

Town of Groton
Select Board Work Session Minutes
March 4, 2025

In attendance: John Rescigno, Tony Albert, Ron Madan and Sara Smith (Town Administrator)

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

Prep for Election / Town Meeting

- Sara already ordered the coffee, creamer, sugar, cups, plates, bowls, etc. for Elections and Town Meeting.
- John asked Sara to look into breakfast options such as donut orders, danishes, etc. for town meeting since we do not think we will make it to lunch time.
- We will need to ask someone to run the coffee machines. Sara will start it but may not be able to stay on top of it.
- Sara already sent Gina a reminder about elections and Town Meeting to make sure the big room is clean.
- Sara will check with Amy to see if she needs anything from the Select Board with assistance setting up or anything for the elections or the Town Meeting.
- On Election Day, John, Ron and Tony will be here all day. Sara will be here as a ballot clerk.
- The Select Board agreed we should schedule a work session for 2:00pm on 3/11/25 since we will all be here for elections in case anything comes up. Sara will post this.

Discussion on Town meeting:

- Sara gave the wording for moving an article - "Ms. Moderator, I move to accept Article __ as written."
- The Select Board went over who is going to move, 2nd and present each Article.
- Article 2- Operating Budget- The Select Board will be prepared to speak to this.
- Article 3- HMGP Grant- The Select Board will be prepared to speak to this. Sara will have the grant information with her.
- Article 4- Capital Reserve Funds- The Select Board will be prepared to speak to this.
- Article 5- Chip Sealing- Bubba will be prepared to speak to this; Sara will have the quotes with her.
- Article 6- 3% Timber Tax to Conservation Commission- The Select Board will be prepared to speak to this
- Article 7- This is on there every year and no one usually speaks to it.
- Closing- point out dedication, thank everyone for bringing food, ask people to get involved in committees.

Town Reports

Sara informed the Select Board that the 2024 Annual Town Reports have been available to the Public since March 3, 2025. The deadline that they had to be available to the Public was today, March 4, 2025.

Email received regarding meeting for Groton Wind

Sara had emailed Groton Wind requesting a meeting sooner than 2026. Our contact responded that he had a discussion with the tax group there and they agreed that we should have some discussion regarding the future of the Groton Wind facility, decommissioning, and PILOT. The tax group needs to do some homework regarding taxes, but he thinks the idea of starting early is appealing to all. He said that it will probably take them a couple of months to sort out what a PILOT would like going forward. They asked how we envision this unfolding.

Sara asked the Select Board how she should respond. John said we should send an email stating the following: "We would like to have the meetings begin now so we can start the process even though we know you cannot give us a definite on anything at this time. Even though you cannot give a definite answer, we have the following questions: What do you all think will happen; will it repower or decommission? In your experience what does decommissioning look like if it was decommissioned? When they do get decommissioned what typically happens with the land?"

Tony and Ron agreed to what John said we should email. John said to let them know that the first meeting can be a video meeting so he doesn't have to come here if that works better. Sara will email them tomorrow with all of this and will keep the Select Board posted.

Email received regarding RVs

Sara mentioned that the Select Board received an email with questions for the Select Board regarding staying in RV's. His email is as follows:

I was reading through the Select Board Minutes from January 21, 2025 and noticed there was a complaint about someone staying in a Recreational Vehicle while a home was being built, which is against the Zoning Ordinance. Since they cannot find affordable housing and it is winter, the Select Board decided that they were allowed to stay. I have two questions:

What is the penalty for violating the Zoning Ordinance by staying in a Recreational Vehicle on a lot with no primary residence?

and

Is it the policy of the Select Board that citizens should ask forgiveness rather than permission?

I bring this up because I did ask for permission from the Planning Board and was told I could not stay in an RV while I build a home on my property. I asked specifically if there was a way to get an exemption or variance to temporarily stay in an RV on my property, which was not answered.

I have been homeless for 9 months because I cannot find affordable housing. I hope you can understand how frustrating it is for those of us who try to follow the rules and get nowhere, while others ignore the rules and get a pass.

It would be great if the Select Board can share their opinion on the Zoning Ordinance, and possibly work with the Planning Board to amend it to allow for such things. There is a serious housing crisis in New Hampshire right now, and I would argue that this is a time when governing bodies should be relaxing restrictions and regulations to make it easier for people to have a home. My sentiment is also reflected in HB410 and HB457 which are both gaining traction in the NH House Regular Session.

I would appreciate it if you would bring this matter to the Select Board at their next regular meeting.

The Select Board asked Sara to message the Planning Board and ask if the 180 days that are mentioned in the Zoning Ordinance are referring to someone staying in the recreational vehicle for 180 days while their house is being built. The Select Board also asked Sara to email the resident back and let them know we are looking into this.

401 Sculptured Rocks Road

It was brought to the Select Boards attention that there is a shed that is over 100 square feet being built at 401 Sculptured Rocks Road. Tony went by but it was hard to see. Sara said she looked and there is no building permit on file for this but we are not sure if it is over 100 square feet. The Select Board agreed not to send a letter until they can see if it is over 100 square feet. They may have to wait until they can go look at it when the snow melts.

Reviews received back

The Department Heads had turned in some more reviews that they signed and the employee signed. **John motioned to sign the reviews, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Meet with Bubba

Bubba met with the Select Board to go over the following:

- Road Ban postings: The State DOT sent an email that the State Roads in Groton are posted as of 3/4/25. This email was not sent until 3/3/25. We usually have a notice and can let people know it is coming but we did not have any type of notice. We even called Dan at the DOT and he was not aware. We usually follow the state but Bubba feels it is a little early and the roads are fine right now. It was agreed to post the town roads effective Monday 3/10/25. Sara will post this online and on the bulletin boards.
- Private Road Email: Sara explained that we received an email from a resident which asked about how they can go about creating a private road. It sounds like it will be one mile long, off of Sculptured Rocks Road, and will access one property/owner. Sara said in her experience while she has been here, if it goes to one property it would be a driveway and all private roads that have been created since she has been here have been done with a subdivision plan. Sara sent an email to legal inquiries today and they stated that if it is one residence it would be a driveway. The Town has no control over making it a road, just over the signage if they were to post a street sign. Tony said that it usually has to be at least two different owners on it to make it a road. Sara said that is what legal said as well. Sara will email the resident back to get a driveway permit and will mention that if there are ever two or more residents out there then it could become a private road.
- Fred Brooks: Unfortunately, Fred gave his notice that he will be retiring. He will continue to work for the Town through the second week in May. He did agree to cover Bubba's vacation in March and stay on payroll to help in the event Bubba needs it. Bubba said it is devastating to him to lose it. He has other personal reasons for leaving. The Select Board and Bubba agreed that we will need to hire someone as soon as possible. However, it was agreed that it may be hard to fill a part time position so it may need to be full time which would include benefits, etc. It was agreed for everyone to think it over and not post it yet. Sara will get some numbers together for the Select Board to discuss Tuesday during the work session. Bubba will start reaching out to a few people to see if they are interested and get a feel if they would be willing to work part time.

Having no other business to conduct, John motioned to adjourn at 6:58pm, Tony 2nd, so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Smith
Town Administrator