

Town of Groton  
Select Board Work Session Minutes  
February 20, 2024

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

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

**Update on building/Bid posting approval**

Sara and Bubba met with the architect/engineer on Thursday and we worked on who was doing what with the bid process. They reached out to USDA who confirmed that “The notice to bid needs to be posted for a minimum of 10 days. You do want to make sure and provide enough time for prospective contractors to submit. As a reminder if the town has a more restrictive timeline (30 days) then that would be the posting timeline to use.”

Doug sent Sara a draft for posting in the paper. Sara asked the Select Board to review and approve or make changes. Sara said we usually send it to the local paper which means it will be listed in their 2/29/24 edition of the paper. Sara asked Doug if he thinks it should be sent to any larger papers and Sara asked the Select Board the same. Doug said it could be sent to Concord Monitor or Manchester Union Leader. The Select Board said also put this in the Concord Monitor and the Manchester Union Leader on top of the local paper. Sara said that the bids are due 3/21/24 and it states to be opened that date. Sara would like to see if we can change the date to 3/19/24 since we have a meeting that day. **John motioned to move forward with the bid posting and changing the date to 3/19/24, Tony 2<sup>nd</sup>, so voted.**

**Town report update**

The Select Board all reviewed and approved the proof of the Town Report. Sara sent the updated budget, warrant and MS-636 on Friday 2/16/24 and approved them to move forward with production. They will start production this week and will let us know when it is ready for pick up. They know that we need to have this to the Town by 3/5/24.

**Dorchester Province Road Bridge Update**

Sara did reach out to Dorchester regarding the Province Road Bridge and to see if the Select Board could set up a meeting and get more information on this. Dorchester Administrative Assistant responded that they do have an informative letter in the works to send to Groton and Canaan. Between budget workshops, DRA reports, writing Warrant Articles, and preparing the Annual Report, she has not had the time to finish it up but she will send it once it is complete.

**Email from North Country Council**

North Country Council sent an email regarding OHRV Study Commission Application. This is to apply for interest in being involved in having our town a part of the study to become town that offers year-round OHRV trails. The study areas such as noise, dust, rider behaviors, etc. The Select Board agreed that they do not want the Town to have year-round OHRV trails at this time so we will not submit an application of interest.

**Town Administrator Job Description**

The Select Board has been working on the job description for a few months now. **John motioned to approve the Town Administrator Job Description, Tony 2<sup>nd</sup>, so voted.**

## Follow up from Public Hearings

- The word draft was removed from the articles of agreement and a new one was put online and new copies were made.
- Sara wanted to confirm if someone from the Steering Committee is passing on the feedback from the Darlington's to the attorney or if the Town should. She also wanted to ask if we are going to wait for their email to do so or move forward with the items that were brought up during the public hearing that we have in the minutes. John said that he knows the steering committee members that were at that meeting heard their feedback so we do not need to do anything at this time. The articles cannot be changed before Town meeting but they could be changed after. If they do submit an email to the Select Board email address then Sara can send this information to the Steering Committee. John said that the Darlington's were correct that we are voting on the articles of agreement with that warrant article but the meeting got very confusing. He wants to be sure people know what they are voting on, that no changes can be made to the warrant article or the Articles of agreement because all three towns need to vote on the same thing and that it is a yes/no vote. If all Towns vote yes, then we can amend the articles of agreement after.
- Budget/Warrant Article Totals: The Select Board agreed to keep the budget and warrant articles as they were presented at the budget hearing. They did not make any changes but the people can amend the articles if they want to.
- Cemetery: It is licensing; they do not advertise so it was agreed this should be changed to licensing and this would cover the \$80.00 for the crypt keeper licensing for the online burial plot database. The Select Board agreed this should be changed to licensing with the cemetery trustees during their budget meeting.
- The amount in the unreserved fund balance after applying money to the taxes is \$332,057 which is 12.26% retained (falls within the 5%-17% recommended)
- Sara has completed the following research when working on items regarding the Town Administrator position. The Select Board can share whatever information they would like to share at tonight's meeting or at Town Meeting.
  - Job description- there are copies of the Town Administrator job description on the table. The Select Board agreed these will not be put online as we do not normally put the job descriptions online but if anyone would like a copy, they can request one from the Select Board office or grab one off the table.
  - Grants/FEMA info- Since Sara has worked with the Town, she has been involved with getting the Town \$1,493,120.00 in grant money and \$1,052,336.95 in FEMA money. This is the grants we have been awarded and she has applied for more grants that we did not get the money for.
  - Sara has binders for grants and FEMA paperwork. The Select Board agreed she should bring one of each to show the amount of work that goes into each one.
  - A lot of the local town Administrative Assistants do not do FEMA paperwork. They stated that it is the EMD, Fire Chief, Planning Board, Road Agents, etc. that do it or they have not had any. It is the Administrative Assistant for some towns like it is for us but not for most.
  - There are many local towns that have never applied for grants or if they do, they are small ones but extensive ones are handled by grant writers. A lot of Towns said the only grants they have done were during COVID which were the ARPA grants that all Towns did.
  - Cost of grant writers: Grant writers charge up hourly rates anywhere from \$35-\$100 with expert level grant writers charging \$100. Most grant writers charge fees based on 3% of the grant award amount. Research also shows that most grants take anywhere from 20-30 hours to write for submission.

- It was mentioned that the towns all have the same responsibilities as the larger communities but the big difference is the scale. This is correct which is why we have one person doing it ALL and the larger communities have more than one. Even not so larger ones have more than one (Hebron has admin and AA, Lempster has an AA and clerical assistant, as you move up to even bigger ones like Bristol, they have a town administrator but they have separate people that handle assessing, they have finance officer, human resources, welfare officer, etc.)
- It is not the same job as it was 10 years ago, things have changed, reporting has changed for everything, requirements through the local and federal government have changed.
- It was stated that from 2020-2023 the salary in that office went up 12% but it has been shown that the cost of living has gone up in that timeframe 18.7%.
- What decision making authority does Town Admin have: Per statute a Town Administrator, Administrative Assistant, or any other title issued along these lines all have the same authority as either assigned by or voted into place by the Board of Selectmen. The next step up would be a Town Manager.
  - Rumney sent that in most cases the only things that he signs for the Board are along the items of letters, notices, and after being given authorizations He can sign agreements, contracts, purchase orders, and things along that line. They do not have building permits, but driveway permits and such are handled by the Planning Board. Timber and gravel intents and yield taxes are signed by the Board.

**John motioned to go into non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (a) and (b) at 5:15pm, Tony 2<sup>nd</sup>, so voted.**

**John motioned to return to public session at 6:30pm, Tony 2<sup>nd</sup>, so voted.**

**John motioned to seal the non-public minutes, Tony 2<sup>nd</sup>, so voted.**

#### **Meeting with Bubba**

- Bubba mentioned there is something that used to be called the Dodge Report. He said we should ask Doug and Jim about this for the building project.
- Bubba stated that the International is currently down, there are some broken springs. He is waiting to see if it is under warranty. If not, we could reach out to Primex to see if they would cover it.
- Bubba did meet with the Forester and a variance is not needed for the River Road project.
- Tony mentioned we need to order calcium chloride for the gravel roads.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Smith  
Administrative Assistant