

2018 Town Meeting Minutes

Meeting comes to order at 9:10 am on March 17, 2018 at the Groton Town House Community Room.

Tony Albert, Moderator

Select Board Members present: Christina Goodwin, Chair; Kyle Andrews; John Rescigno

Town Clerk: Ruth Millett

Supervisors of the Checklist: Pamela Hamel; Gina Rescigno; Anne Tobine

45 Registered voters in attendance, Two Non-registered property owners were present.

Pledge of Allegiance is recited by all.

Moderator reviews the Rules of Procedure for the Meeting.

Article 1: To choose all necessary Town Officers for the year ensuing.

The Moderator reads the list of those who were elected this year at the Town Elections March 13, 2018

- Select Board - 3 years – John Rescigno
- Town Clerk/Tax Collector - 3 years – Ruth Millett
- Trustee of the Trust Fund - 3 years – Gina Rescigno
- Trustee of the Trust Fund - 1 year – Bernard Dauphinais
- Town Auditor - 1 year – Otto Jespersen
- Supervisor of the Checklist - 6 years – Anne Tobine
- Planning Board - 3 years – Forrest “Ray” Blake and David Labar
- Planning Board - 1 year – David Madden
- Zoning Board - 3 years – Charles “Chuck” Stata
- Cemetery Trustee - 3 years – Elizabeth Jespersen
- Cemetery Trustee - 2 years – James Gaffey
- Library Trustee - 3 years - Elizabeth Jespersen
- Library Trustee - 1 year – Ruth Gaffey

Not all were read at the Town Meeting as they had not yet accepted their nominations.

Article 2: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **seven hundred thirty four thousand, six hundred thirty four dollars (\$734,634)** which represents the **Operating Budget** for the ensuing year. Said sum does not include special or individual articles addressed.

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Motion to move the Article made and seconded.

Christina Goodwin: Christina went over changes that were made in the Budget Public Hearing and the following Select Board Meeting pointing out changes that were made at that time. The overall increase over last year comes to \$19,597.

Ann Joyce: Proposes an amendment to this Article as follows –

“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of six hundred ninety four thousand, six hundred thirty four dollars (\$694,634) which represents the operating budget for the ensuing year. Said sum does not include special or individual articles addressed.”

Motion to move amendment made and seconded.

Ann: This is a decrease of \$40,000. Every year for the past 10 years the money left over from every budget has been up from \$32,495 to \$104,721. Last year money not spent was \$86,843. In 2009 when the budget was decreased by 5% there was \$91,284.29. My whole goal of taking money away from different lines is to put it towards something else I can't speak about right now. With the increase in the taxes this year there were 117 parcels that were late paying, compared to 110 last year. The total outstanding taxes as of February 28th were \$181,350.99 and at the same time last year were \$134,773.02. We have to start reining in the budget. I realize it's not the Select Boards fault; it's the school board and the County. The current trajectory is starting to be unobtainable.

Kyle Andrews: Any idea of where that money can come out?

Ann: No, that's up to you.

Lou Lieto: Did the money that was not spent come from the same line items, or different ones?

Ann: I did not go line-by-line. I can't speak to that.

Lou: If they were the same line items, then that speaks to poor budgeting. If they were different ones it speaks to our inability to predict needs. There needs to be some degree of surplus giving us flexibility to react.

Christina: In the last 2 years we've had to have a freeze on spending in October, November, and December because we can't pay the county bill. Any money that goes back into the general fund is money we use to offset the taxes. This past year \$200,000 went to offset taxes to keep the Town's tax rate down. If this amendment passes we will find the money in the budget and remove it.

Miles Sinclair: I was concerned with the overall trajectory not necessarily of the Town budget as it was apparent that the Select Board had closely scrutinized the existing budget and adjusted appropriately. The school issue and the County issue were also addressed in the budget hearing. The increases for both were double digits. The school went up about 25 percent and the county 13 or 15 percent which to me is unthinkable. The tax jump on my property was \$700 per year. I also have some potential reductions which I did bring up in the budget hearing. As a retired police officer, I support our police. I also expect our government to be efficient and economical. I can't say what Ann's proposed \$40,000 will go to but I can say where we can painlessly come up with \$6,250 and that would be from the line dealing with police part-time wages. I addressed this at the budget hearing. I asked that the Select Board answer today where we are in the hiring process. We are almost a quarter of the way through the year and we probably will not be hiring a part-time office before the end of this year. My suggestion would be to deduce that \$25,000 by \$6250 representing wages that would have been paid from January 1st through March 3rd.

Stephen "Slim" Spafford: I have an amendment which I will submit when it is appropriate on line item 4210.3, the part-time line Miles was referring to. Last year we agreed to reduce the police officer wages. E.J. is doing a great job. The FBI recommends one officer per 500 population is optimum. The National Association of Accrediting of Police Departments recommends one to one thousand. I don't see any reason why we should spend money trying to recruit. Our Select Board spends substantial sums for advertising. I have a motion when it's appropriate.

Dave Leone raised a comment about the training for sexual harassment and visibility of a police cruiser. He asked if Chief Thompson has received this training and if money had been spent for that.

Chief E.J. Thompson replied he had received this in other jobs and in other towns.

Christina: Primex has come and done training with employees.

Ruth Gaffey: How do we vote for \$40,000 less when we don't know what that means? Does that mean that I'm not going to see improvements to the road?

Christina: If the amendment passes it's up to the Board where we take the money out of the budget. This doesn't affect the other warrant Articles. We will need to review the budget and find out where to take it out based on conversations at town meeting today.

John Rescigno: We need good attendance at School Budget Meetings. It's where the bulk of money goes. It would be good to see a good turnout for School Board Meetings as well.

Moderator: We will be voting on the amendment. This is the amendment to change the budget amount. (Moderator reads the amendment as proposed)
Count of cards yes 19, no 22 - the amendment is defeated.

Slim proposes an amendment to Article 2 as follows –

“Motion to amend the Town of Groton 2018 proposed budget: Line 4210.3 Police Officer (PT) wages from \$25,000 to \$1.00. Ballot Requested”

Motion to move the amendment made and seconded.

No discussion, no questions.

Moderator calls the vote after reading the amendment.

Although a ballot was requested, there were only five who requested this, so cards were counted.
Count of cards. Yes 16, No 25 - the amendment is defeated.

Miles proposes an amendment to Article 2 as follows –

“Article 2 – reduce appropriations to \$728,384.”

Motion made to move the amendment and seconded.

Miles: This money represents what would have gone to the part time officer from January 1st to March 31st. This is painless and doesn't draw from any other areas.

Moderator calls for further discussion and there is none.

Moderator repeats the amendment

Moderator calls for a vote. The Amendment passes.

Moderator reads the Amended Article as follows:

Amended Article 2: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of seven hundred twenty eight thousand three hundred eighty four dollars (\$728,384) which represents the Operating Budget for the ensuing year. Said sum does not include special or individual articles addressed.

Amended Article passes.

Article 3: To see if the Town will vote to establish an **Electronic Equipment and Software Capital Reserve Fund** under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of replacing and maintaining electronic equipment such as computers, copiers, printers, software and other electronic equipment as needed and to raise and appropriate the sum of **five thousand dollars (\$5,000)** to be placed in this fund. Further, to name the Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund.

