

TOWN OF GROTON
SELECT BOARD MEETING
January 3, 2023

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

John motioned to approve the Non-Public Work Session Meeting minutes of December 20, 2022 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted.

Dave Leone asked when the minutes become public. John mentioned after they are approved, they are put online the next day. Dave clarified he is asking about the non-public minutes. John stated that they never become public. Dave said doesn't it matter what the subject is. John said they are non-public because they are not meant for the public to hear it and they should never leave the Town House either, they should always remain at the Town House.

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

NEW BUSINESS:

Intent to Cut Map 2 Lot 41

The owner submitted an intent for Map 2 Lot 41 for property located on Halls Brook Road. This is about a 35- acre cut. No bond is needed. **John motioned to sign intent to cut for Map 2 Lot 41, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Acceptance under RSA 31:95-b of one-time bridge payment from the State in accordance with Senate Bill 401

The Town received a one-time bridge payment from the State of NH in accordance with Senate Bill 401. The amount of this payment is \$19,831.52 and can only be used on the maintenance, construction or reconstruction of municipality owned bridges. There is no time limit on using these funds as long as they are accepted under RSA 31:95-b and it is non-lapsing. Sara did reach out to DOT and then out attorney and explained that we have no work that needs to be done right away and asked if these could be put into a capital reserve fund to use later. The attorney stated they could and gave some wording on how to create a bridge capital reserve and to place this amount into the fund. The Select Board agreed since it is non lapsing, they will keep it in the general fund for now but if it hasn't been used by next year then we will create the Capital Reserve Fund to put this money in so it doesn't get lost. **John motioned to accept the one-time bridge payment of \$19,831.52 under RSA 31:95-b, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Building Permit- Map 6 Lot 38

The owner dropped off a building permit for a 12x8x24 rhino shelter/portable canvas garage in a box along with the release form. This is on a private road so it had to go before the Planning Board for review so they could provide comments/recommendations to the Select Board. The Planning Board recommended to approve. **John motioned to approve the building permit for Map 6 Lot 38 and to sign the release form, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Building Permit- Map 6 Lot 47

The owner submitted a building permit for a 32x58 log cabin. This is on a private road so it had to go before the Planning Board for review so they could provide comments/recommendations to the Select Board. There is already

a release form on file. The Planning Board recommended to approve. **John motioned to approve the building permit for the log cabin on Map 6 Lot 47, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Building Permit- Map 6 Lot 47

The owner submitted a building permit for a 20x8 Rhino garage/garage in a box. This is on a private road so it went before the Planning Board for review so they could provide comments/recommendations to the Select Board. There is already a release form on file. The Planning Board recommended to approve. **John motioned to approve the building permit for the rhino garage/garage in a box on Map 6 Lot 47, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

SELECT BOARD ITEMS:

Fiber through NHEC

John mentioned that we just got word that Groton will be receiving high speed internet through NHEC. They will be running fiber through the town. The work will be starting in the Summer of 2023 and they anticipate it to be available to customers in the Fall. Anyone house that has NHEC run to it will have access to this internet option. Tony said they said it will be minimum of one gig. Tony said Spectrum is a lot less. Tony said the average cost will be \$70 per house. John added it isn't costing the town anything because the entire town is serviced and NHEC got grant. We are lucky that the entire Town is serviced by NHEC which makes this possible for us. Tony said that Hebron they have part NHEC and the rest is Eversource so the Eversource customers will not have this option. Bubba asked if this means Sculptured Rocks will actually get internet now. John said yes, if there is electricity running to your house, then you will have the option.

School Deliberative Session 2/4/23

John mentioned that the School Deliberative session is February 4, 2023 at 10:00am. It is imperative that residents from the town attend. More than likely there will be another warrant article put in place. We will find out then. They have been trying to change the school formula to change it from the current way of charging per student to change it to the valuation of the Town. This would greatly increase the taxes in the Town of Groton. Last year it was estimated that our taxes would have gone up approximately \$250,000.00 if this went through. Groton, Hebron and Bridgewater are affected the most so they are hoping residents from these towns attend and can speak against it and vote it down.

House Bill

John mentioned there is a bill going through the house for Groton, Hebron and Bridgewater to break away from the school district and create its own district. That will be on the floor of the house on the week of January 17th. John will be there to speak and hopefully the other Selectmen and town residents will be there to speak to that they support leaving the school district for many reasons. One reason being they will get a better education, which they will because the Bridgewater Hebron School scores better then when the children get to the middle school. These students would be at that new school until 8th grade and then would have a choice. They are working on right now between either Newfound or Plymouth. They will also have much more control over the school's budget.

Ann asked when would the new school district be up and running once it is signed into law. John said probably about a year. They are planning on adding two additional classrooms which they are already set up for.

