

TOWN OF GROTON  
SELECT BOARD MEETING  
January 18, 2022

**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 Non-Public Work Session Meeting minutes of January 4, 2022 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

**John motioned to approve the Work Session Meeting minutes of January 4, 2022 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

**John motioned to approve the Select Board Meeting minutes of January 4, 2022 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

*Open Positions*

Any resident of the Town of Groton who wishes to file a declaration of candidacy for the following Town offices, may do so between January 19 and January 28 at the Town Clerk's Office during normal business hours: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 9am-4pm, Tuesday noon-7pm, ending January 28 at 5:00pm.

The following positions are available:

SELECTMAN – 3 YEAR TERM  
MODERATOR – 2 YEAR TERM  
TRUSTEE OF THE TRUST FUND – 3 YEAR TERM  
PLANNING BOARD – 2 POSITIONS, 3 YEAR TERMS  
CEMETERY TRUSTEE – 2 YEAR TERM  
CEMETERY TRUSTEE – 3 YEAR TERM  
SUPERVISOR OF THE CHECKLIST – 6 YEAR TERM  
ZONING BOARD – 2 POSITIONS, 3 YEAR TERMS  
LOCAL AUDITOR – 1 YEAR TERM

*Timeline for Broadband Scope of work*

Carol Miller sent the proposed timeline for the completion of the project for the broadband. The Select Board reviewed the timeline. John said we may want to push this back until after Town Meeting. Sara will email her to let her know.

Slim asked if this is through the electric company. Sara explained this is just the planning process that NHMA set up for the Town through this company that will work with the Town, do a study to see where we have broadband, where we don't, what would be the best for the Town which could be NHEC. This is paid for using the ARPA funds.

*Intent to Cut Map 6 Lot 110*

The logger submitted an intent for Map 6 Lot 110 for property located on North Groton Road. This is about a 3-acre cut. No bond is needed. **John motioned to sign intent to cut for Map 6 Lot 110, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

*Report of cut/yield certificate- Map 9 Lot 8*

The Town received a report of cut for Map 9 Lot 8 on Groton Hollow Road for a cut of about 5 acres. The amount of the tax is \$494.77. **John motioned to sign the yield certificate for Map 9 Lot 8, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

*Building Permit- Map 2 Lot 91*

The owner submitted a building permit for a 16x16 shed at his property on Edgar Albert Road. He said he was not aware that he needed a building permit. **John motioned to sign the building permit for Map 2 Lot 91, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

*Compliance Letter*

The property that has been in violation is now in compliance. Sara worked with the attorney to get the amount of the attorney fees we paid due to this property. She created a letter, an invoice for attorney fees and an updated inspection report. **John motioned to sign the compliance letter, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

*School Funding Apportionment Formula - Petition Warrant Article*

Virginia Parker spoke with the Select Board and attendees of the Select Board meeting to explain that in her capacity on the school district budget committee, she has come to learn about a petition submitted by residents of Alexandria. The superintendent has received a petition warrant article which asks the voters to change the apportionment method of funding the school district from how we do it now, which is 100% ADM (average daily membership), the number of kids we send to the school, to 50% ADM and 50% equalized property evaluation. This petition warrant article got enough signatures so it will be on the next ballot to vote on. This means that even if there was a year that we had 0 students from Groton in the school district, we would still pay based on that other 50% of property evaluation. If it was to change to this, Groton's taxes would increase and the rough number is it would increase by \$120,000 which depends on the number of kids. She said they did it in the sneakiest way possible. The deadline to submit a petition warrant article was 3:30pm last Tuesday and they delivered it in person at 3:00pm which didn't give the other towns an opportunity to review it, rebuttal or come up with other options. As far as she knows there is nothing we can do about this now since it is passed the deadline so this will be on the ballot and all 7 towns will vote on it. She is awaiting confirmation if it is a simple majority or a 2/3 to pass. She learned there are only 6 districts in the state that currently use the 100% ADM like we use. She also learned that if the Town wanted to pull out of SAU4 due to this, that pulling out would be a 3-4 year process. The first step would be to have the voters of Groton vote on this, do a feasibility report, and a few other steps. The biggest hurdle that she sees in this is that the final step would be to have the other towns to release us from the school district which obviously they wouldn't want to lose our payment. There is the argument that the transportation for Groton students is expensive for them so that may help but it is slim chances that this would be done. The Superintendent lives up north and there is a town that has been trying to get out of their district for 25 years and they have tried three times and every time it fails because the Towns won't release them.

Virginia asked if the Select Board has been in touch with Hebron or Bridgewater yet. The Select Board explained that we have been in contact and are meeting with them tomorrow. Virginia said that they have their Village School which they paid for and maintain and they have a deal with the school district that they pay \$1.00 to use the school so Hebron and Bridgewater have some cards they can play. If this funding model changes it null and voids the contract that they have so they will probably give more information on that. If they wanted to close it, they would have to give the district a full year's notice.

