

2019 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Meeting comes to order at 9:15am on March 16, 2019 at the Groton Town House Community Room

Tony Albert, Moderator

Select Board Members present: Ron Madan, John Rescigno

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

Pledge to the American Flag

Moderator reviews the Rules of the Meeting.

Moderator begins with the Ballot Articles for 2019 -

Ballot Article 1:

To choose all necessary Town Officers for the year ensuing.

Based on the Elections that were held on March 12, 2019

List of elected Officials incumbent and newly elected:

Selectmen - John Rescigno, Ron Madan, Tony Albert

Treasurer - Darlene Andrews

Town Clerk/Tax Collector - Ruth Millett

Planning Board - Deborah Johnson, Russell Carruth, Dave Labar, Forest Blake, Dave Madden, Kristina Brodie

Cemetery Trustees – TBD (James Gaffey, Stephen “Slim” Spafford)

Local Auditor - Ann Joyce

Moderator - Tony Tavares

Trustees of the Trust Fund - Michele Lacroix, Gina Rescigno

Library Trustees – TBD (Ruth Gaffey, Gina Rescigno, Bonnie Lane)

Zoning board - Glenn Hansen, Ann Joyce, Gary Easson, Peter Smith

Supervisors of the Checklist - Pamela Hamel, Annie Tobine, Gina Rescigno

Ballot Article 2:

Are you in favor of the adoption of the Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board and the repeal of the 2007 (ratified in 2008) Zoning Ordinance, the 2015 Ordinance for Large Wind Energy Systems-LWES and the Floodplain Development Regulations of 2007?

The effect of a yes vote can be summarized as follows:

1. Replace the current zoning with the proposed zoning ordinance, known here after as the Town of Groton Zoning Ordinance that will:
 - a. Establish zoning districts and uses within each district (Rural Residential, Forestry and Conservation, Renewable Energy and Forestry and a Floodplain and Aquifer Overlay).
 - b. Set lot size and lot dimensional requirements and
 - c. Create performance standards
2. Integrate and revise the Floodplain Development Regulations of 2007 in article 8.
3. Integrate and revise the 2015 Ordinance for Large Wind Energy Systems in article 9.

Should the proposed Zoning Ordinance fail to receive an affirmative vote, the 2007 Zoning Ordinance, The LWES and Floodplain Zoning will continue in their present forms as Groton’s zoning.

This article was defeated 47 “yes” - 95 “no”

Article 3:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **seven hundred thirty-five thousand, two**

hundred eighty-two dollars (\$735,282) for the purpose of the Sculptured Rocks Road culverts project with the amount of **five hundred fifty-one thousand, four hundred sixty-one dollars (\$551,461)** (75%) being offset by a Federal Hazard Mitigation Grant the Town applied for and the remaining Town's share of **one hundred eighty-three thousand, eight hundred twenty-one dollars (\$183,821)** (25%) to come from general taxation. (Majority vote required)

The Select Board recommends this article 3-0

Ron Madan makes a motion to accept the article as written. John Rescigno seconded.

Miles Sinclair:

Point of order; Miles makes a motion to move article 16 forward. The motion was submitted to the moderator.

Moderator read the amendment:

“Motion to bring Article number 16, the Operating Budget, forward to be addressed prior to Article number 3, thereby making Article number 16 the 1st Article to be acted upon at Town Meeting.”

Lou Lieto seconded the motion.

Miles Sinclair:

This is my 22nd Town Meeting and this is the first time the Operating Budget has been moved to last place. There may be a situation that warrants this, but not to my knowledge. In my opinion the operating budget is the most important thing to be voted upon during Town Meeting. There is a concern that people will leave before the end of Town Meeting and the budget will be voted on after they leave.

Without an Operating Budget the Town does not function. All the other warrants if we had to, we could do without. The Operating Budget tends to set the tone for spending in other areas. For this year the total proposed expenditures are up by about \$114,000. About \$75,000 of this is in individual warrant articles that are proposed. It is far too important to be relegated to last place. I would like to see if the Town's people would move to address it initially.

Lou Lieto:

There may be argument for not moving it forward as some Articles would affect the budget such as a Police Department. It is in the State Statutes that we can reconsider any article that's passed before the end of Town Meeting. If we want to address any article again we may do that before the Moderator closes the Meeting.

John Rescigno:

Just to clarify; the reason this was moved to last was we didn't know if the Police Department would remain or not. That would change the overall Operating Budget.

Moderator calls the vote on the motion and reads the motion again:

Motion passes.

(The Meeting will consider Article 16 first.)

Article 16:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **seven hundred sixty-six thousand, six hundred fifty- two dollars (\$766,652)** 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

Ron Madan makes motion to accept the article as written. John Rescigno seconded.

John Rescigno:

The bulk of the increase of \$23,000 is from the contract with the Hebron Fire Department. Other than that everything else remains pretty much the same.

Ruth Gaffey:

Speaking of the Fire Department, I noticed there are some mobility forms on the table in the other room.

John Rescigno:

Yes, there are forms on the table in the other room that need to be filled out. Please take one of each before the end of the Meeting.

Moderator calls the vote, the Article is read again.

The Article passes.

Dave Leone:

I believe there is a way that an Article can be reconsidered in the same Meeting is that correct?

Lou Lieto:

Yes, it would require a motion to reconsider.

Article 3:

Moderator reads Article 3 again, (as stated above).

Ron Madan makes a motion to accept the article as written. John Rescigno seconded.

John Rescigno:

This grant money is from the October storm and the \$183,821 represents the 25% that the Town is responsible for. This money will be used to replace three box culverts on Sculptured Rocks Road. The culverts that are there currently there are not box culverts. This will up the size of them so they will be able to handle the water more effectively. This will hopefully prevent further washouts on that road.

Dave Leone:

There is some confusion about the way the article is written. Are we actually raising the \$735,282 and then being reimbursed for \$551,461?

John Rescigno:

We are just raising the \$183,821.

Rick Belanger:

Where is the rest of this money coming from?

John Rescigno:

This money will be coming from FEMA.

Rick Belanger:

Usually that money is reimbursed after the work is done, will the contractor be willing to wait for his pay?

Sara Smith:

There are certain circumstances where you can request that the money be paid up front. It has been made clear that this is something that we would need as we would not be able to come up with that amount up front. To be clear we have not been accepted for this grant. We had hoped to hear before this.

Rick Belanger:

Does this include any engineering that will need to be done?

John Rescigno:

Yes, this includes everything.

Dave Darlington:

I'd like to amend this \$183,000 contingent upon the grant being approved before the money is released.

Tony Albert:

It's written into the article. The money cannot be spent unless the grant is approved.

John Rescigno:

We can't use these funds for anything else.

Tony Albert:

If the grant is not approved, the Town portion will be rolled into the General Fund.

Dave Darlington:

I don't think that's how it is worded in the Article.

Tony Albert:

Unless we get the grant money this Town portion money cannot be spent.

John Rescigno:

Remember, this is a one-time thing. If this is voted down, the opportunity will not be there again for this money.

Moderator calls the vote and reads Article 3 again.

Article passes.

Article 4:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **one hundred thirty thousand dollars (\$130,000)** for repair/reconstruction of North Groton Road to continue work on the section that was reclaimed and paved in 2018.

(submitted by the Highway Department and Road Committee)

The Select Board recommends this article 3-0.

Ron Madan makes a motion to accept the article as written. John Rescigno second.

John Rescigno:

This is money that will put a second coat of asphalt on the section of the road that was paved last year. It will be the completion of that project.

Robert Ellis:

This will be for the wear coat and for finishing the edges.

Dave Leone:

Do you know the actual cost of the pavement part?

Robert Ellis:

We have several bids, mostly for budget purposes. They were coming in around \$120,000. Just to explain, if oil prices go up, the price of asphalt goes up as well. If the asphalt prices change, we'll need to pay the difference. The contract won't mean anything if the asphalt price changes. I tried to be proactive and go with \$130,000 in case there's some change in oil prices.

Moderator calls the vote and reads Article 3 again.

Article 4 passes.

Article 5:

To see if the Town will vote to raise an appropriate the sum of **eighty-six thousand dollars (\$86,000)** for the Towns 25% portion of the cost to repair damages to Town roads from the October 2017 storm which we are working with FEMA. It is anticipated that the remaining cost will be absorbed by FEMA.

Select Board recommends this article 3-0.

Ron Madan moves to accept the article as written. John Rescigno seconded.