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Motion is made to move the Article and seconded.

John: This Article is proposed in order to maintain as needed our electronic hardware and software to repair and or replace as needed. This will also help to maintain security and be sure systems are up-to-date.

Dave: Is there money in the budget to do these repairs or not enough money?

John: There is not enough money in the budget to do repairs. There is only a small amount, not enough to maintain.

Ann: proposes an amendment to Article 3 as follows –

“I make a motion to amend Article 3: to see if the Town will vote to establish an Electronic Equipment and Software Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA35:1 for the purpose of replacing and maintaining electronic equipment such as computers, copiers, printers, software and other electronic equipment as needed and to raise and appropriate the sum of One thousand dollars (\$1000.00) to be placed in this fund. Further, to name the Select Board as agents to expend from said fund.”

Motion made to move the amendment and seconded

Ann: I realize this is a good fund, but do we need to put \$5000 away? Start off with \$1000 and then add a little bit each year.

Pamela Hamel: I think we should start out with \$5000 and then lessen the amount. The nice printer we have upstairs was actually a gift from the Windfarm. When I worked here, my computer crashed and we didn't have money to replace them. We need to stay up with the times. Start out with a nice little fund and each year, depending on how much we draw from it will determine how much we put in.

Celine Richer: How did you come up with that figure?

John: We have a couple of quotes on maintaining our equipment and what it would cost to replace a computer would be around \$560 plus software another \$204 or about \$783 per computer. Many of our computers are outdated.

Celine: How many computers to you have?

John: About 10.

Christina: The copier was donated by the Windfarm/Avangrid and was over \$5000. We don't have a server in the building either and we need to think eventually of having a server sometime down the road that can host from more than one location and hook into all the computers. We don't have that capability right now.

Chuck Stata: Is this a one-time \$5000 charge not to repeat itself next year?

John: No. It will be repeated, but as stated the amount will be based on how much we will be using from it.

Chuck: Why is it not in the budget rather than an individual expense? We shouldn't need to do a Warrant Article every year.

Pam: It's going into a savings account. Not saying they will use it this year, but if they need it, it will be there for that purpose.

Sara Smith: We can't predict when a computer or copier will crash. But if money goes into the budget, that money will be gone and we'll have to re-budget for the same money next year if it is not used. The money in a fund for this purpose will be available when we have a problem.

Miles: I was on the Select Board when Pam's computer crashed. The world didn't stop. We had money in the budget. It was a day or two before things were back to normal. The risk of a crash is always there. I spoke at the budget hearing asking similar questions. How far is this going to go? There has always been money in the budget up to this point to deal with these issues. Maybe the budget line should be increased, but I don't see the need for an additional capital reserve fund. Where does that lead to with additional capital reserve funds being established targeting specific issues? These issues should be addressed in the overall budget.

Lou: We have capital Reserve for other kinds of things for the anticipation of costs that might seem large for one budget year. As we get experience, if it turns out we only need \$1000 then we can put \$1000 into that fund. We don't know what we'll need yet and the cost of hardware and software does not decline.

Peter Smith: Why aren't the radios in Article 16 included in this capital reserve fund? This is the same type of electronic equipment and will be requiring service.

John: The reason we recognized we needed radios is that during the last storm our analog system was not able to communicate with many people. We are looking to purchase radios that are both analog and digital so we can communicate with one another and also operate some of our old radios along with

today's technology. It's a separate Warrant Article because Article 3 speaks to what we currently have and repairing or replacing those items. Article 16 is purchasing something that is needed for the Town.

Peter: Will maintaining those radios fall under this account?

John: Yes, that's right.

Moderator reads the amendment again and a vote is taken. The amendment fails.

Moderator reads Warrant Article 3 again.

No more discussion so a vote is taken. Article 3 passes.

Article 4: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **twenty five thousand dollars (\$25,000)** for support of The Nature Conservancy in New Hampshire's acquisition and permanent protection of the 2,709 acre Kimball Hill Forest, Map 3, Lot 14; Map 3, Lot 6; Map 4, Lot 1.

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Motion to move the Article is made and seconded.

Jeff Lougee, Director of Land Management for the Nature Conservancy is approved by the body to speak on this Article.

Jeff: The Nature Conservancy is a non-profit organization working in New Hampshire since the mid 1960's. We currently own and manage 29 conservation areas around New Hampshire and we hold conservation restrictions known as conservation easements on about another 120 properties. The summary of how this project came to be; late last summer the owner, Timbervest, decided to put the land up for sale through its forest management company Landvest through a closed bid auction. The property was brought to our attention and it aligned real well with our priorities and so we decided to act quickly and put together a bid on the property. We met with the Select Board. I wasn't part of that meeting. We met to talk about our interest in the property, the vision we had for the property at the time and to learn a little of the Town's interest in the property. We placed our bid and ended up being the high bidder, so they accepted our bid. This is a little different for us because normally we structure it so we have enough time to raise the money before we close. In this case the seller required that we close within 60 days of accepting the bid. In order to acquire the 2700 acres we had to take out a loan to do that. We are currently raising funds to pay back the loan. Thanks to many generous supporters out there maybe some who are here, we've raised about \$725,000 towards the \$2.1 million we need to raise. We're making great progress, but still have a way to go.

A few highlights on the conservation values and the benefits of this project. This was not the first go at this property. Others have worked on it before, trying to conserve the property and paving the way for us to be where we are right now. This is a 2700 acres lot in town that will never be developed. If any of you have been out there you've seen that it's rally excellent wildlife habitat. There is lots of sign of black bear, moose and deer. It's actually quite impressive. There's 10 miles of river and stream frontage; six miles on the Cockermonth and its tributaries. Eleven miles on snowmobile trails which will remain open and maintained by Hardy Country Snowmobile Club. The land will continue to be open for hunting and fishing. It's a great place to get out in the woods; hiking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing and many other outdoor activities.

Some on the long-term disposition: we are currently having conversations with the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department to eventually transfer this property to them to become the State's newest wildlife management area. Under this scenario, Fish and Game will own and manage the property, and we will hold a conservation easement on it. The easement will restrict any kind of development in perpetuity. It will assure sustainable forestry and wildlife habitat management on the land. Under Fish and Game ownership it will still be open for hunting and fishing and other kinds of public use. I want to emphasize that right now we're in negotiations with Fish and Game on the terms of this agreement, but we have not finalized that yet. If we're successful and all goes well with that process and I expect that it will, we anticipate transfer to Fish and Game before the end of the year. That will need to be approved by the Governor's Council in order for that to happen.

The donation by the Town is a significant amount and will really help towards that fund raising goal that we have. It is also helpful to say we have financial support from the local community when we're out raising money from foundations and donors. It is also powerful when we go before the Governor's council and Fish and Game to show we have that financial support. That's about all I have and thank you to the Select Board for advancing the Warrant Article and thank you all for considering it.

Slim: It was emphasized at a previous meeting with the Nature Conservancy at the Newfound Inn that the conservation easement would prohibit anything like Northern Pass putting utility lines and no more wind towers going up there which currently there's a plan for straddling the line between Orange, Alexandria and us. Also there won't be any solar. Those things are important to the residents of Groton as well as the people who don't live in Groton.

