

TOWN OF GROTON  
SELECT BOARD MEETING  
July 19, 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 July 5, 2022 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted. John motioned to approve the Non-Public Work Session Meeting minutes of July 5, 2022 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

**John motioned to approve the Select Board Meeting minutes of July 5, 2022 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

*Casella Meeting*

Casella Waste Systems requested to meet with the Town due to the rising costs. They are constantly continuing to work to keep their cost down, improve their service and minimize their impact to the environment. With the rising cost of goods, they have come to the point where they need to look at pricing in all aspects of our business and wanted to meet with the Select Board to discuss our service and the pricing for that service. They unfortunately had to cancel this meeting and will reschedule.

*Support Letter for NHEC Broadband Grant Proposal*

At the Broadband meeting a few weeks ago, the Select Board signed a support letter for NHEC broadband. It was a short letter and NHEC has since sent a longer support letter for the Select Board to sign that contains more detail. **John motioned to sign the support letter for NHEC Broadband, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

*Junkyard Renewal Application*

The current junkyard licenses expired on July 1<sup>st</sup>. We just received the background check back for this applicant and they are all set. Audrey's report also stated that the Select Board is all set to renew this license based on her inspection. **John motioned to sign the junkyard renewal application, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

**SELECT BOARD ITEMS:**

*Request to use Tables and Chairs*

Richard Ross requested to use tables and chairs for Saturday, July 23, 2022. The Select Board is okay with this. He will come in and pick them up on Thursday and drop them off on Monday. Ruth will be here on Thursday so Sara will give her the checklist that will need to be signed when they pick them up and when they drop them back off.

*Building Committee*

John explained that the Select Board went and looked at Casey Kuplin's garage in Hebron because it is priced right for what the Town is looking for. It is a nice building which is well built and looks like something that will fit into our budget. The next step is to start a new building committee. We do not have a date yet of the first meeting so keep your eye out on the website because it will be added once we do. Tony said that we had a meeting last month on the USDA grant and if we do not do something with the building this year, they will be

taking the grant money away from the Town. Tony said that anyone that is interested can be on the building committee, the more we have the better.

Dave Leone asked if the building we looked at is the same type and structure the Town is looking for. John mentioned that there would have to be some changes such as that building the joists are all 4 feet on center and they would have to be 2 feet on center up here. As far as size goes it is very close but ours would be a little bigger. Bubba explained that the company that built Casey's building took our plans and gave us a quote for the building and a design based on that. John said it is roughly the same size but he only has one garage door and we would have four and there are a few other differences. Tony said that the quote they gave was \$171,300.00 which is the building only, no site work, no concrete, no electrical, well, septic, etc. This price could go up depending on when we move forward. Richard said that what is crazy is that if we do not do this soon, the grant money will be gone. John said that the grant money may not be able to be applied to this building so we will have to work that all out. Ann said that we wouldn't get that much money if the building is cheaper. Sara confirmed that the \$250,000.00 is based on the million-dollar building so if the building is less than one million then the grant money will be less than the \$250,000.00. Once we have the plans and everything figured out, we will have to meet with USDA to see how much it would be for. We also have to see if this building would qualify because the grant was approved based on the engineered plans for a complete building that was submitted so this could change that. Tony said that they would want to do a complete building and with the grant you have to so we have to get some more information together.

Dave asked if that includes insulation. Tony said yet. Dave asked if it included walls. Tony said yes, it is for steel walls. Tony said that the building is engineered for NH snow loads. Tony said Casey's building went up in 7.5 days. They had all the trusses up in 3.5 hours and he watched them do it from the Fire Station.

#### **DEPARTMENT ITEMS:**

##### *Highway Department*

Bubba went over the following:

- Morrison finished grading on Edgar Albert Road, North Fletcher Road and Bailey Hill Road.
- The crack filling on North Groton Road, Sculptured Rocks Road and River Road is complete.
- The basketball court is done and came in way under what we did the warrant article for. This came out really nice.
- They have been using the new mower a lot.

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

##### *Dave Leone*

Dave Leone came in to talk to the Select Board about a letter he received from the Town in regards to his abatement which also included the letter from Avitar. The letter from Avitar stated that "after speaking to Mr. Leone, I explained that we left him a phone number to call Avitar so we could go on the property to measure each camper but never received a response. After several phone calls, Avitar went to the campground to measure the campers on 6/6/22..."