John Rescigno:

The article is fairly self-explanatory. The \$86,000 is the 25% for which we are responsible for the storm damage to the roads last October.

Sara Smith:

It was actually almost \$124,000. We've already spent some money from last year's budget to cover the cost. So the remainder that we need to raise is this \$86,000.

Rick Belanger:

What will this money be used for?

John Rescigno:

Some of the FEMA money has already been spent and it is for repairs on Sculptured Rocks Road and Providence Road. When FEMA money is given, it must be used for its intended purpose.

Moderator calls the vote, reads the article again.

Article 5 passes.

Article 6:

To see if the Town will vote to raise an appropriate the sum of **fifty four thousand dollars (\$54,000)** to be added to the previously established Capital Reserve Funds.

The Selectmen recommend this special article. (Majority vote required).

(Moderator did not read the rest of this article in the meeting.)

- Truck/Sander CR Fund (December 31, 2018 balance \$13,588.55): \$5000
- Townhouse CR Fund (December 31, 2018 balance \$41,252.02): \$5000
- Disaster Relief CR Fund (December 31, 2018 balance \$29,197.88): \$5000
- Heavy Equipment CR Fund (December 31, 2018 balance: \$55,828.43): \$5000
- Atwell/Orange Bridge CR Fund (December 31, 2018 balance \$4113.03): \$2000
- Assessing Reval CR Fund (December 31, 2018 balance \$20,123.54): \$7000
- Public Works CR Fund (December 31, 2018 balance \$25,837.37): \$25,000

Total Capital Reserve Funds \$54,000

The Select Board recommends this article 3-0.

Ron Madan moves to accept the article as written. John Rescigno seconded.

John Rescigno:

These are the same Capital Reserve Funds we have every year and we're putting the same amount in them as we normally do.

Peter Smith:

What is the purpose now of the "Atwell/Orange Bridge Fund"?

John Rescigno:

We're seeking to put money into that account for two reasons, one is the repair and maintenance on the bridge and also to put money aside for the future in case it does need to be replaced again.

Peter Smith:

So we will be putting money into this every year for 40 or 50 years till we need another bridge?

John Rescigno:

Yes.

Miles Sinclair presents an amendment to article 6.

“Move to amend Article 6 to eliminate the \$2000 appropriation for the Atwells/Orange Brook CRF.”

Lou Lieto seconded.

Miles Sinclair:

I believe I had a similar thought process as the gentleman in the back. From my perspective we have done our job and we have done it well. And I think we should be proud of ourselves for that because it ended up costing us a lot more money than originally estimated. While it is admirable to look towards the future, for me I believe we have done our part. The life expectancy of the bridge should be about 75 years. To me this becomes a problem for future generations. I don't believe we should continue to save money just to make it easier for them because no one did that for us and I don't think it's supposed to happen that way. Only the youngest of us in this room will be around when it's time to replace that bridge again. So I would like to see us eliminate that contribution, we have \$4000 already in that account. I would like to see us use that money for more pressing issues that we're facing currently rather than saving for a rainy day. We don't know 75 years from now what infrastructure will look like. I think the more prudent thing to do is to vote down this appropriation and have the Select Board present an Article next year that will eliminate that CRF.

Pam Hamel:

I disagree with that. It's because people in the past years did not put a little money away that we ended up in the position where we have had to come up with a large chunk of money. It's \$2000 which isn't a lot of money but over 75 years will accumulate and that probably still won't be enough money to replace it. We're looking forward for the entire community. We might not be here, but our children will be here and this is not a lot of money. If somebody else had done this 20 years ago we wouldn't have been in the position we were in having to spend a lot of money. We will always have a lot of pressing things to do and replacing that bridge ended up being one of those pressing things because it was not planned for. I think we should actually vote to keep this in the warrant article.

Gina Rescigno:

What are the chances of having to fix the bridge?

John Rescigno:

That money would also be used for maintenance of the bridge. That money will be used for the future or for maintenance.

Many people will be passing their houses down to their children. They don't want to leave them with large bills to pay. As Pam said we don't want to leave future generations with the predicament we are in today with several things that need to be replaced or repaired in the Town which will cost the Town a lot of money.

Lou Lieto:

The altruism is nice and if that's the mechanism for deciding, there should probably be 10 more items on this list. We should look at a modest estimate of rate of inflation and at a reasonable estimate of the life of this bridge; it may not last 75 years but probably 50. No, I'm not in favor of passing a tax burden on to future generations but just by living here we will. In 50 years the \$100K + interest will make this amount of money as

insignificant as \$1000 is today. It's an inadequate amount. If you're really interested in doing this kind of thing for future years you need to be putting effort and time into figuring out what those costs will be in the future, then you would have an accurate amount of how much you would have to deposit between now and then into this account. This is a waste of money.

Robert Ellis:

I agree it's probably going to be a drop in the hat. But the other thing is, there will be maintenance on this bridge. Will the guardrails last 75 years? Maybe it won't be enough to replace a bridge, but it will be enough to maintain it.

Gary Easson:

When you add all this up the budget is shooting up, so just be careful.

Bill Jolly:

Was there a maintenance schedule put together for this bridge? If we had that we'd have a better idea of what it would cost to maintain.

Miles Sinclair:

To address some of the issues that have been brought up; we had hardly any maintenance for that bridge, and I expect that this new bridge will be even better and require little to no maintenance on an on-going basis. Beyond that we always have maintenance responsibilities on our roads and everything else. To me that argument is weak. The old bridge didn't require very much maintenance and it shouldn't be expected that this one will either.

Chuck Stata:

Maintenance is not Capital. Capital Reserve Funds cannot be expended on maintenance.

Anne Tobine:

I'm one of the youngest people here. I have young children who will live in this Town. The reason the bridge got that way in the first place was because it was not maintained. So if we don't keep this in, we'll be making the same mistake over again. Two thousand dollars is a lot for a lot of people, me too, but we need to start looking ahead for my kids and for other people's kids.

Lou Lieto:

I accept Annie's comments but what Chuck said is correct, this money cannot be used for that purpose so a direction to the Select Board would be to re-define for an article next year for a maintenance fund for this and other things. The Capital Reserve Fund could only be used for building a new bridge.

Moderator calls the vote and reads the motion made.

A count is necessary 24 yes; 27 no. The motion fails

Moderator reads article 6 again. (See above).

There is no more discussion so the Moderator calls the vote.

Article passes.

Article 7:

To see if the Town will vote to raise an appropriate the sum of **twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000)** for the repair of Groton Roads (submitted by the Highway Department and Road Committee).

The Select Board Recommends this Article 3-0.

Ron Madan moves to accept the Article as written. John Rescigno seconded.

Robert Ellis:

The only difference between this and last year is that we took out “paved roads”. That way we can use the money on any road that needs to be repaired.

Miles Sinclair:

Just maybe a word of caution. The way it reads right now, “Groton roads”, I think we understand that is Town maintained roads only but somebody else could misconstrue that so for the record this should be Groton Town maintained roads.

Dave Leone:

Since it’s against the law for us to do any maintenance on any other roads except Town roads, I don’t think it’s necessary.

No more discussion so the Moderator calls the vote.

Article passes.

Article 8:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2500)** for a firework display at the 2019 Old Home Day celebration (submitted by the Old Home Day Committee).

The Select Board Recommends this Article 2-1

Ron Madan moves to accept the article as written, John Rescigno seconded

John Rescigno:

Due to insurance regulations the Town is required to have a licensed Pyro technician put on the firework display at Old Home Day. They did go out to get a couple of estimates and this is what the cost would be.

Lou Lieto:

The discussions in this Meeting and prior Meetings have been about monies that were for infrastructural changes and have been debated as to the effect it would have on people who have limited resources. I consider this a frivolous expenditure of Town funds.

Gina Rescigno:

The reason why we put this forward is that people were upset that at the Old Home Day last year there was no firework display. The reason there were no fireworks was because Glen Hansen, (Thank you Glen Hansen, I appreciate all his hard work.), worked for the community and did fireworks every year for us. Because Glen no longer works for the Town I was afraid he would fall under some type of liability and we then could possibly get sued. I went to the attorneys through the Select Board, and we now know we cannot do that. We could

have someone in the Town get licensed to do this, or have a company come in and do this for us. Some did come forward at Old Home Day thinking they had licenses for explosives, but they didn't. If the Town wants fireworks this is the only way we're going to get them. For the communities around us this is the amount of money that they pay. I understand about finances, but if people want to have fireworks this is the only way for us. We will need to pay someone to come and do this.