Sharon "Sherry" Nelson: Miles, when did you and other Selectmen work so hard with the owners of Kimball hill, 3 or 4 years ago? This is a much better deal; being asked for only \$25,000 as a Town. Of course we can donate more as individuals too.

Miles: A committee formed for 2-3 years and at the end they appeared to have accepted the offer for purchase of Kimball Hill. The Town Meeting appropriated \$50,000 to further the process only to have Timbervest come and renege on the deal and that was essentially the end. Nothing developed till earlier this year when two conservation organizations became interested. While my hope was for the Town to acquire this property and use it as a Town Forest which could produce revenue for the Town going forward, this is the second best option in my opinion and I would like to stress that these folks have provided a great benefit to the Townspeople of Groton by permanently conserving this property. I have one question; when the Nature Conservancy had last come before the board at the budget hearing I got the impression the Fish and Game was less of a sure thing in acquiring the property than I had initially believed and I would like you to clarify. Is it headed in the right direction now or is there still some level of uncertainty?

Jeff: I think it's headed in the right direction now. The papers still need to be signed. It needs to be approved by the governor's Council. There are two steps along the way. This is not our first time working with Fish and Game in a scenario like this. We did this with them on the Connecticut lakes and long time ago no... 20 years ago. We have some other projects that we're working on with Fish and Game smaller than this. We're confident that it will happen, but there are steps we need to go through before it's done.

Slim: I did ask at the meeting at Newfound Inn; Fish and Game is always pleading broke because their money comes from hunting and fishing licenses and they don't get money from the legislature. You're right, but there's a federal fund, from the Pittman-Robertson Act, that authorizes excise tax revenue

from the sale of firearms and ammunition products be apportioned to State Fish and Game Agencies on a variety of projects related to wildlife, conservation efforts and shooting programs. New Hampshire gets a large cut of that and that's where this money will come from. This money can be used for acquisitions.

Lou: How will you do forest management? Do you anticipate commercial cuts? What sort of activities do you anticipate for forest management of this tract?

Jeff: It's tricky for me to speak on behalf of Fish and Game who are likely to be the long-term owner, but from conversations I've had with their wildlife biologists that would be their focus, managing the property for wildlife habitat. They have an updated plan for forest management called Nash Brook online. This might be a decent indication of the approach they would take on the Kimball Hill Property in terms of structure they'd be looking to create. They would be looking to do a mix; older stands, younger stands, and early successional. The timber resource of the property is significantly depleted and they will probably give it some time to recover before they start doing active management.

Dave: You mentioned the different users of the land. There's another conservation land in Town that doesn't allow anybody with bicycles to ride on their property or horses to ride on the property. Would horses be able to ride on the property and bicycles be able to ride on the property as well?

Jeff: I think there is discussion right now on those two uses. That is to be determined. I don't have a better answer than that right now.

Dave: I think doing the conservation land is a great thing to do. Personally, I ride horses, so for me to spend \$25,000 on something where I would no longer be allowed to ride over that property isn't worth it. I think it would be nice if we could continue to do that. Along those lines, this great place to have a loop that goes around the whole Town of Groton; a multi-use trail system and this has been looked at and a study had been done in the past. I'm sure Deb Johnson can remember that was quite an extensive study which would be profitable to the Town of Groton.

Chuck: When we tried to acquire this lot of land 4-5 years ago, the timber company backed away from it and we lost our grants, we lost the money that had been put up for that. One of the reasons it's a prime lot is there's a corridor that starts down in Massachusetts and there has been a 30 year attempt to obtain conservation easement properties all the way from there to the White Mountains. This piece is a critical component of that "through stretch". It's not just for Groton, but it has a regional importance as well.

Dave: It's a non-profit organization but the people that work there get a paycheck. Everyone who worked on this project made money from it.

Sharon: I'm glad they do, otherwise we might not have the opportunity to get the land. I might not be riding a horse on the land, but I want the land for our Town and the \$25,000 we're asked to pay is key. I've heard from people on the lake who say, "Oh Groton's getting it purchased for them. They don't even have to put any money into it." The \$25,000 is a small request and I think we should pay and say we have a stake in this.

Dave: I think it's a great thing to have this land and I'm not opposed to doing it. I'm all in favor of doing it; I just think it's unfortunate that they present themselves as a non-profit organization. They make

money off it, and then they don't allow people on bicycles or people on horseback to travel across their land, yet they allow snowmobiles to travel across it which I think stinks.

Lou: Part of the reason there is a discussion around certain kinds of vehicles, including horses is because they do particular damage and cause erosion, but that doesn't mean they shouldn't be there. I think that they should be there but you should consider carefully how and when they should be there to minimize the negative affects they could have. There are dirt bikers who are very responsible and others who aren't. People need to think that through and I think it's good that they do. There aren't many non-profit organizations where people work for free.

John: Conserving this land helps to preserve the vision of Groton according to the Master Plan and I think this is something we all believe in.

Moderator moves the question and it is seconded. No more discussion.

Voting on Article 4 the **Moderator** reads the Article again. The Article passes.

Article 5: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000)** for the repair/reconstruction of North Groton Road to continue work on the section that was reclaimed in 2017. (Submitted by the Highway Department)

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Motion made to move the Article and seconded.

Christina: We are proposing to do another section of the road mainly the section that is now gravel. We're not sure how much of that section we will be able to do. This money is not enough to do the complete section if we continue to do the project the way we've been doing. We're working to increase the Road Committee membership. We have a meeting in two weeks and we'll be discussing what we're going to recommend to the Select Board for the project but this \$200,000 will do only a section of that gravel area.

Ann: 1700 feet will bring you within 500 feet of Regos. What will you do about the Rego property? You won't go to that point where it's nasty.

Christina: When we talked about the road project at the public hearing we talked about continuing the way we've been doing it. There are some alternative we've been looking at to try and stretch out the number of feet. That is what the Road Committee is going to do on March 26th to discuss these alternatives. If we continue the way we've been doing the project we won't be able to finish the section but only 1700 feet of it.

Ann: You were talking about digging it downs and doing a 2" overlay. How much money would it be to do the 9/10ths mile that still needs to be done?

Christina: We've received one quote and I believe it was around \$400,000 to do the whole thing.

Robert "Bubba" Ellis: Yes.

Ann: He measured all the way through to 118 which is in Dorchester not stopping at the Town line.

Christina: We received two quotes for \$400,000 just to do the area that is gravel now, proceeding the same way we have been doing it. We received another quote for continuing the grinding all the way to the Town line by 118 with a 2" overlay...

Bubba: Grinding and a 2" binder course this year the amount would be under the \$200,000 and the money would cover us paving all the way to 118.

Christina: There are multiple quotes for several methods, think overlay, reclaim and pave. I can't really explain all these, but based on what Bubba has calculated if we do a grind and 2" overly that will take us almost all the way to 118. There are concerns which need to be discussed among the Road Committee and then recommendations given to the Select Board for a final decision. Will that cause problems for us to stop doing the road projects the way we have been doing them? If it won't, then this might be a better alternative to give a bit smoother ride on the other side of North Groton Road. We need to look into those alternatives. Right now we're asking for \$200,000 to do something to fix that area. How far we're going to be able to go, I can't tell you right now, but the intent is to get as much as possible fixed.

