Republican or Democrat, you want accurate votes.
- He is cosponsoring legislation that establishes a contentious objection to mandated vaccine and enables business to provide an alternate mechanism. For over a year the wasn't a vaccine and the hospital staff worked with COVID patients without it. They used shields, masks, gowns and other stuff to protect themselves and those will still work if someone doesn't get the vaccine. Right now, he is working with someone who is 13 weeks pregnant and told the hospital where she is training that she doesn't want the vaccine. It has been three weeks and they haven't given her an answer yet so he made a phone call to the CEO of Concord Hospital to get the answer. She is 13 weeks pregnant and there are known risks to the vaccine and has worked 4 years towards this degree and is two work days short and this is happening. This will not look good. Bubba asked why they haven't tested antibodies, Senator Giuda said he is asking the wrong guy. The Senator had COVID and he was down for 5 weeks. It never got to his lungs or his pulmonary system because he had a 10-day supply of

hydroxychloroquine that was given to him from a doctor along with Vitamin D every day and zinc pills. He was sick but there was never a danger that he would have to go to the hospital. He just read a report out of India about Ivermectin so there are drugs that will mitigate the effects of this illness so why are we providing gene therapy. This vaccine actually modifies your RNA which means it will modify your DNA. He will not get the shot ever. He now has immunity. There is so much controversy that it is tearing the State and the Country apart.

Questions and concerns from audience:

- Slim asked for an explanation of what a provisional ballot is. Senator explained that it is a ballot that is cast but who's counting and verification needs to be completed. It would be the same as our ballot but would go in a different box until verification can be completed. It is counted but not certified until the person identity is proven. NH is about the only state in the country that doesn't do this.
- Ann asked if someone can't prove their identity and have to come back, how will they know which ballot belongs to that person. Senator explained it will be marked on the envelope.
- John asked what happens to the ballot if they don't come back? Senator said it will not be counted but they have to be held for a certain amount of time.
- Tony asked if college students are a part of his legislation. Tony doesn't think it is right that they can vote with just a student ID. They are not residents of the State of NH. Senator Giuda said that he automatically assumes a 1200 vote disadvantage for Plymouth. They are working on that. We are not denying them the right to vote, we are denying them the right to vote here. They should have to do absentee ballots. This has always bothered Tony.
- Senator Giuda said one of the things we have to learn is that the Supreme Court is only the Supreme Court because it is Supreme over the other courts, it is not Supreme over the legislature. They can issue rulings and opinion but the legislature has the authority. Most legislatures won't because the court ruled a certain way which is problematic. All the tools we need are in the constitution. We need to really learn it and use it. The level of ignorance of our constitutional rights and our responsibilities is staggering and frightening. We are watching things being done that shouldn't. No president has the right to mandate a vaccine, where is the constitution is health even an issue.
- Health and Human Services is a runaway freight train. 27 million dollars is what they want to appropriate to increase the vaccine advocacy with mobile vans, hire people to make phone calls, etc. We passed a constitutional amendment two years ago that stated we value our privacy of our data and our personal lives. It is in the constitution. This is a collision between the concern of health and welfare and our constitutional rights. At the end of the day, we cannot straddle that divide, we have to pick one side or the other.
- Chief asked if NH supports convention of states. Senator Giuda explained that the State of NH does not as a legislature but he does personally support it, article 5 convention of states. They had delegates that went to Arizona a few years ago so it is in the process. If you get there and get the 35/37 states that you need Congress is going to start paying attention. He looks at the US Congress as utterly dysfunctional and it is the party system that is doing it. I don't give money to parties; he studies the issues and if they share his beliefs that is where he is sending his money and votes. He encourages people to do the same. Democrats outspend 3 to 1 and outraise 5 to 1. He doesn't like the money part of this but it is necessary and goes with the territory in the political process. People have to get involved and they are. We saw what happened at the State House last week. He supports strongly the right to protest but not the right to destruct. There is so much going on and he could talk for an hour on corruption that he found but he isn't going to do that but it is there from the local level to national level. The moral beliefs in the country are not where it was 50 years ago. He used to work on the assumption that you can believe what a person tells you but you can no longer do that. Now he has to go verify what they said before he acts on it.
- Bubba said he knows that the municipal association is working towards getting municipal workers covered like the first responders for pay, etc. as they were during COVID. First responders got extra

money during COVID and Bubba thought they were trying for public works to get this pay as well. They are essential and, in the winter, no one is getting anywhere if the roads are not clear. Senator Giuda isn't aware of this at all.