Dave said that with that being said he called Avitar last year. He called that week and the following weeks after that. He sent emails as well so that he could be present to do the total revaluation. He never heard back from them after any of those calls or emails. On 2/23/22 he called DRA and on 2/28/22 he received a phone call back from Avitar at which they had a 17-minute conversation. He also spoke to him on 4/20/22, 5/26/22, 6/2/22, 6/3/22 and on 6/6/22. Dave showed a screen shot of the 17-minute conversation so he didn't like that it stated he didn't respond back. He was very disappointed to get a letter stating he didn't respond to them

when he did and he has screen shots of these. He doesn't have any from prior to calling DRA because at the time he didn't think it was necessary but after calling them he felt it was so he started screen shotting them.

The reason they came out is because Avitar had added campers on to his tax bill for campers that were not his. This is not how they do this. They had conversations years ago about this and they told him then that there were not going to unless something changed so apparently something changed. He was never given notice of this. He called DRA to confirm this. On 2/28/22 he had a list of all of the owners of all of the campers and asked Avitar to come out. They didn't want to come out then because they didn't want to walk through the snow. He didn't want to come out other times because it wasn't convenient for him. That is why it took so long.

Next year he intends to file and abatement again and if he is not happy with the results, he plans to go forward with the court process because there are things on there that are not right. He said Avitar never mentioned anything they talked about when they were at the property on 6/6/22. There is an addition on his house that Avitar recognized they should be taking 25% off of it and he shouldn't haven't been taxed fully because it is obvious it doesn't have a full wall. If your room doesn't have a full wall on the outside, you can take a % off. There were other things that were supposed to be adjusted or taken off and this wasn't done and wasn't mentioned.

He would like a letter back from Avitar that is corrected. There are 7 phone conversations and none of these happened until he called DRA. John asked if he knows who he spoke to. It was confirmed that it was Kerry that handles the Groton area. Dave dealt with Avitar in the past when he was a Selectmen and Avitar double billed the Town and had to write the Town a check and Dave doesn't know if there is animosity there since he is the one that discovered it. He would like the Select Board to look into this. John said that he would be willing to call Kerry.

### *School Meeting*

Ann asked about the school meeting the other night. This took place July 13<sup>th</sup>. John said that they are going in circles again but they were talking about fixed costs. He pointed out that the fixed costs such as heating the buildings, the number of buildings, the number of teachers, etc. is directly related to the number of students. If you have less students then you don't need as much. They kind of all agreed that they will take 25% of the budget and look at that because that would be the fixed cost part of the budget. They will see what that would be if they divided that up evenly amongst the Towns. When they speak to this next week John is going to point out again that we need to take that and divide it per child and look at how many kids each town has because that is how that fixed budget will be used. Then hopefully someone will point out that is how we are doing it now because it is and it has been this way for 6 years and has worked so there is no point of fixing something that is not broken.

There was a part at the meeting where John reminded everyone why this was started, because Alexandria is looking to pass their tax burden off to other towns. When he said this the Alexandria Selectman got very upset and said that is not why they are doing it. So, John asked him why they did it then and he said because their taxes are high. Which is what John was saying.

Every time they vote there are the same ones that want to leave it like it is and the others want to continue on to make a change. We may end up stale mate when this is done. They did read through how the updated warrant article was written and you can read into that, that the committee is to come out and make a decision on what should be done.

The next meeting is August 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:00pm at the Newfound Middle School Library. Sara will put this on the website as she has been doing. John said that we did have 5 people from the Town show up so it is just the 5 from Groton and about 3-4 from Alexandria.

Dave asked how many towns are in on this. John explained that there are 7. He explained that our district right now pays per child. Throughout the state it varies, some pay per child, some pay 50% per child and 50% per valuation, some are 90/10 so it is different everywhere. We are one of the only ones that still does it based on just the number of children, which is the fair way. The only school that has testing scores above average is the Bridgewater Hebron Village School. The rest are below state average. Also, the enrollment dropped. They need to look at other areas of concern.

John said that even if this ends there is no guarantee that someone else won't put a warrant article out to try to change it again. Dave asked if this was done through a petitioned warrant article. John said yes, Alexandria slipped it in last minute. Then there was a deliberative session where they felt the anger from other towns and changed it to be a committee that will discuss this and figure out the best way. Tony said the way they submitted it; Groton would go up about \$200,000.00. John said we have the lowest median income and second lowest age and one of the lowest populations so when the tax burden comes on to our town and we don't have that many tax payers it goes up. Bridgewater and Hebron also would go up. Tony said that Alexandria has the most kids with 272. Dave asked how many kids Groton has. We have about 47, we are usually around 50.

Dave asked if the bus has been going to River Road now. Bubba said he believes that they are because people went to the school to complain.

**Having no other business to conduct, John motioned to adjourn at 7:26pm, Tony 2<sup>nd</sup>, so voted.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Sara Smith  
Administrative Assistant