John: While at the same time making sure that what we do is not just a "band aid". When we look at alternatives it maybe what we are doing right now is not the best, so we're getting ideas from others who do road reconstruction to stretch the dollars as far as it will go and also serves the purpose of maintaining the road into the future.

Christina: We don't want to spend \$200,000 and then come back in two years because the road fell apart. We're trying to make sure that what we will be doing is the right thing getting the most out of your money.

Dave: Your asking for \$200,000 to at least work on that section that has already be ground? You're not sure yet what process you will use to do that, you're going to look into other alternatives. Will you hold another special meeting for that or will it just be something that is discussed at the Select Board meetings? Will that be between the Select Board and the Road Committee?

Christina: It will be discussed among the Select Board and the final decision will be made with the Select Board based on the Road Committee's recommendations. We wouldn't have another public hearing, but we would discuss this at the Select Board Meeting so everyone would hear what decision has been made and everyone would know.

Peter: Bailey Hill Road also known as Afghanistan. I appreciate what is done, but I think it's crazy not to appropriate a bond or whatever it takes to do the whole thing. Sections of road that were done 4-5 years ago are already in my opinion starting to fall apart. Wherever there's a culvert under the road, there's a big dip. It would be much more cost effective in the long run to do the whole thing. It's a major thoroughfare, the only major road in Town that traverses the entire Town. It should be better. People coming into Town that are directed that way by GPS... their chiropractor bills are unbelievable. Serious thought needs to be put into this "band aid" approach which in my opinion it is; using different techniques every time, you won't end up with a good road surface.

Miles: The roads do need vast improvement. We need to do it within the ability of the townspeople to fund it. Beginning with this article there's only been one other article that dealt with additional appropriations and that was the donation to the Nature Conservancy. On this page, if you look at it

there are substantial sums being recommended for appropriation. I just want to point out that last year's Warrant Article appropriations versus this year's there is a 54% increase year over year so we had quite a surprise when we opened our tax bills. It's going to be worse if these all get funded at the level that they're being recommended and I wanted people to consider that.

No more discussion.

Moderator calls the vote and reads Article 5 again. Article passes.

Article 6: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **sixty five thousand dollars (\$65,000)** for deposit into the **Atwell/Orange Brook Bridge Replacement Capital Reserve Fund** for the remaining costs to complete the bridge replacement. (December 31, 2017 balance: \$247,852.19).

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Motion to move the Article made and seconded.

Christina: Last year the Select Board came to the Town with the preliminary cost for doing the bridge. When we went out to bid, there was only one bid out of the eight received that was anywhere near those costs. This amount is what we need to finish the project. As of 2016 we had \$56,000 and we added \$225,000 and the balance to pay off the project is \$65,000. I can tell you what the quotes were... the lowest \$292,000 then \$398,000 up to \$709,000. One individual was low enough and the reason being they have their own temporary bridge. The total will be \$292,390 to complete this bridge project.

Dave: Will you have a lump-sum of money to work with moving forward to complete this project? Have monies already been spent out of that fund on this project? If so, how much money is there in the fund to complete this?

Christina: We have spent approximately \$36,500 which included the engineer, the permitting with the state, and the plans. We have awarded the project based on funding. We are not tied into the project. If we don't get the money we don't finish the project. We've had to do easements with the property owners and that's why there has been a slight delay.

Dave: Have you already picked a contractor to do the job and will work with him as long as you have the money?

Christina: Yes. We opened the bids at a Select Board meeting and we did announce then that we didn't have enough money and we awarded the bid conditional on funding from Town Meeting.

Ann: On 12/20/2016 K.B. Partners submitted a proposal of \$36,500 which included the survey, base plan, geotechnical, preliminary design, final design, and bidding assistance. We've billed our \$36,500. What's the other \$17,100 for? During the work session it never said "estimate of \$36,500. The \$36,500 took us through the bid.

Christina: There was an additional contract given to us to finish the process which includes Administration of construction services and Mileage and other things like that all coming to \$17,100 which completes the project up through this year. This is the explanation. The \$36,500 did not include "Construction Services" He added this to the estimate thinking it was clear and unfortunately we did not know that at the time, so that was our mistake, or it would have been in the minutes. I thought the

\$36,500 covered the whole thing. We reached out to him and he explained that it did not. The \$36,500 only took us through the bidding assistance.

Slim: This bridge is the only bridge that the Town owns. All the others are on State highways. This is the only one we're responsible for so we won't get hit with another bridge coming up.

Christina: When we came to the Town last year we did state that it was a preliminary estimate. We never anticipated that it would cost this much for this bridge. We've been talking about bridge replacement for 5, 6 or more years during Town Meetings. We've talked about \$80,000 for bridge replacement. When we got the actual bids and saw them come in it was a shock. We did not anticipate that it would cost this amount of money. Once it is fixed, we won't be coming back to the Town for a long time. This bridge is supposed to last for 75 or more years aside from general maintenance.

Cindy Carpenter: The \$17,100 is a 50% overrun of the \$36,000. I was under the impression that you said the Warrant Article we're voting on is to complete the bridge. What assurance can you give the Towns people that there won't be a 50% cost overrun on that construction? I know there are no guarantees in life.

Christina: We already have a contract we are in with a set price on it with the construction worker. He cannot exceed that unless something drastic happens. I can't give you a 100% assurance, but I can give you a pretty good guess we aren't going to overrun this because the contractor had guaranteed that cost.

Cindy: But did you not also have a contract for the bidding? Was that not a contract for \$36,000?

Christina: Yes, but there were additional services added each year. We didn't think of the oversight of that project. We need the engineer to provide that oversight.

John: The engineer comes in, he can quote you on his work and gives you an estimate on what the bridge builder is going to charge for the bridge. We don't know what the builder will charge for the bridge until they come in and actually say "here's your estimate" These were the estimates that we received \$225,000 through \$800,000... that's what you get afterwards. It's done in sections, not in one complete package. There's a cost to each process along the way. It's hard to get someone to bid on something. The engineer goes out and gets those people to bid on the project. The contract that we have now is for the bridge. So there should not be any additional costs unless the unforeseen happens.

Miles: The design that's being presented for appropriation, what is the weight rating on that bridge? Has this been addressed?

Christina: It was addressed. It's supposed to be more than an E-2 bridge.

Miles: E-2 being 80K lbs.? Don't truckers tend to do more like 110K lbs. or in that range?

Moderator call for a break:

***Break ***

(Not on recording) - The bridge is rated over 100K lbs., **Christina** called the contractor who confirmed this.

There is no more discussion so the **moderator** calls for a vote.

Moderator reads Article 6 again, voting, Article passes.

Article 7: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **thirty four thousand dollars (\$34,000)** for the repair of Groton paved roads, with fourteen thousand dollars (\$14,000) to come from the general fund balance and the remainder to be raised by taxation.

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Motion to move the Article made and seconded.

Christina: The reason for the \$34,000 this year is last year we asked for \$25,000 and we did not spend all of that. We only spent \$10,500 and we would like to get more out of our projects this year and try to do more work on other roads. Sow we've asked for \$14,000 to come from the general fund balance and keep the appropriations from tax to \$20,000. This is the same amount we've been asking for multiple years.