Kyle Andrews:

I was the one who voted against this as a Selectmen. I agree with Lou that it should not be raised through taxes. If they want to raise money for fireworks, the money should come from donations.

Gina Rescigno:

We do get donations at Old Home Day, but it would never amount to the cost it would be for somebody to come in and do fireworks for us. I am willing for anyone to come forward that has a license for doing explosives. If they had a license they could do fireworks. We used to use the money that the wind farm so graciously gave us towards a fireworks display, but the fireworks alone cost that much money. They are very expensive and then we'd need a person with a license for explosives to do it. If anybody knows anyone who would like to come forward for the Town, have them come talk to me.

John Rescigno:

The Town is accustomed to having fireworks each year and last year because we didn't have them several people were upset. We wanted to put this Warrant Article out there so the Town could vote whether they want this money to be spent or not.

Gina Rescigno:

I really wanted to do this so that Glen would understand that this is not a personal thing, it's a liability issue. That's the reason why we didn't ask him. If anyone would like to join this committee we would love to have them.

We would love to have more people attend Old Home Day. It's one thing that I don't want to let go of and it's a huge thing for the whole community to enjoy. It's the one other thing besides the Fishing Derby that the Conservation Commission puts forward.

Dave Leone:

This person who has license to do explosives, do they also need to have insurance, or does the Town's insurance cover and you just need to have someone with an explosives license?

John Rescigno:

They would need their own insurance.

Ron Madan:

For a few of years now we've been having this Old Home Day and I feel it's a time when everybody can have some fun where you meet all your neighbors in Town. Lately there's been quite a few kids coming. There are games for the kids to play. We've even had a jump house available, popcorn machine, all the food hamburgers, hotdogs, beans and salads, all that stuff is included. Now it costs money for the fireworks that's all. There were others in the past who would donate money- \$400/\$500 and it's not enough. They now aren't able to come up with the \$2500 and so we requested it this year.

Tony Tavares:

I know personally someone who is enthusiastic about fireworks, but I also know that this is probably not proper use for tax money. I'm wondering, if this does pass, if people can donate to offset this amount so that it would not be taken from taxes?

John Rescigno:

The money would just go into the General Fund.

Tony Tavares:

It was a disappointment last year to not have the fireworks. And I think Old Home Days and the fireworks are something that the Town needs. The spirit of this Town a few years back was pretty low and I think Old Home Days brings up the spirit. I think it's worthwhile to have Old Home Days. Is this \$2500 just for the operator or does it include the fireworks?

John Rescigno:

That includes everything. If you vote for this amendment that money will be spent for the fireworks. If people donate money towards that, towards offsetting the \$2500, that money would just go into the general fund.

Tony Tavares:

I think we should be able to get donations for this.

Jeremy Elder:

I don't know why we can't do this like the Town of Bristol does, putting jars out in the convenience stores. That's how they raise money for their fireworks. I don't know why we can't put jars out in surrounding towns. I don't think it should come out of our tax money.

Gina Rescigno:

That is not how other Towns do it. They put in Warrant articles to pay for it and other communities have done this. Money has been a little tight this past year and surrounding communities do put in Warrant Articles.

Lou Lieto:

I don't want to be mistaken I do think this contributes to community spirit. I just question whether this should be a tax supported event.

Miles Sinclair:

The wind farm still does donate money towards this, is that correct?

John Rescigno:

Yes, they have graciously donated money towards this.

Moderator moves the vote and reads article 8 again. The votes are close so votes are counted, 24 yes, 26 no

Article 8 is defeated.

Article 9:

To see if the town will vote to raise an appropriate the sum of **one thousand three hundred fifty dollars (\$1350)** for signs and posts for the Town Pound.

The Selectmen Recommend this Article 2-1.

Ron Madan makes motion to accept the article as written. John Rescigno seconded.

John Rescigno:

The Historical Society is been restoring the Town Pound, fixing up the area to make it a bit more noticeable.

Slim Spafford brings an amendment to this article.

“I would like to amend article 9 to read \$800 instead of \$1350 due to donations already received.”

Pam Hamel seconded.

Moderator calls the vote.

Amendment passes.

Stephen Spafford:

This summer when they were doing work on the powerlines I had them dump wood chips for a path going down to the Town Pound. The Town owns this property and the Pound that's on it. This is not private property. It was built in 1808. We have the complete history in Town Reports of the money, \$42 and change, which was used to build it originally. We would like to have signs that go along the path down to it. It won't get in the way of any future building that will take place for the Town Garage. The wood chip path does exist, and you can walk down anytime to see it. There are a couple places where trees have come down pulling some rocks down. We have someone already who will work on that. We want this money to build some signs with sign posts.

Lou Lieto:

I just want to point out that according to the RSA if the Article says “signs and posts” that's what the money must be spent on.

Melissa Gromko:

I'm kind of new to the town. I've been here only a little over a year. What is the Town Pound?

Steve Spafford:

I anticipated this question. In the colonies in New England, livestock would run wild sometimes. There was a Town Pound Keeper. The first Town Pound Keeper from Groton lived in the same house that Miles lives in now. He would go out and round up the stray livestock and take it to the Town Pound because in those days there was a gate on it. The farmer couldn't get stock back until he paid a fine. Once that fine was paid the livestock were released to the owner. There are still quite a few around New England and they are very interesting to see. There's one on the way over to Center Harbor.

Tim Crosby:

Considering the amount of money that we're spending already isn't this a frivolous use of our funds?

Pam Hamel:

The Select Board had asked the Historical Society to do some research on the Town Pound a number of years ago when we acquired this property. This is not the only Town Pound that Groton ever had. It is the only one that is still in existence dating from the late 1700s. It's a little sketchy about where all of them were located. It's a stone enclosure where all the animals would be kept. There is so much history that has been destroyed over the years and this is one item that still remains and we'd like to keep it. \$800 is kind of chump change. Most of the work that's gone in over there has been volunteer; clearing the trees, the chips, and someone who has agreed to come and cut more trees. They will be doing that as a donation. We'd like to have some signs to actually explain the history. This is the first sign, (showing a sign that was brought in as an example), and there are four more planned. These will have the history, the Warrant Articles, who the Town Pound Keepers were, as well as some photos of local pounds. It was required by statute back then that towns had to have a pound in order to keep the livestock from roaming. \$800 is not a lot of money and, yes, it is taxpayer money and it is your Town and this is a Town owned site. This is a historical site that we would like to see remain and be up-kept so that we'll have some pride in our heritage.

Lou Lieto:

Every Town had to have a Town Pound, so it loses its uniqueness in that and every town has a history and that's great for those who want to maintain that history, but I think there's more important things for the Town to spend its money on.

Celine Richer:

I disagree. I think history tells us where we come from and where we're going. I'm not from this Town and I'm not even from this State. I've lived in many places. You forget where you come from when you obliterate everything from the past. I think it lessens you as a person, and it lessens the community. I know that \$800 may seem frivolous, but I think to maintain what this community is, it is a good way to spend it.

Stacy Darlington:

You've already set a precedent and some money has been raised through donations. The remainder of these funds should be able to be raised through donations. I've heard comments that the Pound should be maintained and that it's part of the history of the Town. I agree with that. If that's the case, the Town needs to adopt the Town Pound into part of its routine maintenance so there is money, part of the maintenance budget, to maintain property. As you've already demonstrated you have been able to raise money through donations and this amount seems feasible to be raised through donations as well.

Bill Jolley:

This is not really a maintenance issue; this is about acquisition of new things. Being a parent of a small child and many of us are parents or grandparents; we want to preserve things for them. I come from Boston where they dedicate a lot of money to history. Part of children's education is learning about history and children are being distanced from their history these days. They're losing their roots. The US is a collection of small towns, and if we abandon the small things that made the towns what they are, we will no longer have that link. Fireworks only last a moment and that is a frivolous expense for taxpayer to pay. This \$800 that is being asked for is to improve the Town.

Ruth Gaffey:

I just wanted to say that I agree with Celine and Bill. A lot of volunteers have worked hard on this project and \$800 doesn't even come close to the amount of work that's been done. This is a small amount to pay in recognition of a part of our Town's history. I agree we should spend that money.

Moderator moves to vote on article 9 as amended. Moderator reads the amended article.

Amended Article 9:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **eight hundred dollars (\$800)** for signs and posts for the Town Pound.

The Select Board recommends this article 2-1.

Amended Article passes.

Article 10:

To see if the Town will vote to raise an appropriate the sum of **one thousand dollars (\$1000)** for support of the Groton Historical Society.

