

TOWN OF GROTON
SELECT BOARD MEETING
October 4, 2022

In Attendance: John Rescigno, Tony Albert and Sara Smith (Administrative Assistant)

Absent: Ron Madan

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 20, 2022 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted.

John motioned to approve the Select Board Meeting minutes of September 20, 2022 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted.

NEW BUSINESS:

Trick or Treat Hours

Halloween is Monday, 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.

SELECT BOARD ITEMS:

School Meeting

John mentioned that he has been going to the school meetings and the next meeting is tomorrow night. The Towns of Bridgewater, Hebron and Groton are looking to leave the school district. There are different options they can choose and there is a good chance that we can get out. One of the benefits of leaving would be that it would only be three towns instead of the larger school district so we would have more say over what happens and how the money will be spent. It may to save the Town money and there is a chance it could cost the Town more but we will have control over what is being done. One of the big drawbacks would be with the sports because there wouldn't be any sports offered at the Bridgewater Hebron School. This is still being discussed for options if the kids would be bussed to other schools for sports or other options and if the parents would be responsible or if it is part of the school costs. This will be discussed further.

When you look at what is currently happening in the current school district, it is more of a stepping stone then anything. Stacy used it for the same way that Pierre is using it, which is probably the same way that previous Superintendents have used it. You go from a small district to a medium sized district and it is a great stepping stone to build your resume to get into larger districts where you are making the big pay. Right now, Pierre is considering adding on to the school, adding possibly another school, putting a gym in at Danbury which is probably needed. One of his reasons is that by adding more schools or adding on to the schools will help the scores go up. John said that will not help the scores go up, addressing the reasons the scores are low is what will help the scores go up.

We need to make sure we are at the deliberative session. The date has not been set yet but it is usually in January. John said obviously what will happen at the deliberative session is one of the towns will put forth another warrant article which will try to stick it to the Town of Groton and other towns so we need to make sure we are there to vote that down. We also need to make sure we can delay decisions on any buildings that may

go up because if a bond gets passed when we are still in the district, we can still be held liable to that bond even after we get out of the district. We need to pay close attention to that.

John said that in the long run, the Town will have more control and more say if they are in the district with just the three schools then we have now in the larger district. When you look at the demographics, Groton is not the same as some of the other Towns and we are being taken advantage of.

The plan for the meeting tomorrow night is to squash the whole thing and the committee because they are not getting anywhere. They meet every month and the same towns vote yes, every time and the same ones vote no every time.

Bubba asked if we could send all of our kids to a charter school. John thinks we could but we would still have to pay into the district. We really just need to get out of the district.

Ann asked if Danbury is the oldest school in district which is falling down and they have miniscule kids that go to the district. She said they should be closing that school.

John thinks that it is actually New Hampton that is adding the gym, not Danbury. John said they could close the middle school and move everyone to the high school because there is room. Ann said the middle school is where the grades start to decline but that is typical for that age. John said they did say it is typical for middle schools for the scores to dip down. Ann said that something should be done to try to increase this.

Sara mentioned there was an email on being able to tour the schools. She read the posting which stated the following: *The Newfound School families and community members are invited to attend school tours and a listening session relating to the physical condition and future of the Newfound Elementary Schools. The Newfound Area School Board has authorized an Architectural study of the New Hampton, Danbury and Bristol elementary schools. Banwell architects are conducting an assessment of the conditions of our elementary buildings and comparing that to what our needs are. Prior to the meeting you are invited to tour the Danbury Elementary School on October 6th between 5:30 pm and 6:30 pm, the Bristol Elementary School on October 12th between 5:30 pm and 6:30 pm and the New Hampton Community School on October 13th between 5:30 pm and 6:30 pm. On October 18th at 6:00 pm in the Newfound Regional High School Auditorium, a listening session will be held by the Banwell Architects relating to the condition of the three elementary schools. Family and community members will have the opportunity to express their opinions relating to the condition and future of the elementary schools. This listening session will be streaming live on the Newfound Area School District You-Tube channel. You can email your comments during the meeting to questions@sau4.org; your comments will be shared during the discussion.*

Bubba said they do not fix schools anymore they just tear them down and build new ones. They will come up with so many reasons why they shouldn't.