Tony said when they built that high school, they had an opportunity to buy the land across from Bridgewater Hebron School, which is where Dyers is now. They decided to build it where it is now and the people in Town did argue this because they couldn't have built it any farther away from Groton. People on River Road are on the busses for a long time to get to school. They tried back then to go to Rumney and Plymouth but it didn't work, they wouldn't let them leave the district.

DEPARTMENT ITEMS:

Highway Department

Bubba went over the following:

- The backhoe was broken down for a few hours. A hydraulic line let go and there was a problem with a wire on the starter which happened at the same time. Dans Mobile Mechanic was able to fix it that afternoon.
- Charlie Coursey and Gordon Coursey & Son helped fill as much of the really deep shoulder washouts on North Groton Road.
- There was also a pretty bad wash out on River Road which took out some of the asphalt on the road. They tried to repair the best they could for the winter but will be going back.
- We know there are damages on Province Road but we are not sure what the damages are at this time. He got pictures from some people but hasn't seen it in person. Tony and Bubba may go look at it.
- Sara and Bubba filled out an initial damage assessment (IDA) last week to report the damages we are aware of but also reported there are damages we cannot see at this time so we will not know the full extent until Spring. They have the Towns fill out the IDA's because it helps them see how much damage there is across certain counties and the states to decide if it should be declared a disaster. They had said they thought the co-op itself would have enough to get it to the cost it needs to be for a disaster.
- John said there would probably be more damages if the culverts were not put in on Sculptured Rocks Road. Tony confirmed and said those three culverts were way over half full so with the old culverts they would have gone over and washed out the road again. That was money well spent. Tony said that when it rains in winter it is never a good thing.

Police Department

Chief Bagan said he was here on the 23rd. He worked 31 hours and didn't want to go beyond that because 32 hours reaches a threshold of full time which could be problematic. Tony said it is usually an average so one week wouldn't matter if he went over, as long as it is once in a while for emergencies and not all of the time. Tony said if he needed, please do not go home because you are afraid to go over on hours. Chief said police standards and training has serious issues with the hours so he tries to stay under. John said as long as it doesn't happen all of the time it would be fine. When he left, he said the severe wind and rain had passed. He didn't receive any calls for wires or trees down. The river did break the banks especially by the Town garage. No roads needed to be shut down.

John asked Bubba if during these events since Bubba is pretty much out there by himself, if it would help if Chief and the Highway Dept communicated and maybe inspected different sides of Town. Bubba said if anything happened then it would help.

Bubba said the water came to the door but it was close but it didn't flood garage and they moved all equipment in time. It was two inches inside the door but it was not two inches high. They moved everything to Smith Road because it was closer then moving it to the park. Tony said that they were on West Shore Road receiving reports of water across the road. He called Bubba who was stuck on one side so they drove out to look. He said they also cleaned out ditches near Seven Kids Lane to avoid a wash out.

Bubba said our biggest concern is the culvert near Miles on North Groton Road. This will be devastating when this goes out. Tony said they stopped to look at it and it washed out to the yellow line. Bubba said we have brought this up many times and sent pictures and showed them. Sara mentioned when they were doing site visits with HSEM and FEMA they brought them there to show them how bad it was. We were told that since it is on a State Road that the State has to be the ones to report it and apply for grant money but we could send letters which we did. John said we have addressed it the last few years. Tony said we have addressed it at the meeting in Plymouth. Bubba said it is on the 10-year plan but it could be devastating if something happens. This would cut the Town off. Dave asked if this is the State Road that we are referring to. Tony confirmed it is.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

Costs to repair Town trucks

Dave asked how much it costs to repair the two trucks in the last storm. Bubba said that it cost \$400 to fix the big international and we are not sure on the costs for the small international. We haven't paid anything yet because we are working on the warranty for it. Dave asked if it was the serpentine belt that broke on the smaller one. Bubba said that the clutch drive is on the motor that is actually on the serpentine belt as well. When the clutch went on the hydraulic drive, that came off and then the serpentine belt came off too. The serpentine belt took out some other wiring that they had to rewire. Dave asked if the clutch that went for the hydraulics is something that comes on the truck or is an aftermarket part. Bubba said it doesn't come on the truck. Dave asked if the hydraulic line that went on the bigger truck is wear and tear. Bubba said it was just an older hose that he hadn't replaced yet.

Private Roads

Dave said he hears talks about the Town checking on the state road and the culvert and Chief checking on the state road but he asked does anyone check private roads. John said we don't technically check on the state road but there are issues we notice when driving these roads to check all of the town roads. Tony said you have to drive the state roads to get to the town roads so you are looking at them while driving. Chief said that he was looking more at river heights to see if anything was going to be a problem. Dave said he understands that but his question is do you check on the private roads. Chief explained that sometimes he stays off the private roads due the conditions and mud issues and he doesn't want to ruin the private roads and the work the owners do. There are issues with private roads about being directed for patrol, they cannot do that. He checks on residents on private roads courtesy wise because he is still responsible for the residents themselves not the roadway so it is a tough thing.

