

Town of Groton
Select Board Work Session Minutes
April 4, 2023

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

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

Jury Duty Update

On Monday, April 3rd Sara reported for Jury Duty Selection. As everyone saw on the Memo, she was selected and will have to attend April 21, 2023-April 28, 2023. She has posted this time off.

Building Update

On Tuesday March 28, 2023 Sara, Tony and John had a zoom meeting with Doug from Studio Nexus and Rena from USDA. It was agreed that the next steps will be that Studio Nexus will assist with the bidding process and with items USDA needs.

Studio Nexus worked on a contract and sent it over to the Select Board for review. The Select Board would like some adjustments made so Sara will send that information back to them. They also mentioned that they could do the clerks of the works service for bi-weekly visits assuming a 9-month duration which would be about 10 visits at roughly \$4500.00 which would include the site visits and documentation such as photos and field reports of those visits.

The Select board understands that the entire Phase 2 is over \$10,000.00 that is stated in the procurement policy but it is broken up into different categories which are all under \$10,000. The procurement policy also states that "If purchases in excess of \$10,000 do not adhere to the foregoing procedure, the Board should document the reasons for not following it, and record those reasons in Board meeting minutes". They feel the reasons are that each category is under \$10,000 but more importantly they feel it is necessary to continue the work with Studio Nexus since they completed Phase I for us, they have built a relationship and involvement with the Town and with USDA. They are very familiar with the project and what the Town and USDA needs and wants from this project and what the requirements are. The Select Board feel it would cost more to start over with a new architect or engineer and to have new plans done, etc. and the Town cannot afford to pay again for the items already completed and we do not have the time to bring another company up to speed on the requirements, wants and needs of the project. Therefore, the Select Board all agreed to move forward with the next phase with Studio Nexus. They would like a few changes to the wording on the contract but once that is complete, they will come in and sign the contract. The Select Board also agreed to add the clerk of the works to the contract and have Studio Nexus take care of the part as well. **John motioned to move forward with Studio Nexus for the next phase of the building project, to also have them take care of the clerk of the works part of the project, and to come in to review and sign the Studio Nexus contract when the adjustments are made, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Bid for Refurbishing the International

Sara explained the refurbishing of the international was on the warrant and was voted in favor of. Since the quote was over \$10,000.00 this needs to go out for bid. The Select Board agreed that we should put this out for bid now to get the project started and that Sara should list everything that was on the quote that we received. Tony said we should add the cables for the wing plow both front and rear. Sara will create the invitation to bid. It was agreed that anyone interested can contact the town to set up a time to see the vehicle. It was also agreed to give two weeks. Sara said she will look at the date of the posting

and then have the bids due the Monday before the meeting that will be two weeks after that. The Select Board will open them at that next meeting.

Guardrail Concern at 531 Sculptured Rocks Road

Sara talked to a resident at 531 Sculptured Rocks Road. They are having an issue with the guardrail that was put in when the culvert was replaced. They are trying to have some work done and the trucks can't make the turn. They sent in some pictures to help describe what they are referring to. They are wondering what can be done about this.

Tony will go look at it with Fred and let the Select Board know of his recommendations.

Cormier parking/driveway concern

A resident called with a concern about the driveway/parking area at 1047 North Groton Road. They wanted to know if this is considered a driveway or a parking lot. They also wanted to know if it is a driveway if a driveway permit has been submitted for this. We do not have any driveway permits for this on file and it is on the Town portion of North Groton Road.

The Select Board agreed that we should send a letter explaining that we have received an inquiry regarding what appears to be a new driveway at the property so we are reaching out to see if the intent is a driveway and if so, a driveway permit is required. This letter will be ready for Select Board to sign with checks next week. **John motioned to come in and sign the letter when they sign the checks next week, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Wind farm decommissioning

John wanted to discuss the wind farm decommissioning. John read through the decommissioning and it he didn't see where it says who is responsible for the cost. Ron said that they are responsible. John will look into this further.

Letter from Grafton County regarding ARPA funds

Sara mentioned that the Town received a letter today from The Grafton County Commissioners and the Executive Committee stated they have authorized a portion of ARPA funds received by the County to be allocated to Grafton County Municipalities with eligible projects. They listed how the funds can be used:

- Support Public Health expenditures by funding COVID mitigation efforts, medical expenses, behavioral health care, etc.
- Address negative economic impacts caused by the public health emergency
- Replace lost public sector revenue
- Provide premium pay for essential workers who bear the greatest health risks because of their service in critical infrastructure sectors
- Invest in water, sewer and broadband infrastructure.

The letter also stated that government services are the most flexible eligible use category under the SLFRF program and government services generally include any service traditionally performed by a government, unless Treasury has stated otherwise. Common examples include, but are not limited to:

- Construction of schools and hospitals- we don't have any
- Road building and maintenance and other infrastructure
- Health Services
- General Government Administration, staff and administrative facilities
- Environmental remediation
- Police, first responders and other public safety services (including purchase of fire trucks and police vehicles)

Towns can combine applications with other municipalities for projects. ARPA funds cannot be used as matching funds for other federal grants but may be used in conjunction with other federal funding for projects.

The maximum amount for an application is \$50,000.00. Sara stated applications need to be submitted by May 5, 2023 and project expenditures must be completed by June 30, 2024.

Sara mentioned we have applied for a lot of other grants and congressional spending which we haven't heard back on. Sara asked if there are any projects the Select Board would like to apply for. The Select Board agreed we should look into if this could be used for paving of the Transfer Station and the new Highway Garage. Sara will email the contact on the letter to see if this project would be eligible.

Treasurer Email

Sara mentioned that Pam Hamel emailed that she left the uncashed check list on Sara's desk and asked Sara to ask the Select Board about the 2021 checks and to ask Consolidated about the August check. Sara will contact Consolidated this week.

Regarding the 2021 checks, these were the negative tax bill checks that we had to send because the tax rate was low and the estimated tax bills for the first half overpaid the taxes. There is quite a few outstanding which Sara showed the Select Board. Sara asked if we should send them a letter to see if they still have the check and if they can cash it. The Select Board stated we should send letters explaining that there is an outstanding check, ask that they cash it within 90 days and explain if it is not cashed within 90 days then it will be voided. Sara will work on creating these letters and mailing them. The Select Board said these letters can come from Sara on behalf of the Select Board.

MIT Plans

MIT submitted plans which the Planning Board reviewed at their meeting on March 29, 2023. They are looking at moving forward with their new bunkhouses and they are doing it in steps. The Select Board reviewed the plans for the road and the parking lot. They will be making a new parking lot which will be located off of the road and then there would be a road off of it. The Select Board will send the following recommendations to the Planning Board:

- The road has to be big enough for emergency vehicles to fit, which it appears the plan is showing 10 feet wide which would be wide enough but we should confirm that width.
- There needs to be a turnaround at the end and the road so the emergency vehicles can turn around.
- The road will have to be plowed and maintained year-round.
- We should also ask what the weight rating is on the bridge and will need an engineer rating for it.
- They can put a gate up but the Town/emergency services would need a key.

Sara will send this information to Deb and cc John.

Having no other business to conduct, John motioned to adjourn at 6:55pm, Tony 2nd, so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Smith
Administrative Assistant