- Bubba said Massachusetts is pushing for First responders to add 3 years onto longevity. Senator Giuda doesn't know if this is happening for NH.
- Slim said that the Senator has mentioned before that he doesn't support anything that interrupts due process in the legislature. A few months ago, there were talks about disbanding the government and they stated that it isn't a legitimate government we have in NH. Senator said he wasn't part of this and it is a legitimate government. He said he supports anyone standing up for their beliefs but if it disturbs the peace or worse, that doesn't work. You are guaranteed the right for peaceful protest, with peaceful being the key word. Once you start disrupting the peace or threatening then it is time to stop.
- Senator said there are heavy issues and a collision like he has never seen in his lifetime especially regarding privacy and health and personal liberty and personal choice. All of this is up in the air right now. Bubba said he thinks the Patriot Act didn't help us. The Senator agrees and doesn't think they needed to do the Patriot Act and feels it is torture of our freedom in his lifetime and he said so at the time.
- John asked if any of the Afghan illegals are being released into NH. Senator Giuda doesn't know but they are actively looking into this. He has friends at the airports that he has had looking into this. He doesn't have any evidence or information that they are or that they are not. This is being actively pursued right now. It was asked if he can propose legislation to ban the acceptance of illegal immigrant in the State. He thinks this is possible. John wanted to clarify the reason he said Afghans is because they have not been vetted. Bubba said that we may need some of them because nobody is taking jobs around here.
- Senator is on fiscal committee which is very important. They meet to allow acceptance of funds not appropriated for the budget. Acceptance and disbursement through whatever agency. A month and a half ago an item came across the committee for a 10-million-dollar federal grant to be used for a person who is unemployed and agrees to go to work and works for 8 weeks full time they get a \$1,000.00 bonus and part time is a \$500 bonus. He asked what about all of the people who worked through this pandemic without expectation of a bonus to get them to go to work. We shouldn't be rewarding those that are not working. The vote was 7 to 3 to pass this. He feels hunger is the motivator and people will get a job when they are hungry. There is a help wanted ad on almost every block in this state. We shouldn't be giving bonuses to people that are doing what they should be doing and is an essential part of our American culture.
- Senator Giuda said that mental health is a huge problem. John asked if it is self-inflicted. He doesn't know but it is a problem and every one he knows is talking about it. The last three shootings were people that were known to be mentally unstable. This morning we had the attorney general, the commissioner of safety, two senators. Ken Norton, state police discussing the issue if there is something we can do to show officers an indicator to take them into protective custody or something. Chief said they had a mobile crisis unit. Senator said we have four of these coming. Chief said they go out and you don't need an IEA but they can do interviews and evaluate the person. These people use to be institutionalized but aren't anymore. John said there is a true mental illness but today too many kids are enabled and aren't taught reality so they create these illnesses. Senator said that 46% babies in NH are born out of wedlock to single mothers. That is a scary number and is an attack on the family unit.
- The schools are teaching some wrong things right now. John said how do we handle this when the federal government says if you challenge the school board you are a domestic terrorist? Senator Giuda said how are they going to enforce that? He feels we are in a civil war right now; it is not coming, it is here. We are in a civil war based on values and we have enslaved ourselves to federal funding. 40% of the State budget is paid for with federal funds. There is around a 29 trillion-dollar deficit and within 10 years that interest on the debt will grow. The collision of values, rights, the role of the government and

the rights of an individual citizen. Can the government make you get an injection that changes your genetic structure to combat a virus that they spent money to weaponize? Chief said it is 99.7% survival rate. Bubba said that people need to follow science on both sides. Senator says science shows there are drugs that work so why are we injecting people with genetic modification factors. John said because there is more money in the vaccine than the medicines. Senator said 5-billion-dollar profit to Pharma this year. This entire thing has provoked the collision.

- Tony asked for school numbers that he mentioned he would provide us with. He provided the following:
 - ARPA: Groton will be getting \$62,290, and the first payment was \$31,145.17. This is 8% of the budget. Bubba said it is not clear though how this can be spent, no one is giving definite answers.
 - School Education grants 2022-2023 \$900,849 which was an increase of \$466,473 to our school district. Chief asked how we can control how this is spent. Senator Giuda said people need to go to the school budget meetings.
 - Meals and rentals for 2021 was \$30,868, 2022 will be \$41,498, and 2023 will be \$42,889. This is based on population.
- Tony asked how much of the money from Keno, lottery, etc. is going to the school like they said. Senator Giuda said all of it except what it costs to run it. He is on a committee to study charitable gaming and are looking into keeping it consistent, etc. This is due November 2022.
- Tony stressed again that the Senator's support regarding the LRMFA facility would be greatly appreciated and needed. It is very important for many towns. He said he is sure that a bill will come forward to design and appropriate funds for a new facility while keeping the current one in place until a smooth transition is completed. He is sure this will happen. Tony said they dispatch for 37 towns and there are towns on the edge that can go elsewhere but it is a good organization and works well and Towns like Groton are not close to anything else and we do not know where we would go. The Senator asked if they have said where they are looking to go. Tony said they don't know where they will go but they are looking for state land and he has recommended the land at the Plymouth traffic circle. The Senator asked if facility has to be high up. Tony said the building doesn't need to be but the antennas do need to. It would be nice to stay where they are since they put money into it and had a 99-year lease. When they moved last time, it was expensive and they looked for somewhere permanent. Slim asked about the armory but Senator Giuda said this was federal funds not state funds. The first step is to find a place and then go from there.

Having no other business to conduct, John motioned to adjourn at 8:35pm, Tony 2nd, so voted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sara Smith
Administrative Assistant