The Select Board recommends this article 3-0.

Ron Madan moves to accept this article as written. John Rescigno seconded.

John Rescigno:

This is the same \$1000 that we contribute every year to the Historical Society. They do a lot of work preserving the history of the Town. We have a little Historical Society Museum that was one of the school houses in Town at the intersection of North Groton and Hall's Brook Rd.. There's a lot of great information there regarding the Town and is very worth going for a visit. This money is well spent preserving the Town's history.

Pam Hamel:

We had positive comments that were made for the previous article. It is actually the Historical Society that does the legwork and research for these things and historical programs for the community. We thank you very much for the support of \$1000 dollars. We know that many feel that this is something that taxpayers should not be contributing to, but I will say that it is part of the heritage of this community. It's where this community came from and it's our work to preserve that.

Steve Spafford:

Last week we were able to meet up with a lady here at the Town Hall and she gave us a whole box of old photographs as well as a family Bible. She will be expecting us to have this available and on display at the museum. She lives in Hebron. Our President and Curator of the Museum was there and she couldn't believe the amount of things that we were given. Afterwards, we were able to take a walk through the museum and view the displays. This lady was excited about seeing all the great work.

Moderator calls the vote on article 10. Moderator reads article again.

Article passes.

Article 11:

To see if the Town will vote to raise an appropriate the sum of **one thousand dollars (\$1000)** for support of the Newfound Lake Regional Association, (NLRA).

The Select Board Recommends this Article 3-0

Ron Madan moves to accept article as written. John Rescigno seconded.

John Rescigno:

The Newfound Lake Region Association has helped the Town to apply for grants to help with Sculptured Rocks Road. They help to maintain the clarity of the water in Newfound Lake. We have donated in the past and we believe this is money well spent.

Robert Ellis:

We've used them quite a bit this past year. They are helping us with grants for various things in Town. Sara and I have worked with them. They have been helping us with a maintenance plan to help with the roads. They helped us to find matching grants. We replaced over 26 culvert in Town last year. We received almost \$9000 in match grants from NLRA.

Celine Richer:

If any of you been to Gray Rocks; the NLRA maintains that and improves the trails. There are many trails that you can walk on. Within a year they completely transformed it. It is quiet and peaceful with lovely paths through the woods. Gray Rocks is in Hebron but it's open to anybody and we use it a lot.

Sherry Nelson:

I didn't know till a few years ago that Groton is part of the watershed for a Newfound Lake. The NLRA helps to monitor the water that's going into the lake from the Cockermouth and other rivers that flow into it.

Moderator calls the vote on article 11. Moderator read the Article again.

Article passes.

Article 12:

To see if the Town of Groton will vote to abolish the Police Department.

The Select Board does not recommend this article 1-2.

Ron Madan moves to accept Article as written. John Rescigno seconded.

John Rescigno:

It is not impossible to reinstate a Police Department once it has been abolished. It may take time but it can be done. We have been unsuccessful in filling even a part-time position, regardless of the pay. We have been looking for someone for over a year and in the past, the Town has struggled filling this position. We have been unsuccessful in filling the Chiefs position. The first time this position was opened there were three applicants, two from the outside and EJ. EJ was the only one that was qualified at the time to do this job.

At a cost of over \$100,000 a year this is a lot of money for a small Town to be putting forward. The turnover is very high, the training is expensive. We've sent people to the Police Academy then they only turn around and leave and go to another town. We look at the percentage of time that the Town is covered. It's even low when you have a Chief and a Police Officer. There still a lot of time that we don't have coverage in Town.

On the flipside of that, the only time you need a Police Officer is when you NEED a Police Officer. This is the reason it makes it a difficult decision which way to go.

We spoke to several towns that rely on the State Police. They all seem to be very pleased with the response time, and as long as it is not contracted, there is no cost to the Town. If there is an arrest made it is all handled by the Department that responded to that call. If it's the Sheriff's Department that is called then the Sheriff's Department picks up the tab. We had talked during one of our previous meetings about the possibly having the Sheriff's Department cover the Town a little more in the summertime. We did meet with the new Sheriff and it will be difficult if not impossible for them to cover even at all during the summertime because their traffic goes up and their people will be required to cover their own assignments.

Gary Easson:

I'm not crazy about this. After making a call it was three hours before a trooper showed up. It's a good thing there wasn't anything serious. These guys are spread pretty thin now and I'm concerned about that. I think there should be something in the contract when we hire someone and train them that they need to work for the Town at least three years and if they don't stay, if they decide to leave then they need to pay back the money for the training.

Bill Jolly:

I would like to know what the calls for service have been. I would like to see us shelf this decision for year. After we determine what the real demand is for the community we can use that to plan. We can use that information to help us decide whether to keep it or not.

Frank Harris:

The Sheriff is here so he can speak for himself. I know that if you're depending on the State Police you're talking about long wait times. If you're gone and your house is burglarized who investigates that and at what rate? Who goes to Concord with the evidence? Who's going to go to the grand jury? Who's going to prosecute? That's just one case. I know there will be more felony level cases in this Town. Relying on outside agencies; sure they will be here, the State Troopers will be here, but they don't have a commitment to the Town that a Town Officer would have. They don't know us and we certainly need to consider that.

They have limited resources, they have fairs going on and races going on and other things during the summer. They will probably not be able to be here in a timely manner. If there is something going on in town such as an active incident, we will need someone who can stabilize that scene quickly otherwise you're just on your own until the Police Department shows up. How do we move forward? I've heard, "Let's table it for year," I'm not sure if the board is qualified to figure out what's best for the Town. I

think we need to go to the experts. We may not need a full-time Police Chief. It might be nice to find someone who is retired and have them for 25-30 hrs. a week. Once the PD is abolished we will lose it for a year. It will take a lot of time to reestablish it. I'd be very concerned if we let the Police Department go. It is a lot of money, but law-enforcement cost a lot of money. Our selection process is not working we need to sit down and discuss what the Town's needs are with some experts and I think waiting a year is a good thing.

(There was much more to this, but the recording was quite poor).

John Rescigno:

When you are looking for a Police Officer for the Town, it's like looking for a "needle in a haystack". We are looking for someone who will fill that niche; someone who wants to live and work in a small town. We did speak to our new Sheriff. One of the questions I asked was how do we make this position more enticing? It's not a simple thing to just abolish the Police Department. We wanted to know how to open up that application pool so we'd have a better drawing. That's one of the biggest challenges for a small community set in the middle of nowhere, finding someone who wants to live within a certain distance from the Town who will be here and available for us.

Dave Leone:

When Bill White retired, I was Selectman at the time, I called the State Police and the Sargent from the State Police and Sheriff Dutile came out and we met with them. We asked them if they would help us find a good candidate and we presented what type of person we were looking for. The Sargent laughed and said, "You won't find that guy because we took him already." I would be in favor of tabling this for a year and maybe look in different ways. Out there someplace there must be a guy that is a cop or qualified to be a cop, that wants to live out in the woods, that likes to snowmobile, that likes to hunt, that likes to fish that wants to be a part of our community, that wants to be here. Maybe we do need to pay him a little more money or some other incentives to get that man here to run everything. I may be wrong, but I'd still be in favor of tabling this for a year.

Stacy Darlington:

We have a very popular tourist attraction in Town; Sculptured Rocks. Recently on a Facebook page with 75,000 followers Sculptured Rocks was noted as the number one place to go to among 11 top things to do in New Hampshire this spring. We need a presence locally to take care of us and our tourists and to take care of us from the tourists.

Jeremy Elder:

The equipment that the Police Department has needs to be certified every so often and without a Police Officer how are we addressing the cruiser and all the gear that we have paid for as far as staying up-to-date. What is the future cost to bring that up to speed when, or if we find a person to fill that position?

John Rescigno:

We really can't answer that question because if this doesn't go through we don't know if we'll find someone in 6 months or a year from now. The Police Cruiser is being stored inside. We do run it now and then to keep the exhaust from rotting out and to keep moisture from building up. There really is no one to certify the equipment on a yearly basis.

Gina Rescigno:

It's not the Select Board who will choose to have a Police Department. It will be the Town who will choose. The problem is, they can't find anyone who wants to come here. We have not been able to find anyone who will come to Groton and work here for us. The part-timers we had before didn't want to work for us they would just go somewhere for a better-paying job. If the community didn't want to pay before, are they going to be willing to pay whatever it takes to pay for a Police Officer that would be willing to work for our community?