Slim said he went to the meeting last week. A lady from Danbury had a presentation and pictures of the school and how crowded it is. She said they are still growing so they need a new wing on the school. They are not giving up. John said if you go through the school budget line by line it is mismanaged money.

Sara said if they expand schools and do additions and add gyms, wouldn't that make their valuation go up which would make their taxes go up if they change the formula. John agreed and said that some of the Towns are fully thinking this out and they are doing building in their towns that will make their valuations go up which will make their taxes go up with that if they change the formula. Ann said most people don't go to the meetings and see lower taxes now and they vote based on that. Tony said we are going to lose that vote because Alexandria is an SB2 town and they are telling them their taxes will be lower so they will vote in favor of it, same with Bristol. It

would be the same way here if someone told Groton residents that our taxes would be lower. All people want to hear is that their taxes will be lower.

DEPARTMENT ITEMS:

Highway Department

Bubba said they are getting ready for winter. They have been putting the sanders in the trucks and making sure everything is working the way it should. They said we may get some wet snow Friday night.

Police Department

Chief Bagan said that the nail issue has subsided, besides some residual nails. There was one more complaint made from a resident. Sara said that the Select Board got the email which stated she was letting the Chief know. He said he talked to her. Slim said he had one which makes three for him. Chief said like he said at the last meeting, the State did sweep but that doesn't pick them up, it just sweeps them off the road. Sara said the rain could wash some back out or the State did some mowing on the sides of the road that could have kicked some back out. John said that everyone needs to keep in mind that the sweeper doesn't get rid of the nails, it just moves them. They do not have giant magnets to come pick them up so unfortunately, they will sweep them to the side and some will get wedged in with the vegetation and some will make their way back out. It is one of those things that will clear itself up in time and if it does become an issue again, the residents need to let us know. The State will not come out and sweep for one or two. Chief really believes it has to be residual. John said people have to be careful with what they post on the Facebook page because people see that and it gives them ideas like the challenges on Tik Tok.

Chief said he has received some complaints and accusations that it could have come from someone's place, which has not been found to be true so you have to be careful making those accusations when you do not know for sure and there is no proof. John said it doesn't seem like anyone is maliciously throwing them out there. Chief said there is no evidence of this. He also had our computer guy come and pull footage from the Transfer Station cameras but it didn't show anything.

John said the best thing to do is to contact the office so we know there is an issue that needs to be addressed. Also, keep your eyes open. We know there are nails out there so pay attention and let us know if you see anything.

Tree on wires

Bubba said they do know about the tree on the line on North Groton Road down towards 118. They have put an orange safety barrel there and Spectrum and Consolidated Communications have been called multiple times and it has been about a week and they haven't removed it. Tony said we have called and they haven't responded. John said that it doesn't pose a threat to anyone right now unless you stand under it. There is a barrel there so it would be more of a liability for the Town to remove it. We could damage equipment, injure an employee, or break the lines off of it so since it is marked people should stay away from it and eventually, they will come out and remove it. Bubba said that there have been multiple calls between himself, Chief, Sara, Tony, etc. Tony said when he called it in, he called through Fire Dispatch. John said that we are going to call again. Bubba just wanted to let people know it is there and we are aware and have made calls.

COMMITTEE UPDATES:

Conservation Commission

The Conservation Commission clean-up day is October 15, 2022. Anyone interested can meet at the Town House at 10am. They will see how many people show up and assign areas to go to. After that, they will take a hike from Edgar Albert Road over to Sculptured Rocks Road. He asked Ann if her article with that information

will be out before then. She said that it should be out Thursday, October 13th so two days before as long as they print it. They didn't print her last column.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

Ann's Column

Ann will only be doing two more columns and then she is done. Someone else can do it and if they don't then the residents can come to a meeting to see what is going on or they can view the minutes online.

Having no other business to conduct, John motioned to adjourn at 7:21pm, Tony 2nd, so voted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sara Smith
Administrative Assistant