

TOWN OF GROTON  
SELECT BOARD MEETING  
July 5, 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 Work Session Meeting minutes of June 7, 2022 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted. John motioned to approve the Non-Public Work Session Meeting minutes of June 7, 2022 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

**John motioned to approve the Select Board Meeting minutes of June 7, 2022 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

**John motioned to approve the Work Session Meeting minutes of June 14, 2022 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

**John motioned to approve the Non-Public Work Session Meeting minutes of June 14, 2022 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

*USDA Grant Information*

John explained that we met with the gentleman in charge of the USDA grant that we applied for the equipment. The Town is being denied that grant because they don't feel there is any value of giving the Town money if they are going to put that piece of equipment into a Town Garage that is going to continuously flood. He also shared that when you receive grants, they continue to give grants to you because you are viewed in a positive manner. Once you are denied a grant, especially if you are not making improvements in the Town to house the equipment in a safe place, you can be looked at negatively. Now that we have been denied, we may not be viewed as favorably in the future for other grants. We will not be getting this money and it will probably be a challenge for the Town now to get any grant money for anything that will be stored in that Town Garage.

Miles asked which equipment we are referring to. Sara explained this was for the backhoe that was voted on at the Town Meeting in March. Miles confirmed that we are not getting any grant money towards the backhoe. John said we are not and we were hoping for \$50,000.00. Tony explained this will have to come out of taxation now. Tony said that when we got the International, they did give us the money at that time because we were still going for the building at the time and did have the grant money for the building. Now that the Town has voted down the building, until something happens with the building, they will not grant us anymore money.

Bubba said that is the hard part, it is almost like you get blacklisted. He said that a lot of the different companies that are on the boards for the grants are either the same people or talk to each other. John said that it is almost like being in the business in the sense that the person that works on the grant for you and then something happens to that equipment you got the grant for, you get looked at wondering why you gave them money. If something happened to this backhoe it would be their money that was lost so it makes him look bad that he is giving out money to something that is a risk. Tony explained that the Town is disappointed they didn't get it but they understand the reasoning why. Sara said that it was a lot of work to do the grant application but they had it feeling this would happen sooner or later.

#### *PA-28 Inventory of taxable property forms for 2023*

Sara explained she received the form to fill out to request these forms as we do every year. She included last year's form and requested the same number of forms for 2023. **John motioned to sign the PA-28 Inventory of taxable property forms for 2023, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

#### *PA-16*

Sara explained that the Town received the PA-16 which is the Application for reimbursement to Towns and Cities in which federal and state forest land is situated. We fill this out every year. Sara filled it out with the new Valuations from Avitar and included last year's form to be compared. **John motioned to sign the PA-16, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

#### *Junkyard Reports*

John explained that we do have a new junkyard inspector from MRI who went out and visited properties that either have junkyards or have junkyard concerns and submitted the reports to the Select Board for review. There was one property that she found in violation and a few that she had to reschedule but the rest are now in compliance. **John motioned to sign all of the junkyard letters, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

#### *Junkyard Renewal Application*

The current junkyard licenses expired on July 1<sup>st</sup>. This is the application that we have received so far for renewals from the current junkyard properties. We have received the background check back and they are all set. We are also waiting for a background check to come back for other ones. **John motioned to sign the junkyard renewal application, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

#### *Local septic approval- Map 1 Lot 53*

The owner dropped off a Septic Plan and local approval for Map 1 Lot 53. All the information is correct. **John motioned to sign the local septic approval for Map 1 Lot 53, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

#### **SELECT BOARD ITEMS:**

#### *Miles Sinclair*

Miles explained that about six weeks ago Sara sent him an email that there was a guy named Lang Gureckis, who lives on Groton Hollow Road in Rumney, trying to get in touch with him. Sara provided his phone number and Miles called and left a message and didn't hear anything back until last Wednesday. Sara had asked Miles that if he did go meet with him to keep the Board informed as to what happened. Miles talked to him on the phone last Wednesday and met with him on Thursday at his house. If you are familiar with Groton Hollow Road, the road goes to a point where it splits to the left to go to the maintenance building for the Wind Farm and the right it goes towards Gordon Coursey, which they call Coursey Lane. This guy lives on the fork. He is having issues with the Town of Rumney. He is looking for an abatement because he doesn't think he has as much land as they are taxing him for. When Miles got there, he had maps out on his table. He even had a copy of the narrative from the perambulation report that Miles did for the Groton/Rumney line. It boiled down to different issues with the Town of Rumney and Gordon Coursey. He seems to think there was some shenanigans going on when they put the road in to the wind farm. Miles heard him out but at the end of it he told him that he understands what his concerns are but he cannot do anything about any of this, he does not have any responsibility and no power to do anything about this. He did lose some points with Miles in one sense because on the phone he said there used to be one of the boundary markers, which was a big stone that was lost. Miles has talked to Gordon Coursey about this. Somehow Gordon had brought it to the attention when they were putting in the road that it was a historical marker that they needed to set aside so that when the road work was done, they could put it back where it belongs but somehow the stone was lost. When he was talking to Lang last Wednesday, he said that the stone is still there and he knows where it is. That is what got Miles over there more than anything else but when he got there and he was done showing him the other