John Rescigno:

We did raise the hourly rate to make it more appealing. Our Police Department has always been a revolving door. It's always going to be a challenge.

Lou Lieto:

I also believe we should maintain the Police Department. I understand the difficulties involved and I don't presume to know the right answer. I don't think we should refuse to do this job because it's hard. I don't know all the possibilities. I'm not sure what could be arranged with surrounding towns that would benefit the prospective officer or candidate. I'd like to see us look around. We have a lot of resources right in this room. As we age we don't see as well or get around as well. We need to provide security for those who reside in this Town.

As I recall from times past, roughly 25% of the properties in this Town are owned by people who don't reside in this Town. Vacation homes are one of the largest sources of crime or break-ins. How long do you think you can maintain a population of people who don't use services, but pay taxes, if their homes are not going to be secure?

John Rescigno:

If the decision is made to keep the Police Department, every effort will be put towards finding someone to fill that position. We've reached out to Hebron to see about joining them and they didn't seem to be too interested. It would also have to go before Hebron's Town-people before a decision could be made, and then our Town would need to vote. The Police Chief in Hebron has Hebron to look after, and if he joins into Groton he will have twice the ground to cover, twice the headaches, twice the responsibility at the same pay. It's not all that enticing for them to want to cover our town. We did look at that idea.

Annie Tobine:

Like I said before I have children, and the opioid crisis and heroin don't just affect Manchester and down that way, it is affecting here, now. With that comes domestic abuse and a whole range of other things. It

is happening in our Town whether people want to acknowledge that or not. I work at Bristol Elementary School and my kids are in the school system and it's happening. We need a Police Department in Groton to at least be there to help protect the families in Groton. If someone is abusing drugs and is really mad and is getting ready to kill their kids, a local Police Officer would be there much quicker than the State Police or the Sheriff's Department. There are some like those who live in our Town. They live everywhere. Who's going to protect our kids? It's won't be long before Groton doesn't have a Police Force. I know it doesn't now. All these factors are there and they're getting worse. If we do away with our Police Department now, things will continue to get worse.

Pam Hamel:

I think if the vote goes that we keep the Police Department we need to use a different approach. We are looking for a very unique individual. They will come here and realize that the job is not 40 hours a week. Any Police Chief or Officer that comes to this community he will be the cop. He will be it. He won't be working Monday through Friday he will have to fill the needs in the community. I think we should have law enforcement here. But no matter what happens, let's not fool ourselves into believing that there will be coverage anytime anything might happen. Even a full-time Officer might not be the one to respond. He truly might not be working. He could be away. It's just 40 hours per week he would be here. He's take up the investigation if necessary, but he might not be there to answer every call. That's just the nature of how it is and it's one of the reasons why we live here. Going in with other communities; I don't feel is the way to go. I've thought that in situations in the past where there is a sharing of help that the heart wasn't in it. Groton didn't get the services that they needed and paid for. We need to find someone to be invested in this community.

Miles Sinclair:

I know it's frustrating to try to find someone but right now I feel it's a little premature to abolish the Police Department. What people need to understand is that this problem of hiring personnel is widespread. Even the State Police are having a hard time. It's not impossible to find the right person but it does take the right kind of person to fill the needs of the Town. I believe Joe Pivirrotto did a great job of filling that role. To find the right person we just need to keep at it. A different approach may provide some new areas to explore.

Ron Madan:

If we abolish the Police Department we will abolish that budget so it would allow us no money to even search for a new Officer or if we were to find a new Officer who is willing to take the job. Once that money is gone there's no money to even look for a Police Officer or even have a Sheriff come in for a couple of weeks when it's going to be busy. That money is going to be gone.

John Rescigno:

It's clearly a very difficult decision to make. The reality is if you are relying on the State Police or the Sheriff's Department the problem is how close they are to Town as to how quick they can get there. If we have our own Police Department and they are staffed at that time they'll be here a lot faster. There are a lot of great ideas being thrown around right now Frank made some great suggestions. Whether it's the Zoning that failed the Police Department the Town Garage we had a lot of meetings that led up to these things. It would be nice if people came to those meetings so that the things that are being thrown around now could have been brought up then. It wouldn't just be information you're picking up at the Hebron Store or something that was handed out, whatever it may be. It's nice to come to these meetings and you can ask these questions. We may not know the answer but we do it for you. It opens the door for so many more possibilities. Maybe what Frank's suggested is what we need to do. I got a lot of great

information from the Sheriff. Maybe that's where we need to go figuring out another avenue to go down to find that person. Joe was a fantastic Chief. The Town got lucky. I had the honor of working with him for a year. He's the needle in a haystack that we're looking for. We all know how hard it is to find a needle. The needle's out there, but very difficult to find. Even if we find someone, we'll be going through this cycle again. That doesn't mean we shouldn't go through the cycle.

Melissa Gromko:

I'm curious as to the number and nature of calls. I thought I heard earlier that we have that information.

John Rescigno:

In January they were 49 calls that went to dispatch.

In February it was 41. In March they were 44.

June calls go to 62. Second quarter was 168 that was half of Hebron's calls. July 58 calls; August 20; September 19; the full third-quarter 97 calls and that was for the summer. When you need a Police Officer is when you need a Police Officer.

Gina Rescigno:

Aren't we contracting with Hebron for fire and ambulance service?

John Rescigno:

Yes, we contract for those services.

Gina Rescigno:

I just want to make it plain that the ambulance comes from Hebron because we contract for those services.

Melissa Gromko:

So based on the numbers given, we paid EJ a full-time salary and EJ basically patrolled.

John Rescigno:

Yes, when he was here, yes.

Melissa Gromko:

How many of those calls came in on EJ is 40 hour shifts?

John Rescigno:

Not many. The time the Town is actually covered, when the Town has an Officer, is very low. What we are looking for is a Chief and two part-time Officers. The bulk of the time he was here he was by himself. We continue to advertise through different resources. We upped the money because we thought our hourly rate was too low.

Sara Smith:

Depending on who we get for a Chief could make the difference. I'm not saying it was because of EJ that we couldn't get the part-timer at all, but if it's a Chief that's well-known, we may have a better chance of getting part-timers.

John Rescigno:

It was mentioned that one of the reasons we couldn't find anyone is because people didn't want to work for EJ. When he was Chief we did continue with advertising and no one wanted to work for Groton.

Sara Smith:

When our Officer is not working the State Police will respond.

Melissa Gromko:

So the response time is based upon the proximity to the location.

John Rescigno:

So for 40 hours per week we'd have a full-time Officer and the remaining of the hours we would be relying on the State Police. If we have a part-time Officer will have 60 hours of coverage. There's 168 hours in a week so 128 hours would not be covered if you have a 40 hour per week officer.

Robert Ellis:

Sculptured Rocks has increased in popularity over the years and it's helpful if someone at least sees a Police presence. The traffic on Sculptured Rocks Road is tremendous in the summertime. If you don't live down there you wouldn't know it. There are thousands of people that go down that road in the summertime.

Frank Harris:

(Much of this was hard to hear on the recording). Each one of these calls has a lot of time involved in it. There's a lot of stuff that you don't see that's involved in each call. Much of it is desk work. You will be paying for that. Who will be doing that work for you? The Chief is not all that we need we need part-time person's to. Don't just look at the numbers but what the need is.

Sherry Nelson:

Before everyone goes home could we get names for those who would be able to work on a Search Committee?

Stephen Spafford:

I would advise the Selectmen not to start putting ads in with "pie in the sky" figures. We need to have people that really care about the Town.

John Rescigno:

We always do things in a fiscally responsible manner. That's why we did the wage study.