John asked Dave if he is talking about welfare checks. Dave said no, he is asking if anybody such as the Chief of Police, the Fire Department, the Emergency Management, check on the private roads to look for trees, to look for wires. John said that he thinks that would be more of a private road issue, he asked Dave if he thinks it is. Dave said he is asking if any town official checks any private roads. John said we do not maintain the private roads. Tony wanted to clarify when he was out, he wasn't out as a Selectman, he was there for the fire department. Dave said again, his question is that is there any town official that checks on trees, wires, washouts, on private roads to make sure people can get in and out and that the fire department can get in. Chief said if he gets called about a tree or wire, he will investigate it and notify or dispatch the co-op or whoever is needed. If he comes across it, he also notifies dispatch to let the co-op know or whoever's pole it is. Dave said so there is nobody that checks on the private roads in Town. Tony said when the people call to report it the fire department or police respond. If you call, we come. Ron said that he lives on a private road so he checks his own road.

Dave said that he wants to make a comment about the minutes where it says "he has promised the Town wood which was never delivered". Dave said he didn't deliver the wood because he found out that there was a deal between Bubba and the Coursey's not only for the wood but also for the labor so had he produced the wood there was no one to put the wood on the bridge. John said there was people to put the wood on the bridge. Bubba said Dave knew this and that Bubba had called him three times prior. Dave said that is not true but he isn't going to argue with Bubba. John said he is sure that if the wood was delivered that we would have installed the wood. Dave said he wanted to make it perfectly clear that he was told afterwards. John said that we should also make it perfectly clear that several times Dave has said that we should hire town people to do work because they would get the town a better price. Dave said he doesn't know if he has said that, he has probably said it at least once. John said he has said it more than once. Dave asked if he just remembers that and what is the point. John said to Dave that the point is, have you ever given the Town a better price. Dave said he certainly has. He said when he only charged the Town \$800 a day for his excavator that was certainly a better price then the price at the time. John said then we appreciate that. Dave said that when he told them that he took a building down for the Town of Dorchester at that \$800 a day rate and the Town had paid another company a lot more to take down our building. John said so you charged Dorchester \$800 a day and charged Groton \$800 a day, is that what you are saying? Dave said it is a municipal rate.

John said so if we are charged the same price as another town, it is not a better deal. Dave said of course it is, it is a better price then he would charge him personally. John said that Dave said he would charge our town a better price but he charged the Towns the same price. Dave said it is a municipal rate. John said so it is the same price not a better price. Dave said the same price as another town. John said but not better. Dave said not better than another town but better than a private party. John said he should have specified that.

Dave said he just wants to make it clear that it is too bad that there is no one in Town that looks out after anything on private roads. John said he wouldn't say that.

Sara stated that there is a private road release that states that they understand the Town is not responsible or liable for a private road and it is their responsibility for maintenance, for emergency vehicles to get in and out, etc. Chief said that it can be problematic and he went through a private road seminar on it and if you start the Town could assume obligation and then the Town could be liable for maintenance. John said that from his understanding if a public road gets washed out and there is an emergency, the Town can go help in the event of an emergency. Bubba said it can get tricky because we are not supposed to spend the Towns funds on a private road. John said in the event of an emergency or crisis this would be looked at differently. Tony told Chief he is doing the right thing. Bubba said it is a very tricky thing. Tony said when people call, they respond. Ron said if Chief cannot get up a road there is nothing he can do. Chief said that he got a call for Will Colburn Road but it hadn't been plowed out to get to the residence so he couldn't respond so he let dispatch know.

Province Road- Dorchester

Bubba read Dorchester's minutes. They have a gate up on their end of Province Road and they are looking at making it a Class VI Road. Bubba said they should contact NHMA. He doesn't know if they can because it is a Kings Highway but if they can do it then we then we should look into it. Why should we take care of a road that goes nowhere. He people who are at the end are Dorchester residents and tax payers. Ours is a camp, not year-round residents. We have put a lot of money into that road and received FEMA money for it so we may be required to keep it as it is for a few years. That is what saved us the last few years. We never would have got the road into the shape it is in now. Sara and Bubba would have to look into this if we do decide to change this. Bubba just wanted to make the Select Board aware so we can look into it if Dorchester is able to change it to a Class VI Road. He knows it will be fought by the residents. John asked where it changes over to Dorchester. Bubba stated right before the Dorchester residents. Bubba said if it is a Class VI Road, the State would take care of it because they own almost the entire side of one side of the road. John said that is a valid point and something to think about. Tony agreed that if it is a road to nowhere it doesn't make sense. If there is a bridge there it is a shortcut. Bubba said that is true but would also increase the traffic. John asked if there was a lot of traffic when the bridge was used. Bubba said there wasn't as many people here. Tony said that it was used more than you would think. Bubba just wanted everyone to think about this. We will wait and see what Dorchester does.

Having no other business to conduct, John motioned to adjourn at 7:39pm, Tony 2nd, so voted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sara Smith
Administrative Assistant