stuff, Miles asked him what the deal was with the stone since he said he knew where it was. He hesitated and then said no he doesn't know where it is but he knows people that know where it is.

Miles wanted to come to the meeting to let the Select Board know he did go meet with him and this is what was discussed. The Select Board thanked him for meeting with him and letting them know the outcome.

#### *Local septic approval- Map 1 Lot 38*

Matt Barnard dropped off a Septic Plan and local approval for Map 1 Lot 38. All the information is correct. **John motioned to sign the local approval for Map 1 Lot 38, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

#### *Request for Parking*

Martha Twombly from the Hebron Conservation Commission and Newfound Land Conservation Partnership emailed to ask if a hiking group could park at the "old" Groton Library site where Groton Road crosses the Cocker mouth River, to carpool to the Cocker mouth Forest (where there's not much parking) for a hike to Bald Knob. This is sponsored by the NLRA and Newfound Land Conservation Partnership, and is part of a series of hikes for folks to learn about conservation lands in the Newfound Watershed. She said she can print dashboard placards identifying participant's vehicles. This is for August 14<sup>th</sup> which is a Sunday. Sara told Chief Bagan and Bubba so they have a heads up. The Select Board approved the parking at the Town Garage on August 14, 2022 and think that placards are a good idea.

#### *Hebron Firefighters Association*

The Town received a letter from the Hebron's Firefighters Association inviting the Town to a dinner/dance on August 28, 2022 to honor Fire Chief John Fischer who is retiring after 47 years of service. The Town can reserve a table for 10 for \$450 if they want to. The Town will pass on spending \$450 on this. Tony said that Jamie Moulton is the new Fire Chief and seems to work well with everyone.

#### *Memo to Trustees of the Trust Fund*

Sara created a Memo to the Trustees requesting to transfer the money to the Capital Reserve Funds that was voted on at the Town meeting. John went over the amounts again which was Public Works CRF \$100,000, Disaster Relief CRF \$50,000, Police Cruiser CRF \$10,000, Truck/Sander CRF \$10,000, Assessing Revaluation CRF \$7,500 and the Electronic Equipment & Software CRF \$5,000. This is a total amount of \$182,500 to be transferred. **John motioned to sign the memo to transfer to Capital Reserve Funds per warrant article 4, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

### **DEPARTMENT ITEMS:**

#### *Highway Department*

Bubba went over the following:

- There is a new flag pole so the Fred from the Highway Department put ballasts out and they put the handicap signs in them. They will be painting them yellow. This will help them know where things are when they are plowing. One is where the old flag pole was because the well head is right behind there so this should protect that as well.
- Morrison will be out to grade Edgar Albert, North Fletcher and Bailey Hill. They were waiting for some rain for the moisture so now that it rained today, they will be out tomorrow. They are starting with Edgar Albert Road and should only be a day or so on each road.
- They got the mower last week and he is going to register it tomorrow. We have put in the request to add it to the insurance. They will be using it for the next six weeks. Miles asked if it is the used machine he read about. Tony explained it is a 2003 but is in really good shape. Bubba said the cost to rent was getting too high. Miles said he read it was about \$5,000 a week. Tony said it is \$5,000 for a 40-hour week but if you didn't use it due to weather it didn't matter, it had to go back Friday at noon. Tony said on

top of that cost, you had to pay for the trucking. Bubba said we were never really getting a full week out of it. Since this is the first year that we have our own, they will use it a lot and it will probably take about 6 weeks. Once they are on top of it, they will still use it but more like three weeks a year, not six. Bubba said that within four years it will pay for itself.

#### *Police Department*

Chief said that the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend went pretty well. He worked every day on the Holiday weekend and was here on Monday the 4<sup>th</sup>. Sculptured Rocks did reach capacity but there were no incidents and all went well.