Nick Blodgett:

I know we talked about it in meetings before that people are afraid they're not going to have coverage. Don't forget that the Plymouth PD is a central hub for troopers in the area. They can get from Plymouth to here in a cruiser at what they call code 3 in about eight minutes even on these roads. You will have somebody covering you at all times. That same person may be covering a call in Piermont so it may take a lot longer to get here. Any Officer around would come to assist if there were a mass casualty incident or some bad accident. I'm a big supporter of the Police Department, but when the stuff happens we don't hear about is covered by a Trooper it's hard for me in my mind to justify a local Officer to stay here with the history we've had. The contracts we keep on these people, we know from experience don't

work. These guys go to the Academy, they get out, they'll give you their word that they going to stay for \$40 grand a year. Then when somebody comes around and offers \$60 grand a year, their word's not worth \$20 grand to them. They're going to take that \$60,000 job at Plymouth PD or Bristol and their contracts don't mean anything. Just keep that in mind. They get out of them all the time and it's not worth it to fight with them. I want the PD, but look at the past at what we've been getting. We get a guy who takes 16 months to go to the Academy then he takes off. We get a Chief people have bad experiences with. That could happen to anybody. Somebody's always not going to be happy with the Chief and other people are going to love that Chief. Don't be afraid that if something happens no one's going to be here for you. If you don't hear the guy breaking into your house, then you see him and he takes off running whoever is in the area is going to come. There could be chances they won't be here just as there may be a chance the local Cop might not be here. The follow-up is very important. The Trooper's still going to do it. They have a daily backlog of stuff they can't get caught up on. You'll probably be frustrated because you may not get your chainsaw back as quickly as if a local Cop had gotten the call. If the local Cop has to put 40 hours into your chainsaw that's not going to happen either. He's got 4 tickets he's written and needs to cover in court with a prosecutor we're paying \$10/\$15 grand a year for. The main thing is you will be covered.

Bill Jolly:

We really do need a committee so that we can build a vision of what we see the Police Department doing. Then backwards from that we can look at what human resources is able to do. So should we keep the Department at least in name and continue our search? I think we should move the question.

Moderator moves the vote and reads article 12 again.

Article 12 is defeated.

Article 13:

To see if the Town of Groton will vote to contract Police services with the State Police and/or Sheriff's Department for Police coverage.

**In the event article 12 passes the select board recommends this article 3-0
In the event article 12 fails the select board does not recommend this article.**

Ron Madan makes a motion to accept the article as written. John Rescigno seconded.

John Rescigno:

We will gather those names to create that committee. We'll do everything we can to move forward to staff that Department. Currently we are working with the Sheriff's Department covering the Town for a four hour block. The days change throughout the week so that no one knows when there will be someone here or not. One thing that came up at one of our meetings was to increase those to two 4 hour blocks during the summer. In speaking with the Sheriff's department they will probably not be able to cover any blocks in the summertime. We're currently trying to work on a contract with the State to get their coverage. There were some discrepancies that we're trying to fix. There still will not be guaranteed coverage even if this passes but we will work on getting that coverage.

Jeremy Elder:

If this fails that means that the State Police and the Sheriff's Department will not be getting paid because it's not contracted; is that correct?

John Rescigno:

They'll be working on their own time, so they'll still receive their pay. The difference is if it's contracted and something does happen in the Town then they'll be responsible for the prosecution and all of those fees. If they respond and there's no contract then the State or the Sheriff's Department will pick up that tab. When you call 911 there will always be someone that will respond. Just because we don't have a contract it doesn't mean they will hang up the phone on you. Someone will be here. Just to clarify if this passes it does not guarantee that there will be coverage it just means that you'll be willing to spend taxpayer money to service the contracts. If we find someone that can do it State or Sheriff will respond if we don't you'll be relying on that 911 call.

The Moderator ask permission from the body for Sheriff Stigler to speak.

Permission granted.

Sheriff Jeff Stiegler:

It's an honor for me to be here today. I did have a meaningful conversation with your Select Board members and Administrative Assistant. I want to say it's awesome because I think you folks are probably a few round-table discussions away from deciding what you want to do about policing as a whole. That's from my perspective from 43 years in law enforcement. My career started in Littleton New Hampshire right out of high school, I grew up in the Town of Haverhill living less than a mile away from the Sheriff's Office. I spent the next 25 years in the City of Laconia then on the Attorney Generals Drug Task Force then running the Detective Bureau. I understand what Miles said earlier about how difficult it is to find Cops. Every one of us and here pays county taxes; we have a former full-time Deputy Sheriff here, Norm understands and could tell you more about it. We have constitutional and a statutorial requirements we must do. Most people see us and they ask why we're not doing this or that. Statutorily what we're budgeted for is the security of the courthouse that's one of our four primary functions; transportation of prisoners taken from Grafton to the state prison. Last year we logged in just under 310,000 miles transporting prisoners. Grafton is the second biggest county in the state, 75,000 square miles and Norm can attest to how many miles he put on in his career. Civil process, we're the only one by statute that can serve civil writs. That is a money maker so I can see why former Sheriffs have put a lot of emphasis on getting this done and bring it back revenue to the tune of almost \$200,000. We also have the duty of serving warrants. Those are on us. The Local Police, the State Police can not detain on those things.. When they are superior court ordered warrants we are the only ones who can process the person in the system and bring them back to the court. So those are the things that keep us primarily busy at the Sheriff's Department. When I arrived there I was always interested in returning to my hometown. I finally found the home of my dreams back up north. My kids came along my wife was a Police Officer for 14 years in the neighboring Town of Guilford. We moved back up there because I found this job right along the Connecticut River in a neighboring State and I got to be the small-town Police Chief in the Town of Bradford; a little under 3000 people. I can relate to what your folks are struggling with here today because that's one of the first things I saw when I walked into that town. I didn't want to be that guy. I used to hire a lot of people from Massachusetts in Laconia. They'd all stand up when you were going through orientation and talk about how it was done, "down in Mass." I don't care. Welcome to New Hampshire. I didn't want to be that guy going into Vermont. We had a State Police barracks near Town and we had a full-time vacancy, I thought why do we need to hire him when we've got the State Police barracks. It's foolish to spend the money. I noticed very quickly, just like the thought process that is in this room today, most people would be able to take care of themselves. It's just Yankee common sense and the further north you go the more there is. I grew up in that. I understand people think in different

ways and soon will find a common ground. I could live way out in the woods but my wife's not so much. She likes the sidewalks and that sort of thing. I remember being up on this very rural road to see this gentleman late in the evening. He came out and asked what I was doing there so late at night. I told him, Troopers don't usually get out to some of these back roads. He said, "I don't need you around at night. It's a waste of tax money. I can take care of myself you be around during the day and watch my house while I'm at work down in Hanover."

I inherited 42 sworn Special Deputies when I arrived at the Sheriff's Department. There's a lot of Workmen's Comp cost for the number of people that you put on. I took a look at the number of hours that people worked here before. If you're only showing up to do the training to maintain your certification it doesn't really make sense to have all those people. I want part-time people to be meaningful to have a purpose in the agency; that they actually do some work. It's hard for me to find people who want to work. Special Deputies, that's generally what you've had of late, down here working your Town. They have full-time jobs elsewhere. The extra money is nice, but I don't think it would matter if you put up \$200 an hour. For some people, if it means I have to give up something like a walk with my kids, I'd rather do that. I also want you to know that the Sheriff's Department is never going to turn a blind eye to something that they see if they're out here and they come across an accident or someone operating a vehicle erratically. I know the previous Sheriff didn't like traffic enforcement but why are we spending \$3000 to put blue lights on? That's what they're there for. I don't want somebody sitting beside the road running radar because they have enough to do, but if they see something I want them addressing it. We are in Groton from time to time and we won't turn a blind eye to your needs. If were in Plymouth at the regional hub we will respond from there if we hear something is going on. It's on our dime but it's your money too. Our function is different from most law enforcement entities that you see. The Municipal Police, the State Police by statute have an obligation to cover all towns that are under 3000 which you are. I worked for 6 years in Laconia where they wanted that local touch. There are many things you could be doing which aren't responding to calls but are some of the things that I think should be done as part of "Policing" today; like checking on people's houses. You get to know everybody. You know someone will be gone in the evening so you take a ride by or if someone is gone to work during the day you will notice if there's a pickup truck backed up into the driveway idling. You can work collaboratively with the Select Board. There are the elderly who would benefit from someone checking in on them. I like to check to see if they're OK a couple of times a week. Policing is changing; it's not just enforcing the law anymore. A lot of it is about community care. So with respect to article 13, we'll do our absolute best for you as far as trying to get people here, but in the summer time we have other things that come up. The White Mountain National Forest has called and wants us to work over there in the Lincoln/Thornton area. The Moore Dam up in Littleton calls for extra security reasons; there are all these temporary things that the Sheriff's Department has always filled the void for. They are multi-jurisdictional duties and the Sheriff's Department obviously has State wide authority. That's what makes it unique to us. I only have so many people and I don't want to maintain 40 Special Deputies that are not working actively in the department. I am working on trying to downsize to active part-time people who are working and understand the need of our county. Right now I can't just give you a guarantee for times like Memorial Day that we'd be able to fill that block of time. Some days we may be able to fill the eight hours.

This is a great time to meet people ask questions and I think you're headed in the right direction. I don't think the common ground is that far away. Are there any questions?