Bubba: There are a lot of repairs other that the main road we've been talking about. There's a lot of ditching, especially along River Road that hasn't been touched in a long time. There are many things we need to address. We're going to try to keep some sort of schedule so we will be addressing issues as they come up. It will be a while to get there.

Lou: Maybe the Town would consider some sort of feed-back mechanism. Perhaps that could be on the website, for people to leave messages, concerns, conditions and then you could look at that to help you.

Christina: Sara has talked to the North Country Counsel and they will be coming out to do a "Road Surface Management Survey". This may help the Road Committee and the Select Board and Bubba to determine what priorities there needs to be. This is at no cost to the Town.

No more discussion so moderator calls for a vote.

Moderator reads the Article again. Article passes.

Article 8: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **ten thousand seven hundred fifty dollars (\$10,750)** to be added to the **Truck/Sander Capital Reserve Fund** with ten thousand seven hundred fifty dollars (\$10,750) to come from the unassigned fund balance. (December 31, 2017 balance \$15,187.31). This amount represents an insurance payment received by the town for the loss of the 2006 Ford F350.

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Motion to move the Article made and seconded.

Christina: We had a flood at the Highway Department Garage and the 2006 Ford F350 was out and was damaged. The insurance gave us \$10,750 for the vehicle so we want to take those funds and put them into the Capital reserve so we may use it towards future purchases.

No more discussion so moderator calls for a vote.

Moderator reads the Article again. Article passes.

Article 9: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate with **twelve thousand six hundred thirty five dollars (\$12,635)** to purchase a new truck with plow for the highway department with twelve thousand six hundred thirty five dollars (\$12,635) from the Truck/Sander Capital Reserve Fund. (SB38 funds of \$22,365 received in 2017 will complete the \$35,000 purchase.)

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Motion to move the Article made and seconded.

Christina: The Dodge has been down a lot. For the last two storms we had to contract out to have someone come plow. We were down to one vehicle and could not keep up with the snow. The proposal is to use it for plowing and to do runs to the parts store and not to use personal vehicles. The SB38 funds came in last year and cannot be used for the North Groton Road project, but you can use it for equipment. It will not be money from taxation. This is money from the Capital Reserve and from those funds only.

Bubba: This vehicle is to replace the 2006 Ford F350. We're looking for a one ton pickup with a plow to check and work on roads to help out during storms when snow is heavier than usual and to plow when the other truck is broken down. Without that truck we've had to use GFC and Sons / Charley Coursey who has been unbelievable to help when the truck has been broken down. The plow has been broken down 31 days out of the last 91 days. For pick up we've had to use our own vehicles. I think over the years Glen used his own vehicle a lot which didn't really help us in the long run.

Dave: How many trucks will the Highway Department have after they purchase this new truck, and what is the make of the truck?

Christina: We'll have 3 trucks, The big truck and then the two small trucks. We are looking at a Ford but we'll not be held to that.

James Joyce: Have you thought about turning in that Dodge?

Kyle: We have talked about it.

Christina: We have talked about getting rid of the Dodge, but we've also talked about getting rid of the bigger truck and just working with the small trucks. There are a lot of things we're trying to determine what we'll go forward with.

No other discussion so the **moderator** calls the vote.

Moderator reads Article 9 again. The Article passes.

Article 10: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000)** for deposit into the **Public Works Capital Reserve Fund**. (December 31, 2017 balance: \$573.23).

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Motion to move the Article made and seconded.

Christina: The intent of the Board and the Building Committee for this year was how to plan the regards to the Public Works Building being moved out of the flood zone and up onto the hill. At first we thought it was being rushed so we drew back from it. Now we're asking for \$100,000 to be put into the Capital Reserve Fund. Building is going to be a lot more money than that at some point, so we're asking for that money to be put into the Reserve Fund. We have spent money out of the Reserve Fund. We have contracted with Turnstone, a company to design a building and we're still working with them currently and will be meeting with them after Town Meeting to discuss the plans because we haven't yet determined what we needed. We're asking for this money to be put in the Reserve Fund in anticipation that we will be coming back to the Town at future Town Meetings to build a building. Obviously we do need to move the building. The building was flooded out this year and we sustained substantial damage. We lost a vehicle and substantial damage in the building. We are pushing to get this done as soon as possible, but we don't want to rush a plan and then come to you with something that is not feasible.

Dave: The current company that you're dealing with now as far as getting plans to build this building is this a block contract that you're into? Do they charge a percentage of the building that will be built? Are you open to other contractors giving you proposals to do the work?

Christina: This went to bid last year and we received two bids and did award this to Turnstone. Are we locked into it? We contracted with them to give us a design. We are reviewing if we will continue with them or not.

Peter Smith: I've heard a lot about the building and I know there have been engineering studies and proposals. To my knowledge there have been no examples or artist's rendering as to what this building would be. Is this something that will continue; that we'll have no idea what we're looking at for a facility and what will be included and what won't be included etc.? I have no idea what this facility will look like. I wondered if there will be a little bit of transparency.

Christina: We haven't gotten a plan to present to the Town.

John: So far we've met with them. We explained to them what we were looking for. They came back with a proposed building. Not something that would be within our budget. We sent it back to them. If we actually had something we could show you, we would have asked them here to present it to you, but we're not at that stage yet. Once we get to that point you will definitely be involved.

Peter: How much money had been expended on this project already?

John: It works somewhat the same as the bridge. You hire a designer, they sketch everything out, then they send it out to get bids on it.

Christina: We've completed the survey. We've worked with them to get a design. We rejected it. We've spent \$47,000 which included the design, testing the lot across from the Transfer Station and site plan and all the permitting for the driveway. That's what we've spent so far. The first estimate was \$2.2 million. We asked them to go back, we cut some things out and told them they needed to come back with a better number, but that was only down \$1.9 million, so we are going back to meet with them again. After we established this Capital Reserve Fund, we established a Building Committee and the Building Committee had members or the public on it, the Highway Department, the Select Board, the Fire Chief, and the Police Chief. We met together as a group to determine what we needed and we came up with an idea of what we wanted and so far we've been chipping that away. We went to bid to get a construction firm to come up with a plan because you need someone who can manage the plan and come up with a design that will work, to do all the permitting and do all that needs to be done. We put it out to bid for a contractor and we're trying to get a plan to present to you. We're just not there yet. It's just too high.

John: We have an idea of what we're looking for, no bells and whistles, a place to store our trucks, an office space which is needed, all the bare essentials, a rest room etc. There are state laws and guidelines you must follow which were not there in the past which ups the price. You can rest assured we are not looking for the Taj Mahal to be built. It is basically what the Town needs.

Frank Grelle: Can you tell us the size you're looking to build?

John: We started with 120x80 and it's been cut down to half that size. We went with the initial plan to get an idea of what it would look like and a couple extra pieces and now we're starting to pull some of that back. When we did go down to the bare essentials, a place for 3 or 4 trucks and small area for offices, breakroom and restroom, their quote didn't change much. They changed the direction of the building which I thought was odd. If they hadn't changed the direction there wouldn't have been as much excavating that had to take place which was a large part of that dollar amount. We haven't had a chance to go back to them and question why.