#### **QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:**

#### *Junkyard question*

Jim Joyce asked who the new junkyard inspector is now. Sara explained her name is Audrey Cline and she is from Municipal Resources Inc (MRI). This is the same company that Ken Knowlton was from but when he retired, they didn't have anyone else to do it until now, which is why the Select Board did the inspections last year. She does other towns, like Rumney, as well.

#### *New Building*

Miles said that he talked to Casey Kuplin about his building and he mentioned that the Town may be looking into a building like this for the Town Garage and wanted to see if there was any progress happening with that. Tony mentioned that they have talked about it and are trying to set up a time for the Select Board to all go together to look at the building. Tony explained that we need to move forward with something this year. We still have the grant right now for \$250,000 but if we don't do something with it this year, we will lose it. Sara explained that they gave us one more Town meeting to bring this forward and if it doesn't move forward at the March 2023 Town meeting then we will lose that grant. Bubba explained that the person from USDA said he would come to meetings to talk to the Town about the grant and the potential for losing it.

Tony mentioned that this cannot come from the Select Board anymore so he is trying to get Casey, Heath Matthews, Jeremy Haney and a few others on a building committee for this so that it is coming from the residents not just the Select Board this time. There was so much wrong information, especially with those that never attended any of the meetings on it. We need to get some people on this committee so the word gets out that it is not just the Town doing this. Tony said he is not willing to do this again if it is just the Select Board. Miles said that Casey did tell him he would be willing to be on the committee. Tony said he told him that as well and he has a set of plans that he tried to email and couldn't so we need to look at those. It was under \$200,000 to build the building very similar to the size we wanted. Bubba explained this is just the building though so we would still have to pay for the other work. Tony said it was the insulated building with doors and windows, it is a wood frame, steel sided like Casey has. Sara confirmed that this is just the building and doesn't include the foundation, septic, well, electricity, etc. Tony said they don't expect it to be the million dollars. John said that everything is going up so it is hard to say right now. Miles said that Casey gets his big trucks in there and when he saw the layout, he thought maybe we could modify the plans. Tony wanted four doors so we got the plans for this. It is an engineered building. John said that Casey said he would even GC it for the Town.

Miles asked if that building is something they think would work for the Town and that they could live with. Bubba said it basically would be the building we were looking at it, it is just not a steel structure. Tony said there won't be the partitions inside, we would have to build the office and stuff inside. Tony would like to get the foundation in, get the building up and get it heated in one year and do the rest later. Miles thinks that this is the best plan so far that would have a better chance of passing. Tony agreed. Sara said that we would have to submit the new plans to USDA for the grant to make sure it would still be eligible. Especially if it will be cheaper and being done in phases we would have to see if it is eligible and if it is how much we would get because the \$250,000 was based on a million-dollar building. We haven't presented this to them yet to see. Bubba said that last time they

said the building needed to be complete in order to get the grant. John said we could consider it complete at that time and then do the rest of the work later.

Tony said to answer Miles' question, yes, we are looking into this and have to do something sooner than later. Tony will try to set it up so we can look at the building in a work session at 5:00pm for the next meeting and then start building committee for August. Tony will let Sara know if Casey is available July 19<sup>th</sup> so she can post the meeting for that time. Right now, we are posted for 6:00pm so she would need to change that if he can meet at 5:00pm.

Tony said we are starting to get interest and more people volunteering for committees. He would really like Casey, Jeremy and Heath on this committee and anyone else. Heath is an alternate on the Zoning Board since Glen is still on there while he is still living in Town until his property sells. The more people are involved the more they know. They only say one million for the building last year and voted that down and didn't look at the money that was being put towards it so we didn't need to bond the full amount. Tony said the funny thing is, they voted it down but then last year voted to put \$100,000 into the Public Works CRF but the first payment for the building would have been less than that. Tony explained that we told USDA what happened at Town Meeting and that we would try again. Bubba said he knows we have been trying and are still trying. He is also from a smaller town in Vermont so he understands. Sara said that he doesn't want to come to Town Meeting to talk because he feels it will be too late at that point and people will already know how they are voting, but he is willing to come to meetings before the Town meeting to explain the grant and how the Town can lose it, the costs of buildings, how costs are increasing every year, etc. Bubba said that he said sometimes hearing it from someone that doesn't work for the Town can help.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Sara Smith  
Administrative Assistant