Sherry Nelson:

Do you have time to serve on the Town search committee?

Sheriff Seigler:

I hear echoes of people who used to work here that you were very pleased with and did well. You have a retired Massachusetts State Trooper you have a current New Hampshire State Police Rep ranking Lieutenant you have a former prosecutor here and a Deputy living in Town who may be on some sort of special assignment and he is very knowledgeable about law-enforcement and about contracting or having a Police Department. You may come to relying on the State Police by what the State Statute says but you have some heads that could come together to determine what the needs are. Don't look at the numbers only but what the core of those numbers is in determining what is fiscally prudent. When I went through my process in Bradford, the room was almost as full as it is here. There were 61 people who applied for that job. You will prevail if you work together to find what you need. The State Police may be the right prescription. I will be willing to help with answering questions, but my responsibility is 39 communities equally. If you have questions feel free to contact me.

Deb Johnson:

What will the cost be to contract with the State Police and will that contract be paid from the Police Department budget?

John Rescigno:

It is paid out of the Police budget.

Sara Smith:

We don't know what the amount will be because the details have not been worked out.

Deb Johnson:

When you say contract does that mean you'll be able to negotiate hours with them?

John Rescigno:

The way it works right now is that we have them for four hour blocks and we asked them to be on specific days Monday this week maybe next week Saturday we switch that around. After Memorial Day the Sheriff's Department will not be able to cover those shifts. With the Sheriff's Department it is not so much of a contract as an agreement. The State Police would be more of a contract.

Pam Hamel:

Is it correct to assume that if we contracted with the State Police, if an incident happened here they would do the investigation and the prosecution and all of this could easily exceed our Police budget?

John Rescigno:

We are liable for 100% of any hours that they spend on a call in Town. If it happens during contracted hours we are responsible for 100% of any fees. If the incident happens outside the contracted hours we are not responsible though you're not creating that Police relationship with the Town. Someone different would probably be here every time, so there are advantages and there are disadvantages.

Frank Harris:

You don't get a lot done in four hours. But it is nice to see a cruiser or go by your house checking on things. What's that worth?

Dave Leone:

Does that include private roads as well?

Miles Sinclair:

I can identify with the Sheriff trying to weed out those people who are not productive and are looking just to maintain your certification. Not everyone carries their weight like they should. Some people just show up drive around a little bit and do as little as possible. I asked the Select Board at the hearing if they could get any details of the work that was done. Are we getting value for money? Is it money that's being wasted? In your opinion are we getting value for what we're investing?

John Rescigno:

In a four hour shift you're not getting much. If you're driving around and they see something wrong they report it. That's one cruiser going through 11 miles of road in four hours.

Sara Smith:

There was a snowmobile accident that they responded to. There was a fall at the Town House which they responded to. So there have been a few cases.

Miles Sinclair:

Have they made arrests that are documented? That's the kind of stuff that should be ready available.

(Recording is unclear through a response from Sheriff and interaction between Miles and the Sheriff).

John Rescigno:

The reason we had that block of four hours is so no one would know when an Officer was going to be cruising through the Town. They have been active.

Ron Madan:

I've seen them at least twice coming out Giovanna Road checking on houses out there.

Moderator calls the vote. Vote was a tie. Moderator voted no to break ties. 22 yes; 23 no

The article is defeated.

Article 14:

To see if the town of Groton will vote to stop recycling at the transfer station.

The select board recommends this article 2-0-1

Ron Madan moves to accept the article as written. John Rescigno seconded.

Norm Willey:

It's no secret if you read the paper and listen to the news the majority of plastic and glass was going to China but due to the grain in embargo China is not taking any plastic or glass. The only thing that's recyclable is cardboard and that only if it's not contaminated with something. Right now we're paying \$80 a ton for recyclables to get rid of them. We get no revenue back. The whole system is reversed The Town used to get reimbursed now all we do is pay to get rid of it. Sara informed me that Waste Management as of next month will be increasing \$10, so it will be \$90 a ton. I will be going to a workshop

put on by the NLRA and Casella, Waste Management and others will be there to discuss the future of recycling. In May the cost will go up \$25 per ton for recycling and it could go even higher than that before we're done. There's no way you can plan in the budget for this type of increase. We do have a Plan B. People may not know this but approximately 75% of the stuff we throw in to the recycling bin doesn't get recycled. It winds up in a landfill. So that means we're paying a lot more money to "recycle". Twenty-five percent of what we're putting in the recycling may be recycled and the rest is going to go to the landfill anyway. The only other alternative is it everything goes into a bin but it will not be recycling.

Frank Grelle:

How much money will we save if we're not recycling?

Norm Willie:

I think it stabilized at about \$80 a ton which is what we're paying now to get rid of everything across-the-board. What we're looking at right now is a budget that will increase 25% or 50%. We knew this was coming last fall.

Rick Belanger:

How much do we pay for demolition?

Norm Willie:

We pay by the ton and also by the trip for demolition. Most of our stuff goes to the Bethlehem landfill. Anything in the blue bin goes to Casella

Rick Belanger:

How much in tons does the Town recycle each year?

Norm Willie:

Last year we did we did 67.4 ton of recycling and we had 78 ton that left the Transfer Station that was not recyclable; that would include construction debris, the overflow and the compactor.

(some discussion in here between Rick and Norm that was not clear on the recording)

\$190.55 per haul for each container. Waste Management goes south and all the rest goes north.

Rick Belanger:

Right now recycling is not worth much but it will come back someday. What he is saying is true, right now things that should be recycled are going to a landfill. Back when things were being shipped to China even a quarter or a third was going into a landfill even then. Once you get out of recycling the chances of ever bringing it back are extremely poor. It's hard to get people to come back in that direction. Right now people are educated in separating the things. Economically it's not the right answer but it may be at some point in time. So I'm wondering if for the time being we put stuff into the compactor?

John Rescigno:

By doing so you will have a more negative affect than positive. We're horrific at recycling we're not educated we don't know what we're doing we don't know what to put in there. We put false claims out there. Look at McDonald's. McDonald's used to use Styrofoam containers why did they switch to paper? Because they're recyclable; but they're not recyclable because they have grease on them. They made everybody think they were recyclable when they're not. Paper cups are not recyclable. Pizza boxes are

not recyclable because there's a lot of contaminants in those things. If we let people know we're not really recycling, but we want to keep everyone in that motion. What will happen is people are going to become more and more lax over time. They will throw more and more things into the black bag and into the compactor and this will create a new pattern of behavior that will be harder to break down.

The problem is not recycling the problem is in the amount of waste that people produce. How many cups of coffee do people buy out at McDonald's or Starbucks and people could just as well buy a container and refill it. We do this disposable cup because of convenience. What about K cups? Who just drinks one cup of coffee. More plastic containers go into the trash. Get a mug filled up, fill up your thermos and guess what else you've done? How much does a cup of coffee cost at 7-11; or at Starbucks? Think of the money that you're saving on top that. Does it make more sense to recycle or to reuse and re-purpose? There are a lot of things we can do to save the environment. Let's think about recycling. In order to recycle a mayonnaise container have to wash it out which means hot water which means energy to heat the water using oil, releasing Carbon into the atmosphere, that plastic then goes on to a ship from New Jersey to China. A cruise ship burns 108 gallons of fuel per mile. How much carbon are we putting into the atmosphere at that point? We're reducing the landfill but we're creating all that global warming that's putting us in the situation were in today. Does it make more sense to use a reusable container or a paper cup?

I think we're doing better to educate people on how to reuse, repurpose, reduce and to stress the importance of recycling and what that should look like. There are new markets opening up in India, Pakistan, and other countries but it's just a fraction of what China took.

Ron Madan:

You can check those two container for recycling up there now. Out of 10 people that go into the transfer station, one will throw contaminated stuff into that container and that contaminates the whole load.

John Rescigno:

That load is then brought to a place where there is recyclables from every Town. The chances or recycling are not great.

Pam Hamel:

I was shocked when we came to the public hearing and found out that we're not recycling. How politically incorrect can you get? It angers me that I've been paying for recycling and it's been going to Bethlehem. Waste Management is taking my money for recycling and putting it into a landfill that angers me. I don't want to stop recycling but I don't want to do it the way it's happening now. We can't really have a true recycling program where it's uncontaminated where you know that it's actually being recycled. I say scrap it and start again, maybe in a couple of years would be smart. The way it is now its not the way to go.