Christina: It's not just the building. You have to store salt and sand, you need a septic and water. There are a bunch of things incorporated into the cost. We haven't gotten to a final plan at all right now.

Pam: That cost includes the entire package, septic, water, salt shed, sand shed, whatever was needed and it would be a done deal?

John: For \$1.9 million, yes; and the building itself.

Pam: And I agree that's way too much money.

Kyle: It was going to be done over two years and when we told them we wanted it spread out over the two years, they added on \$500,000 for the second year.

Sherry: Christina said earlier we have to move the old road shed, not destroy it, move it.

Christina: I changed my wording. We cannot move that building.

Ann: Are you still planning on doing the bond next year?

Christina: We're going back to the drawing board with them, but we obviously don't know.

Ann: I have an amendment to this Article.

Moderator reads the following amendment:

"I make a motion to amend Article 10: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Zero dollars (\$0.00) for deposit into the Public Works Capital Reserve Fund. (December 31,2017 balance \$573.23)."

Motion is made to move the amendment and seconded.

Ann: No more comment.

Helen Martynzyn: If that garage isn't feasible anymore, did we collect insurance money for that? Can that money be applied to the new building?

Christina: Any insurance money has been applied to fix the old building. The insurance paid for damages.

Ruth G.: If the \$100,000 is not in the budget, does that affect anything you are going currently?

Christina: No, it will not stop us from getting a plan, but it just means we are not putting money towards that project.

John: It could slow down the progress of the building that has needed to be replaced for many years. That building is now starting to cost the Town money. It needs roof repairs, the garage door motor needed to be replaced. We're putting money into a building that just needs to be razed.

Miles: My opinion is that Ann's motion is premature. It will negate any opportunity for the Select Board to move forward. If this amendment fails, there's a number of questions that I have for the Select Board of all the amounts involved which I would like to have the opportunity to ask.

John: To keep the project moving forward we could cut \$50,000 out of it, but it's just money we will need to collect later. We've been putting \$5,000 per year into this building for several years now which is kind of comical. When you think if how much a building will actually cost it's like taking cups of water out of the ocean and expecting to drain it. More money than this will needed to be put into this account. If we had we wouldn't be in the position we are today.

Dave: It's obvious we need the building. If we put money into it now maybe we can move forward. I hope the plans that we get are what we need. I think we should move forward.

Ann: I am not against the Public Works Building. I just want the Building Committee to get their ducks in a row and get this bond and show us what the building is, what way it will go, and the dirt-work all figured out and make sure everything is up to date so we can do it.

Slim: When I saw the plans, I was surprised at the amount. I don't really think we need a new Police Department in there with two or three jail cells which was in the plan. I think that's ridiculous and I think that should be taken into consideration by people here who don't know that.

John: Like I said, the only think in that building is space for two or three trucks... it's basically a rectangle with garage doors and a small area for an office, small break room and a bathroom and a salt shed.

Peter: I know the site is a great spot right across from the Transfer Station, but it seems from what I've seen, the site work costs are really excessive on that spot. Maybe that's why it hasn't been built on previously. Is there any thought about this building on a lot that would cost quite a bit less? Isn't there someone in Town that builds commercial buildings that would be a lot cheaper?

John: That's part of the reason we want to get back with them. When we lopped off half the building which was supposed to take away the part of the building that was closest to the area that required the most site work, it should have cut back on the site work but instead they took the building and turned it so we would still need to do the site work. They didn't leave it and just remove this part of the building and we haven't gone back to talk with them about that yet.

Christina: For clarification on the site work costs... that quote is not just digging up the ground, it includes the salt shed and the digging for the foundation. The site work includes the foundation and the salt shed. I'm not saying that I agree with that \$400,000 cost, but it does include those things.

No more discussion so the **moderator** calls for a vote on the amendment to Article 10.

Moderator reads the Amendment again. Amendment fails

Moderator reads Warrant Article 10 again and discussion resumes.

Miles: I agree that the building must be moved. I agree that the estimates received are absolutely absurd. I would like more specifics on what exactly we're going to do with this \$100,000 and what it is going to get us.

John: the money is primarily to pay for the building. That will go towards the \$1.2 million plan, once we get it down to and amount we feel is reasonable.

Miles: So we don't have a plan and we've spent \$47,000 already?

John: We have. That has been spent on the site plan and the preliminary work that needs to be done before we can start building. The site plan had to be done. It is the building we need to now get under control.

Miles: How much more money will we need to spend... best estimate... to have a final set of plans?

John: What they will charge if we have them turn the building the other way? It's hard to say. We did pay for a site plan and a rendering of what this building might look like.

Miles: So at this time we have no idea of how much this is going to cost us additionally.

Christina: The estimate they gave us for the site plan was \$65,000. That's what we had in the Capital Reserve Fund at the time. It's that amount we have on retainer with them to finish up the services. We have about \$18,000 in that account right now.

Miles: How much of the \$100,000 would be expected to be used for future payment on the building?

John: If we feel things are getting out of control with this engineer, needlessly creating plans that need to be altered and collecting money from us, we can take a different route. The plan is to use all this money for the construction of this building.

Christina: Our best safe guess is that all of this money is going to the building, period, without any more work from the contractor/engineer.

Miles: We should be able to get final plans without tapping into the \$100,000?

Christina: Yes, that is what we're trying to do.

Miles: If in the best case scenario the building will cost \$1.2 million, which I still think is ridiculous, is the reality not that we will be looking to bond that? Kyle had mentioned phases of the building process, but if we're going to wind up having to bond, I wouldn't think it would make sense to bond a portion of the purchase price. If it makes sense to bond it then I suggest there's no need to phase it.

John: The plan was to not do a bond and to build it in phases with x amount of dollars this year we can do the foundation, next year build the structure and then finish it in the third year. However with inflation the price just keeps going up every year. What will cost \$800,000 this year will cost \$1 million next year. So option B would be to simply get a bond to pay for it all in one shot. It will tie up a lot of money for 15 years or so. It would make things really tight if something else were to happen.

Christina: We did look into a bond based on the numbers we received. One of the bonds was \$1.5 million. If we did do the bond then the Capital Reserve could be used for a payment as well. If we don't do the bond and the building is built in phases then the Capital Reserve would be used for the building.

Miles: If we were to build in phase how many years are we looking at?

John: Possibly three years, but we also need to consider if we do it in phases how much more would it actually cost us. The way they first described it doesn't seem that it's feasible to do it in phases because the price goes up dramatically every year.

