

Town of Groton
Select Board Work Session Minutes
December 19, 2023

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

John called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

Budget Items

- Email from Forester: Jordan King sent an email stating *“As budget season approaches, I am putting in my yearly plug for the Town to start managing their Town forests. A stewardship plan and timber appraisal for each property, along with boundary line maintenance, possible hiking trails, etc. should be considered for land owned by the Town. If not, they should at least maintain the lines and perform a timber appraisal so that the lots can be sold and put back into taxation. At least one property that I know of is ready for logging in the near-term.”* The Select Board agreed to hold off on this again this year.
- Minute Taker: The Select Board agreed this should be added under the Executive budget.
- Other budget items: Sara explained nothing has changed since the last meeting. At the next budget meeting she will have the YTD totals for this year on the budget and will have proposed warrant articles to review so there will be more to discuss then.
- Tony mentioned that the defibrillator is out of date and they got quotes for new ones. Tony said if Mike has money left in the budget, we could buy some. Tony will get the quote but he believes it will be around \$1600.00 each and we need two.

Peter Smith email- building update

Peter emailed to see if the Select Board could update the Townspeople on the status of the approved Public Works garage. He asked if a paragraph or two could be put on the towns home page of the website. The Select Board stated that this has been updated at meetings but agreed that Sara should put an update on the website stating that there have been some delays on the building due to requirements from USDA but we have been working hard to get this project moving forward. We should have more information soon and are hoping to send the project out to bid and have a contractor in place by Town Meeting.

1693 North Groton Road Update

The owner of 1693 North Groton Road provided an update that they have no intentions of staying in the RV full time and realistically they are only there on weekends during the warmer weather to clean up and work on the property. They do plan to building their retirement house and continue to make site improvements and enjoy their time on the property. There were originally three campers located at this property before they bought it and they did reach out to the Town to discuss the plans before they purchased the property. Two of the campers have been removed from the property. The Select Board is okay with this intended use. Sara will email the owner to let them know.

Articles of Agreement

Terry from Bridgewater sent an email with the final draft of the articles of agreement for the Select Board to review. He has already discussed this matter with Pat Moriarity of Hebron and John but wanted it brought to our respective Boards for discussion and for the Selectmen approve the draft and move to schedule a public hearing. During January of 2024, a public meeting in each town must be held. He will forward the procedures to follow in the near future. After the public hearing it will be brought to the voters in each town to vote. Sara will send an email to see if the meeting dates of 1/16/24 or 1/23/24 would work

for them for the hearing at 7:00pm. **John motioned to approve the draft and to move to schedule a public hearing, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Encumbering Funds

Due to the 2023 Warrant Article 3, building the new town garage, work not being completed in 2023, the following need to be encumbered:

- The Select Board need to encumber the \$169,000 that was raised from taxation for the building
- The Select Board need to encumber the \$100,000 that was to come from the unassigned fund balance

John motioned to encumber \$269,000 total for building the new town garage, which is the \$169,000 that was raised from taxation and the \$100,000 that was to come from the unassigned fund balance, so that we can use it in 2024, Tony 2nd, so voted.

Town Administrator Position

Sara asked when the Select Board would like to make the Administrator position effective. The last time they discussed this they were going to do it in 2023 but the money was not budgeted so they decided to wait until 2024. Also, the attorney stated that since it is not a statutory position that the Selectmen can make this change on their own and it does not need to be done at a Town Meeting. **John motioned to change Saras position from Administrative Assistant to Town Administrator effective the pay period after Town Meeting on March 16, 2024, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Reminder- Sara surgery

Sara reminded everyone that her surgery is scheduled for tomorrow. They said she will be out for 2-3 weeks but she is not sure exactly how long, it will depend on how she is healing. For now, she posted time off from December 20, 2023- January 3, 2024. That would be two weeks but it could be more. She will keep everyone posted. Hilary will be doing payroll while she is out.