It hasn't been announced yet that she is aware of but there should be an additional information session in February on this which the school district atty should be present for that.

Bubba asked if it is because Alexandria has so many children. Virginia answered yes, Alexandria has double their students and their taxes are high. They found an avenue to try to lower their taxes and took advantage of it.

Bubba asked what does she think the chances are that the other towns will vote no. Virginia said the projections show that 4 out of the 7 towns will have lower taxes and only Groton, Bridgewater and Hebron will go up. She said Bridgewater will go up about a million so our \$120,000 is hard to swallow but Bridgewater is one million because they have lake value. Tony said Hebron does too. Virginia said that she thinks Hebron will go up over \$700,000. Sara brought the information and shared that Alexandria would go down about \$560,000, Bridgewater would go up \$1,001,162, Bristol would go down \$467,437, Danbury would go down \$450,282, Groton would go up about \$121,000, Hebron would go up \$744,000 and New Hampton would go down about \$388,000.

Virginia said she wants everyone in our Town to know about this. The reality is the smaller Towns will get hit. Virginia said that something to consider for all Towns is that if property values go up for whatever reason, the school tax will go up.

Slim said he thought he heard there was 44 kids in school here. Sara said the handout she has states 46.99 kids in Groton. Virginia and Sara said that this number is about a year behind they believe. Sara said that since she has been working for the Town, we have always ranged between 35-50.

Virginia's biggest concern is that a lot of money will go to lawyers which is the most likely outcome. The Bridgewater rep on the budget committee is very savvy with numbers and she is sure they will be putting together numbers and proposals and getting lawyers involved.

Sara explained that the Select Board should have more information tomorrow. The meeting is with the Groton, Hebron and Bridgewater Select Boards.

Slim said he was talking to the Chairman at the Alexandria Select Board and he said it wasn't his idea but there are people in Town that wanted to change things. He said that everything on the list from the other towns isn't guaranteed and the other towns are wondering how it is going to work. Bubba said that all the people need to hear is that their taxes are going down and they will vote that way. Slim said that Chairman said that Hebron and Bridgewater will about double due to the lake but Groton won't increase that much. Slim said he just hopes the formula comes out where they don't use the Pilot for the wind towers against us. Slim said he then called Sue at the SAU and talked to her. She told him to call at the end of the week and she will have a date for the information session so we can tell the Town to be there.

Virginia said that she has no jurisdiction over it as the budget committee and even the School Board doesn't because it is a petition warrant article. The School Board are the ones that reached out to say they need to have a informational meeting on this because people will have questions. They are trying to have this meeting before the deliberative session. The goal is the first week of February. Slim said that Sue said the notices will go out to the Town and will go on the bulletin board here and at the Town. Sara said whenever Sue sends her something she posts it here and gives a copy to the Transfer Station to post there.

Virginia didn't have any more information and there were no more questions from the audience in regards to this. The Select Board thanked Virginia for coming and for the information and said they will see what happens at the meeting tomorrow night.

## **SELECT BOARD ITEMS:**

### *Land Use Change Tax- Map 2 Lot 97*

The Select Board received recommendations from Avitar on a land use change tax that was submitted for Map 2 Lot 97. This 25-acre parcel was assessed with the entire lot in current use. During a visit to the property, a member of Avitar observed a new 16x12 cabin with a 12x8 attached porch had been constructed on a cleared site. As a result, an approximate .052-acre area no longer qualifies to remain in current use. The estimated market value is \$2,100 which results in a land use change tax of \$210.00. **John motioned to sign the land use change tax for Map 2 Lot 97, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

## **DEPARTMENT ITEMS:**

### *Highway Department*

Bubba went over the following:

- They have been busy plowing, sanding and taking care of the roads.

### *Police*

Chief Bagan went over the following:

- He got quotes and a work order for the Cruiser repair but they are waiting for parts. They check has been cut for the repairs. Once they get the parts, he will schedule this. Slim asked what happened to the cruiser and Chief explained there is damage to the bumper.

## **COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

### *Conservation Commission*

Slim mentioned that the Conservation Commission met this month. They will not be a meeting in February but they will meet monthly after that. Sara will update the posting to reflect this. They still want to do the fishing derby this year and the clean-up days.

Slim thought about the Conservation Pond being used for ice skating but some people think it isn't big enough. John said that it is a nice idea but not something the Town wants to get involved with due to liability if someone got hurt or something happened. Slim wondered if you would be able to do this at Spectacle Pond. It was mentioned that they would have to talk to the State and the Spectacle Pond Association about this, it wouldn't be up to the Town. Slim mentioned that there is a skating loop around Squam Lake. He looked into it and people are parking at the Ashland Town Beach and it is about a mile loop. This is an option if anyone is interested.

## **QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:**

### *Plymouth Ski Jumping*

Slim mentioned that if anyone is interested, every Wednesday at 6:00pm they do the ski jump training in Plymouth.

**Having no other business to conduct, John motioned to adjourn at 7:34pm, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Sara Smith  
Administrative Assistant