Miles: Three years was the plan? Even then at \$1.2 million, that's an additional \$400,000 you'd be coming every year asking for this amount understanding we are already spending \$200,000ish on the road work as it is. To me, the reality is that we're looking at a bond whether we want to admit that now or not. I think we already have the wrong firm addressing these issues for the Town of Groton. I would like to think there is recognition of that. The fact that they would look to charge \$500,000 for extending it another year shows where they're coming from. I don't think that's in the best interest of the Town. We need a set of plans and I think we also need a Groton-based solution which is what we did when we first built that building. From my perspective I can see it's in the wrong place, but I don't think we need much more that we already have down there, as far as size on the building, the salt shed. I think we need a Groton-based solution, we need a set of plans, but much like they did with the addition here, we got the plans and I think we spent about \$35,000 because I was part of the Town House Committee. If anyone wanted to do the research they could find out the exact figure. To give Steve Pilcher the credit he is due on this in a stroke of genius made Kenny Martell the Clerk of the Works, over seeing this addition and the man did a fantastic job on behalf of the Town of Groton. We need to look at that same

kind of approach rather than wasting money on an architectural firm that is looking to profit as much as possible. You're waiting for final plans before getting public input. You need that early in the process. What's the point in putting time, energy and expense into a project that the town's going to say "no" to? I think you need to get more people involved earlier on. It doesn't necessarily need to be a public hearing but maybe publish a notice in the paper or on the web site and everything else; having a Select Board Meeting or public hearing for the purpose of getting input into this process. Realistically I think we're looking at a bond. I don't think we have any alternative. The numbers we have are completely absurd. I can't think they spent more than the \$200,000 on the building that's there now. I'd like to know if anyone has any idea of what those numbers were. Almost half a million for site work. I think we can use local excavator companies that can do it for significantly less than that. The things at the top of the hill, drainage will go downhill anyway unless there is a ledge problem that needs to be blasted. I can't fathom how they came up with that figure.

Dave: Is the size of the building adequate?

Bubba: With the backhoe, one ton, and the big truck, there's barely enough room to move around in there.

Dave: The physical size of the building would need to be longer. Including the equipment we have and house now we'd need a larger building to facilitate that. We spent \$170 on that building. I know that, because I drew that plans for that. I gave those plans to the Town at no cost. We used \$35,000 to do the shell. The next year another \$35,000 to do the electrical and insulate and I installed the septic at no cost to Groton. I think there are alternatives to going through an engineering firm that will give us a number that the highest they can come up with. We need to utilize the resources we have in Town and the people we have in Town to move that building to the top of the hill. At the time I wanted the building at the top of the hill and it was voted to put it where it is now. We need to move forward, we need some money to work with. The Board needs to get more local people involved so. I think we need to put money into this fund so we can move forward.

Christina: So people will understand. I do believe we should be using Groton resources. We have reached out for over a year for people to be on these committees; at Town Meeting there was a discussion once. At Select Board meetings every week we are asking people to participate but we aren't getting that participation unfortunately. We would love to have more people on this committee providing feed-back so we should have more information to give the public. We've been asking people to help out for a number of months and we just aren't getting participation.

Bubba: I don't disagree with what Miles has said, but I think we need to remember how long ago was that building built? I think it was about 20 years ago now. Many things have changed since then. There are laws, rules and regulations now that we'd never had then. There is a collection system that needs to be built underneath to collect all the waste off the trucks. It's insane what has to be done and there's no way around it. With the size, even for four vehicle spots you need to look thirty or forty years down the road. We need to make sure the building is big enough so that some of this equipment isn't left outside. I'm not disagreeing with all that you're saying; it is a tremendous amount of money. Many have been asked to come to the meetings, but no one shows up.

Lou: The amount of \$100,000 would be used in one of two ways; either to pay off a portion of a bond if we went that way, or paid directly against the cost of the building, so it seems there's enough information to move forward with a vote.

Christina: I would like to propose an amendment.

Moderator reads the following amendment –

“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) for deposit into the Public Works Capital Reserve Fund (December 31, 2017 balance \$573.23).”

Motion is made to move the amendment and seconded.

Christina: We’re listening to what you’re saying. There is concern about putting away \$100,000 and how it will affect the tax rate. There’s a concern where the money will be spent. The \$25,000 will allow us to continue to work on the project but not have you concerned with the amount of money that will be sitting there.

Miles: Christina, thank you for your amendment. I’d been preparing an amendment that was not as much of a reduction and will remain secret. I’m glad the Board has been as receptive as they have been. That was one of my main concerns; instead of putting this money towards future expenses. The tax rate will be going up enough this year as it is. I do think what you have done is appropriate. I also think you have gotten people’s attention with the shock value of the figures involved though I can tell you that your participation could be increased by one if you so choose. It’s of that much interest to me. There are past leaders and presidents who try to impose what they think is the right thing to do in a situation. As a former Select Board member I have tried not to stick my nose too much into what the current board does. A lot of it is approach and vision and the mechanics don’t matter that much, that’s the reason I’ve been as removed as I have. I would be willing to participate in that. I do support the amendment.

Discussion is closed and the **moderator** calls the vote.

Moderator reads the amendment again. The amendment passes.

Moderator reads the amended Article as follows-

Amended Article 10: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of twenty five thousand dollars (\$25,000) for deposit into the Public Works Capital Reserve Fund. (December 31, 2017 balance: \$573.23).

The **moderator** calls the vote and the amended article passes.

Article 11: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **five thousand dollars (\$5,000)** for deposit into the Police Cruiser Capital Reserve Fund. (December 31, 2017 balance: \$17,241.06).

Motion to move the Article made and seconded.

Christina: The purpose of this Capital Reserve Fund is to purchase a new police cruiser. We have no intent to do that at this time. The Impala will most likely not be user after this year. We’re sinking a lot

of money into is for repairs. I believe we've gotten good use out of that car. We aren't suggesting a second vehicle this would be to replace the cruiser when the time comes.

No discussion so the **moderator** calls the vote.

Moderator reads the Article again. Voting. The Article passes.

Article 12: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **seven thousand dollars (\$7,000)** for deposit into the Assessing Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund. (December 31, 2017 balance: \$12,815.11).

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Motion to move the Article made and seconded.

Christina: The town completed a revaluation in 2016 and it will need to be done once every five years. The next year we will be doing it is 2021. The Reserve Fund is to offset the cost of a full valuation. \$7,000 goes in each year to pay for that fifth year.

No discussion so the moderator calls the vote.

Moderator reads the Article again. Voting. The Article passes.

Article 13: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **five thousand dollars (\$5,000)** for deposit into the **Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve Fund**. (December 31, 2017 balance: \$49,854.01).

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Motion to move the Article made and seconded.

John: This fund was created to purchase any heavy equipment the Town may need such as a backhoe. No discussion so the moderator calls the vote.

Moderator reads the Article again. Voting. The Article passes.

Article 14: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **five thousand dollars (\$5,000)** for deposit into the **Disaster Relief Capital Reserve Fund**. (December 31, 2017 balance: \$41,300.26)

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Motion to move the Article made and seconded.

Christina: Last year we had a disaster in July and again in October that we had to pay for and we are not done with the repairs from the October storm. There are still a lot of repairs that need to be done. We have applied for FEMA funding but we are not guaranteed that funding to reimburse us. In the public hearing I said if we got the FEMA funding we'd put it back into the Capital Reserve Fund but we can't just do that. The FEMA funding is to offset what we spend. FEMA goes to the General Fund first and then would be on the Warrant Article for the Town to put into the Reserve Fund. I can tell you what we spent so far for the October storm... that was \$46,000 so far and we still have more. We are not done

fixing the Sculptured Rocks Road and we have other areas we haven't fixed yet from the damage. We need to pay for that regardless of what FEMA will give us. We have applied to FEMA claiming we are anticipating \$100,000 in damage. If we are granted that money it will come from FEMA and if we are not granted that money it will need to come from somewhere, from the Reserve Fund for from the budget.

