

TOWN OF GROTON
SELECT BOARD MEETING
February 20, 2024

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 February 13, 2024 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted.

John motioned to approve the Public Hearing on Withdrawing from SAU4 Meeting minutes of February 13, 2024 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted.

John motioned to approve the Public Hearing on the Budget/Warrant Article minutes of February 13, 2024 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted.

John motioned to approve the Select Board Meeting minutes of February 13, 2024 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted.

NEW BUSINESS:

Updates from Public Hearings

There were a few items that came up at the Public Hearing on the Proposed Budget and Warrant Articles that the Select Board wanted to follow back up with everyone on.

- John said that the Darlington's were correct that we will be voting on the articles of agreement at the Town Meeting with the warrant article. The public hearing 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 exact thing and that it is a yes/no vote. Tony added that if all Towns vote yes, then we can amend the articles of agreement after.
- The word draft was removed from the articles of agreement and a new one was put online and new copies were made.
- 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 which falls within the 5%-17% recommended.
- There was a lot of questions on the Town Administrator position
 - Job description- there are copies of the Town Administrator job description on the table. 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.

- 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.
- The Select Board showed the binders for grants and FEMA paperwork and how much paperwork actually goes along with it. They brought one for the grant example and one for the FEMA paperwork.
- What decision making authority does Town Administrator 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.
 - We did reach out to a few different towns and we are waiting to hear back from them. 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 wanted to add that when you talk about the value of an employee there are certain things you have to look at. When you have someone as valuable as Sara, you do what you need to do to keep them. Sara has been offered other jobs. In fact, she was approached about a job from a former employee of the Town to apply to work for her at the Town she works at now. Her role is extremely critical with the work that she does. He knows it was pointed out that the Select Board should spend more time in the office but the reality is that is not going to happen because they have jobs, some have full time jobs. Even going forward the person to replace them will probably have full time jobs and they don't have 15 hours to spend in the office. Not to mention, when you look at what needs to be done and what needs to be learned, if I was to learn all that and then be replaced in three years, someone else would have to learn all of that. It would probably take 2-3 years to learn it all and get it all down. It is not something that is easily replaceable and it is something that we need to consider when we talk about the value of the employee. John said he has a lot more written down but he will discuss it at Town Meeting.

PA-29 Tax Credit/ Exemption for All Veterans & Elderly

The Town received an application for the Tax Credit for the All-Veterans Tax Credit and for the Elderly Exemption. The Town also received the DD214 and all of the income and asset paperwork and supporting documents which. There were no questions. **John motioned to approve the All-Veterans Tax Credit and the Elderly Exemption, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Abatement Request Map 6 Lot 63-RD

The resident and Sara requested an abatement for the inventory penalty for Map 6 Lot 63-RD. All of the properties owned by Upper Birch Holdings were sold. The Road was a separate parcel that wasn't showing clearly on any deed so the road parcel didn't change but the rest did. Therefore, the new owners did not get the inventory and the old owner did but didn't think she needed to complete this form. We requested deed information to see which property owner should have this parcel attached to them so we can make the change. **John motioned to approve and sign the abatement request for Map 6 Lot 63-D, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

DEPARTMENT ITEMS:

Highway Department

Bubba would imagine they will be banning the roads soon especially since we are going to have warm temperatures. We usually follow what the state does. Bubba also ordered new load limit signs.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

There were no questions or comments from the audience.

Having no other business to conduct, John motioned to adjourn at 7:15pm, Tony 2nd, so voted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sara Smith
Administrative Assistant