Meeting with Carol Miller

Carol Miller and Jonathan from NHEC met with the Select Board. Jonathan explained that this has been installed in Town and have started putting it out to customers. Sara explained the Town is on the internet and went over the few issues they experience while they were here. They said that we should see service getting better from here. They asked if we experienced any issues with the weather. Sara explained that we are getting phones installed tomorrow.

Carol said that all that is left is her report. She will work on that and add the map to it and get that to the Town. It was agreed we do not need to have any more meetings.

Meeting with Deb Johnson

The Select Board met with Deb Johnson to discuss the minute taker position and the flood plain updates.

Minute Taker Position

The Select Board wanted to discuss the minute taker position with Deb. The Town had posted the minute taker position online awhile ago and never had any interest. Hilary had shown interest and sent the Select Board an email. The posting was to do minutes for all committees not just one. It appears that Deb had a conversation with Hilary and that the understanding was for Hilary to do minutes and other secretarial jobs for the Planning Board such as filing, abutter notices, etc.

John said they feel that whoever is hired should be hired for all committees. The Select Board agreed that we can increase the pay if we find out that is not enough. John said the entire committee should be helping stuff the envelopes. Deb said that we need to make sure that they are all there then and all there to help

even with the printing. John said we just cannot have someone who isn't aware of the Planning Board to take care of this. John said the Planning Board should discuss this at the next meeting.

Deb said that if we are not going to put money in to pay someone to help her then it probably won't get done. Deb said they will just have her do minutes and see what else gets done. She said she is the Chair and this is not her job. John said she should bring it up again. Deb said that every time she brings it up, they cannot agree on a time. John said that they should commit to every planning board meeting they should take 30 minutes or so to go through the cabinets and boxes. Deb said that she is disappointed that the Select Board doesn't see that there is a lot of work that needs to be done that isn't her job and that she needs someone to be trained on this and to help. She doesn't know how much longer she will be doing this. John said they completely understand but they do not think it is the best way to spend the tax payer's money. Deb said that even doing the handouts, minutes and agendas for the meetings is a lot for her when she is volunteering. She is committed for another year but after that we will see what happens. She said she would encourage everyone to think about a replacement for her. John mentioned that the alternates could become permanent members. He said we need to make sure that we have people on the board that are committed and can attend the meetings.

John also asked Deb if they can change the Planning Board meeting because it always conflicts with the Steering Committee Meeting. She will discuss this at the next meeting to see what works.

We will let Hilary know that starting in January she will start meeting minutes in January and will put the budget line under executive. We will look at increasing the line if needed later on.

Flood Plain Updates

Katie Paight the State Floodplain Management Program Coordinator sent emails looking for an update for the flood plain updates. Katie has emailed a few times looking for an update. It appears most of the updates are to be reflected in the Site Plan Review, which Katie Outlined. Sara asked Deb where she stands with this and it looks like we have a mid-January deadline. Katie is looking for an update and Sara is out for surgery tomorrow for a few weeks so she would at least like to email back with where we stand on this. Deb said she will email the updates to the site plan regulations information to Katie.

The Select Board also has to motion to have these changes declared to be a part of the Town of Groton's Floodplain ordinance. She provided the following wording which the Select Board motioned:

John motioned that pursuant to RSA 674:57, by resolution of the Board of Selectmen, all lands designated as special flood hazard areas by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in its "Flood Insurance Study for the County of Grafton, NH" dated February 8, 2024, together with the associated Flood Insurance Rate Maps Panels 33009C0795F, 33009C0811F, 33009C0812F, 33009C0813F, 33009C0814F, 33009C0818F, 33009C0819F, 33009C0960F, 33009C0976F, 33009C0977F, 33009C0978F, 33009C0979F, 33009C0985F, and 33009C0990F dated February 8, 2024, are declared to be part of the Town of Groton Floodplain Management Ordinance and are hereby incorporated by reference, Tony 2nd so voted.

Having no other business to conduct, John motioned to adjourn at 6:57pm, Tony 2nd, so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Smith
Administrative Assistant