Nicholas Blodgett: Would this money from the disaster fund include the training for any particular people in Town? Would there be someone in charge when there is a disaster because I know personally when we have had disasters it seems like the residents come around to help out. Somebody makes something happen. There's no one in charge of what's going on, just scrambling around to see what's happening. That includes the people who are emergency response hired for the position who didn't have a clue what to do. Would this include having someone trained and paid to go to that training, or is there anything we can do to get someone in charge? Saying the fire chief or police chief are in charge is easy to say. He's in charge, but do they have the training for it? Is there someone designated for disaster relief training?

Christina: We do have an Emergency Management Director and that is our fire chief. We are looking for a Deputy Emergency Director and we don't have one right now. The Select Board members are your emergency contacts. We do have money for training. To be the Emergency Management Director you do need to have training. Roger has that training and there should be more people who are trained to respond. In October we learned a lot from that storm. We learned what we did wrong and what we could have done better. We held a meeting after that storm to point out all of the things we should have done better and that we need to do better in the future and we are moving ahead with those plans.

No more discussion so the moderator calls the vote.

Moderator reads the Article again. Voting. Article passes.

Article 15: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **five thousand dollars (\$5,000)** for deposit into the Town House Capital Reserve Fund. (December 31, 2017 balance: \$35,542.77).

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Motion to move the Article made and seconded.

Kyle: These funds are to work on the building when needed. We noticed this winter that there are shingles that have fallen off. This spring we'll need to assess and see what the roof looks like. We may need a new roof coming up soon. The back deck on the building is rotting and will need to be replaced.

Some small discussion and then the moderator calls the vote.

Moderator reads the Article again. Voting. Article passes.

Break

No discussion will be allowed on previous Articles from this point, by vote.

Article 16: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **three thousand dollars (\$3,000)** for the replacement of two portable emergency radios to upgrade to digital/analog radios.
The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Motion to move the Article made and seconded.

Christina: One of the things that we discussed at the October meeting was that our portable radios didn't work all the time we needed them to work and we were having trouble communicating. So the intent is to purchase two replacement portable radios.

Roger: I agree with Christina. We found this problem in October. Emergency Management has four radios and they wouldn't function throughout the community and we found out what part of the problem was. The radios we currently have are analog and if we must communicate with state agencies all of their stuff is digital and we were unable to interact with them. The only radio we have like that is the one in my pick up which is both digital and analog. These new radios will be analog and digital so no matter what's going on we can communicate back and forth and have better coverage in the community and be able to assess what's going on. In October no one knew what was going on till the next morning which put everyone in turmoil because you couldn't get to places in Town. We couldn't establish a base of operation.

Christina: We couldn't establish a base here. We had no phones. Sara had to go to someone's house on Hall's Brook to use their phone in order for us to get in touch with someone from Environmental Services to get them out here because of the spill we had.

No further discussion so moderator calls the vote.

Moderator reads the Article again. Voting. Article passes.

Article 17: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **one thousand dollars (\$1,000)** for the support of the **Groton Historical Society**.
The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Motion to move the Article made and seconded.

Pam: The Groton Historical Society would like to thank the Town of Groton for their support of our organization. It's been about 5 years now that you have allotted a sum of money to us. Last year you voted for \$1,000 and we are asking for the same amount this year. There's a report on page 78 of the Town's Annual Report of just what we have been doing for the past year and some of the goals going ahead. The Historical Society is here for you to continue offering programs, preserving the history of this Town for its future. Thank you for your support.

Slim: When the Select Board goes to demolish the old building, the old Town Office/Library, please take off the Library sign. Don't throw it into the dumpster; give it to the Historical Society as an artifact. We want it to put on display in the museum.

No further discussion so moderator calls the vote.

Moderator reads the Article again. Voting. Article passes.

Article 18: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **one thousand dollars (\$1,000)** for support of the **Newfound Lake Region Association (NLRA)**.

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Motion to move the Article made and seconded.

John: The NLRA is helping out currently with some culvert replacements on Sculptured Rocks Road. Their services benefit the Town.

No further discussion so moderator calls the vote.

Moderator reads the Article again. Voting. Article passes.

Article 19: To see if the Town will vote to enter into a contract with Hebron Public Library, pursuant to RSA202-A:4-b Contract for Services, for a period of one (1) year to provide library services to Groton residents. (Submitted by the Library Trustees)

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Elizabeth Jespersen: This is the renewal of our contract with Hebron that we had last year. We again are not asking for any taxpayer money to fund this contract. What's different this year than last year; last year there was discussion about whether we should or should not do it and who would actually use the library. Historically the library here wasn't getting much use. According to the State Librarian we didn't even have a library. We entered into a contract with Hebron Library last year for \$2,000. With that, any resident of the Town of Groton can go down and see Robin and get a library card and use the library for free versus having to pay for that library card. In the past we had maybe five people per year use the library when it was here. In the past year we've had right around fifty people use the Hebron Library. As part of our contract you can get books online and participate in anything the library has to offer. We're asking to continue that again this year. No taxpayer money will be used; it will come from the library savings account.

Ruth Gaffey: I am the newest Library Trustee. If you haven't been to the Hebron Library you should go down and check it out. They have a lot of things you may not even think of. The Librarian, Robin, will help you with things like using your "smart phone", email accounts; she goes the extra mile to help. She will get books for you through inter-library loan. All sorts of things that are free and available for you so please go down and check out the library. In the coming year we will also be doing more with and for the children.

Elizabeth: To keep some of the services here we have a computer and printer and WIFI available to the public which anyone in Town may use.

No further discussion so moderator calls the vote.

Moderator reads the Article again. Voting. The Article passes.

Article 20: To see if the Town will approve the demolition of the old library and Town office building.

The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0.

Motion made and seconded to move the Article.

Christina: This is an advisory article. We are looking for input from the Town. Years ago the Select Board asked to Town about demolishing this building and questions were raised about ownership and whether the Town had the authority or not to make that decision and who would be responsible. It has taken a long time to figure out the truth and we finally determined that it is the Town's building and that we do have the right to demolish. We're looking for input from the townspeople on getting rid of this building so we can finally move forward with this process.

No discussion so moderator calls the vote.

Moderator reads the Article again. Voting. The Article passes.

Article 21: To see if the Town will vote to transact any other business that may legally come before the Town.

Motion to move the Article made and seconded.

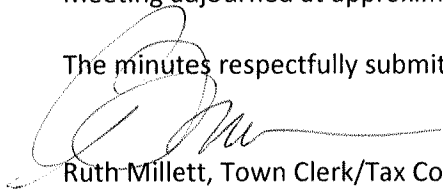
Christina had a few announcements and mentioned again that the Select Board is looking for participation on committees.

Attention was drawn to the dedication in the Town Report for Beatrice "Bea" Fligg written by Sara Smith. Bea is a long time Groton resident and involved in many Town activities.

Miles asked about the status of the Rumney Fire and EMS services. Roger and the Select Board will be meeting with them soon to review their contract and find out the status of the services they are providing for the Town.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 1:45 pm.

The minutes respectfully submitted,



Ruth Millett, Town Clerk/Tax Collector