

Town of Groton
Select Board Work Session Minutes
March 21, 2023

In attendance: John Rescigno, Tony Albert, Ron Madan and Sara Smith (Administrative Assistant - AA)

John called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Meeting with Carol Miller

NHEC Presentation: NHEC met with Carol and the Select Board and went over a presentation to provide and update on the fiber/broadband in our area. NHEC covers 1/3 of New Hampshire which is 118 towns. They are planning to have fiber to the premise in Groton by Q4 of 2023. Once it gets closer they will start sending mailers to residents so they know they have the option to change to NHEC for broadband. They will also work with the Town on doing a presentation with all of the information. They mentioned that it is important that you speak out if you are interested. You can put your interest online now too. As long as you sign up when it is available there will not be any installation costs but if you wait and then need something installed later, you will be responsible for those costs.

NHEC went over the different package options that will be available to residents:

- Ultimate: 2 Gigabit (2,000 Mbps) Internet
 - \$99.95 a month and includes managed Wi-Fi and Conexon Connect Router
- Premier: 1 Gigabit (1,000 Mbps) Internet
 - \$79.95 a month and customer must supply wireless router or has the option of buying one through the program
- Basic: 100 Mbps Internet
 - \$49.95 a month and customer must supply wireless router or has the option of buying one through the program
- HD Quality Phone Service- unlimited local and long-distance calls
 - \$29.95 a month plus local taxes and fees with internet package
 - \$39.95 a month plus local taxes and fees stand-alone service

NHEC went over the different package options that will be available to businesses:

- 2 Gigabit (2,000 Mbps) Internet
 - \$299.95 a month
- 1 Gigabit (1,000 Mbps) Internet
 - \$199.95 a month
- 100 Mbps Internet
 - \$79.95 a month
- HD Quality Phone Service- unlimited local and long-distance calls
 - \$39.95 a month plus local taxes and fees with internet package
 - \$49.95 a month plus local taxes and fees stand-alone service

NHEC went over the discounts available:

- No install costs or contracts for residential customers
- ACP- Affordable Connectivity Program
 - \$30 discount for broadband qualifying customers
 - 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines
- Lifeline
 - \$10 discount for telephone qualifying customers

- 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines
- Basic internet with ACP
 - Only \$19.95 a month for highspeed broadband

The Select Board asked since the Town is small business would they be able to get the one business plan for all town buildings, the town house, transfer station and highway department. They said they think it would have to be three plans but they will have someone look into that. Sara said if that is the case the Town is small enough we may be able to just do residential plans to save on money since we are not a standard business, our largest building only has three offices.

The Select Board mentioned that we may not have any more questions now but we probably will once this gets put into place.

Carol and the Select Board scheduled the next meeting for April 18, 2023 at 6:00pm.

John motioned to go into non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (a) and (b) at 6:30pm, Tony 2nd, so voted.

John motioned to return to public session at 6:45pm, Tony 2nd, so voted.

John motioned to seal the non-public minutes, Tony 2nd, so voted.

Meeting with Fred and Jeremy

The Select Board met with Fred and Jeremy to provide an update on the Highway Department and what is happening from here.

Deputy Fire Warden Appointment Form

Jeremy brought in the Deputy Fire Warden Appointment Form that he filled out for Tony Albert to the Deputy Fire Warden. Jeremy said there is a section Tony has to sign and then a section for the Select Board to sign. **John motion to sign the Deputy Fire Warden appointment form, Ron 2nd, so voted.**

Reviews received back

The Department Heads had turned in some more reviews that they signed and the employee signed. The Select Board needs to sign these. **John motioned to sign the reviews, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Jury Duty Reminder

On Monday, April 3rd Sara has to report for Jury Duty Selection. She is off that day for this and will provide an update after that meeting once she knows more information regarding if she is selected and how much time she will be out for this. She is planning on working a few hours each day, either before or after business hours so she can keep up on emails, voicemails, mail, payroll and payables. She will also be at the meetings on April 4th, she should be out by then but will let the Select Board know if anything changes.

Affidavit

The attorney put together an affidavit for a property in Town that we have been working on for a while now. They originally put it from Sara but Sara wasn't sure if this should be her or one of the Selectmen. She asked the attorney and they said this is just an affidavit to attest to specific facts that they then rely on in the motion. It isn't a lawsuit or anything like that where it is an action that the Board is taking. That is the Motion itself, and the attorney will be signing that as counsel. Since the affidavit is a list of specific facts, what is needed is a person with firsthand knowledge of those facts, which in a situation like this, is typically someone in Sara's position as she is the one who keeps the relevant records. He said that we have a very involved Board so maybe one of them would also do it, but it needs to be someone that knows

these things as facts, not has simply heard them in a report. The Select Board agreed that Sara can sign it. Sara will sign it and send it back to the attorney.

Building

Sara emailed both Eric Law at USDA and Doug from Studio Nexxus. Eric Law emailed back that this is very welcomed news and that Rena is our most important RD contact and next steps will be just finishing up the PAR to address our comments, essentially adding in all soft and hard costs relevant to the project.

Doug from Studio Nexxus emailed back that this is great news and in terms of next steps, shall we arrange a meeting to discuss the minimum RD requirements the Town is required to carry for the various insurance, bond and contingency items and determine if a civil engineer is warranted for this project, or are we waiting for the any further reviews? He is available Thursday afternoon, Friday until 2:30, or Monday after 10:30. Tony said that he can attend this meeting with Sara. The days that Doug provided do not work for the Town so Sara will email him back to see if Tuesday works. She will let the Select Board know.

Compliance Information for the USDA Grant

Rena from USDA emailed Sara with the compliance packet that needs to be completed by March 30, 2023 for the grant. With the Town of Groton's recent award of a USDA Rural Development Community Facility Grant Program for the public works building, USDA is required to conduct a compliance review on the project. As part of the review, she attached forms for the Town to complete, as well as some informational handouts that we may find useful. The following are the forms the Town must complete:

- Please complete "Compliance Review Questions for Administrator" (Attachment A).
 - Sara completed this and asked the Select Board to review it and let her know if all is correct.
- Please fill out the chart found on the "Guide for Racial/Ethnicity and Gender Statistical Information" (Attachment B) document.
 - Sara asked the Select Board for assistance on how to complete this.
 - Sara will reach out to Rena to see if attachment B is just for the Public Works Building or for the entire Town of Groton. If for this project, then it will be not applicable because we haven't started the process yet. If it is for the Town, we will need her to clarify exactly what she is looking for and may need to send it to our attorney for review. We need more clarification.
- Please pass along the "Compliance Review Questions for Board of Directors" (Attachment F) to two or more of your Board of Directors to fill out and return to me.
 - We need two Select Board to fill out the form for board of directors and Sara made copies of this questionnaire for them. John and Tony completed this form.
- Please pass along the "Compliance Review Questions for Employees" (Attachment G) to two or more employees to fill out and return to my office.
 - Sara and Ruth completed this form.

We need to return these documents to Rena via email no later than March 30, 2023. Once the completed forms are received, she will follow up with our office to complete the compliance review.

Having no other business to conduct, John motioned to adjourn at 6:59pm, Tony 2nd, so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Smith
Administrative Assistant