Gina Rescigno:

I'm the Vice-Chair of the Conservation Commission we had a discussion on this and I feel that in some ways we failed because we should have been at the Select Board meetings. We are going to work on this issue that is so important to us. I do agree that it doesn't make sense to pay for recycling when it's all just going to a landfill. It's sickening, sad, unfortunate... I've recycled me whole life, I'm a tree hugger. I use that along with a lot of other things in our house to reduce. I need to focus on really reducing our garbage. We can't rely on recycling anymore, we need to go back to what was done long ago, getting rid

of packaging just for convenience. Our committee is going to work on giving ideas on ways to reduce your garbage load. Maybe you can also give some helpful hints.

Steve Spafford:

I'm the Chairman of the Conservation Commission and what Gina was alluding to is the meeting we had on this. Because it is important and my suggestion was that the Conservation go on record with a resolution. The resolution reads:

Whereas the Town of Groton has been notified of the price increase for handling recyclable materials; whereas an Article concerning this issue is on the Town Warrant; whereas the importance of keeping recyclable materials out of the landfill is unquestionable. Be it resolved that the Groton Conservation Commission goes on record as wishing to continue monitoring this situation in the future to reduce waste.

Respectfully submitted as amended,
The Conservation Commission

(Given to the Moderator, who gives this to the Select Board)

Ruth Gaffey:

I apologize that I was not at any of the hearings concerning this and need to take a minute here and say that I have not had time to do proper research. I did call the North East Recycling Counsel and I'm hearing numbers that are different, I'm not questioning anybody here but I think more research needs to be done. I'm fully on board with the Conservation Commission. We'll be looking into things and try to do our best to be responsible. I have heard these numbers before but if I did my math correctly the recycling that has been collected and the garbage including construction and everything we've produced in Groton equals 144.4 tons of garbage. How many people live in this Town? It's shocking we all need to address this.

Anne Joyce:

Asked to move the Article

Dave Leone:

Is the reason this Article is in here today because in the past in an Article we voted to recycle?

John Rescigno:

Correct.

Dave Leone:

We've also given the Select Board the authority to do what's legal, what's right. So can we keep the Article saying we will recycle but let the Select Board use their judgement and when it's not worth it for us to recycle to not go that route? Can that happen?

John Rescigno:

You want to maintain the system we have right now that we're collecting/separating it and we'll throw it into the landfill until times change. When Norm came to me and said they were considering getting rid of recycling I thought he was out of his mind, until he explained a little more and I started doing some research on my own. The situation is bad; there are States like Oregon and Massachusetts where it is against the law to put recyclables into the landfill. They have now signed waivers to allow recyclables to

go into the landfills. I don't see the value of continuing to separate it when people know that it is going into the landfill because it's just going to give people the mindset that it doesn't matter, it's all going to the landfill anyway. It may not be two years before this is resolved, but when it does get resolved, we're going to be so used to throwing it all together thinking that we're recycling that then it will be hard to change that mindset that recycling is a real thing again.

I think we just need to continue educating people. We can't forget about it, we need to continue talking about it so that when it does come back we can implement it once again in a more successful fashion realizing what needs to go in there and what needs to stay out.

Lou Lieto:

Trying to incorporate the two points of view, starting with the economics, it is \$80/ton to recycle?

Sara Smith:

It's \$65 per ton for the garbage through Casella, it's \$80, probably \$90 and will be even more for the recyclables.

Lou Lieto:

And essentially they are all going to the same place. The education process that John describes doesn't depend on the outcome of this vote. We can continue to educate our citizens whether we decide to recycle or not. They don't know what we just heard about the grease and things like that. We could implement it in an education process that would inform our public so when recycling really became more useful, they'd already be there. At this point in time the major driver to me is that it's not going to make that big a difference if it's going to be 10 or 15 dollars a ton. What they suggested is that the Select Board retain their responsibility so that if in fact as Sara suggested the price goes to \$120/\$130 then the Select Board can say, "We're not doing that anymore". It would be in their authority to do that. I would prefer to stay in the business because once we get out of it, people will get sloppy. I say to stay with it and let the Select Board make the decision based upon what is most reasonable and try to educate people.

Bill Jolly:

This is a commodity, plastic is a commodity, newspaper is a commodity, wood is a commodity, it's stuff. Many of us are self-employed or work for small businesses and have our finger on the pulse of our own individual companies. Your company wouldn't go out of business because your product came out of favor unless it had been out of favor for an extended period of time. Commodities are fickle things and this particular commodity relies on "Joe Political" garbage going back and forth and right now it's being used as a weapon against us. There are other nations who are going to step in and take advantage creating a demand. If we simply react to a trend that is out of our control instead of saying, "Let's wait it out." It will go in a hole and not be made into new products. If we do that then we'll have to build it back beyond the cognitive dimension that John's talking about we'd need to do contracts all that stuff again. No one knows how far we need to ride this out. Commodities will bump along and then spike and the bump along, that's how it works. Right now it's so low that there is a high likelihood that it will spike again. We'll be saying, "We don't recycle anymore." and be paying for waste removal when we could be paying maybe \$40 for plastic renewables. When you're making a decision to abandon a system that we have in place right now, whether or not it's at its optimal performance just think about how long this trend might last.

John Rescigno:

This happened before President Trump was elected. This has more to do with supply and demand. We have so much plastic that we are creating, even if it was clean and ready to go again, the demand for that amount just isn't there.

Moderator calls the vote and reads the Article again.

John Rescigno:

So if we vote to continue recycling that means that we need to recycle no matter what the cost, is that correct?

(lots of discussions erupt here and it's hard to hear what is being said on the recording)

John Rescigno:

We will phone our attorney right now to find out since it was voted in to recycle if we can say if it goes over a certain amount we can stop recycling.

Moderator makes the decision to take a break while the Select Board calls the Attorney.

(during the break the Moderator is given an amendment to Article 14)

"To see if the Town will give the Select Board the power to either recycle or not as appropriate use of Town funds."

Seconded by Bill Jolly

Ruth Gaffey:

I understand why we're doing this amendment and I agree with that, but I don't agree that it's OK the way it's stated. It sounds like it could move to a place where we could not have recycling again. It sounds like the Town is not going to recycle.

John Rescigno:

The Select Board has the right to put in a new warrant article, next year or five years from now, or whenever the Town agrees to recycle.

Jeremy Elder:

Who is to decide what is reasonable and what is not reasonable?

John Rescigno:

The three Select Men would need to decide amongst themselves what they feel is acceptable.

Melissa Gromko:

I think that is a very broad thing to give you the power to determine. Someone might think that recycling is worth \$300/ton. You need to set a dollar figure cap on what we're willing to pay.

John Rescigno:

We looked into that and it was recommended that we don't do that because it opens up a lot of doors where for instance if we set the cap at \$90, and tomorrow it's \$91 and then it goes down to \$88, there's a big fluctuation in the market. It causes a large grey area. There are too many variables.

The way the Warrant Articles work, for instance the first year there was an Article for a 2001 Cruiser. In 2002 we had to hunt around for a 2001 Cruiser because that's what the Article stated. The way the Warrant Article is stated is exactly what needs to happen.

If we vote not to go over \$88 and the next day it goes to \$87 we'd need to start again and if the next day it went to \$89 we would need to stop.

Stacy Darlington:

I just want to be sure I know what this Amendment means; we are giving the Select Board the authority to make the decision that recycling is the appropriate use of our funds. Is that correct?

John Rescigno:

Basically if it goes over a certain dollar amount and it is no longer feasible for the Town to continue recycling then they will have the right to stop recycling.

Stacy Darlington:

So at your next Select Board meeting you could decide that where we are today with the money we're spending on recycling, it is no longer an appropriate use of funds.

John Rescigno:

We could, but I assure you I would never do that. Yes, you are giving us that authority. We also report to you in a sense and that would not be wise on our part to do something as silly as that. Yes, you are right, we'd have the authority to do that.

We're voting that if the price goes over a certain dollar amount that the Select Board have the right to stop the recycling.

Stacy Darlington:

And you're saying you can't put a dollar amount in this amendment so you're still making a determination of what that dollar amount is. You could determine that the dollar amount we're paying right now is inappropriate, so at the next meeting you could say we're not paying for recycling anymore.

John Rescigno:

We could.

Lou Lieto:

I don't regard the Select Board as residents of Washington, DC. These are our friends and neighbors and they've heard this discussion. They hear that the Town wishes to continue recycling. I'm sure that if the price were too high they would hold some type of forum to let the Town's people know that the price has gone to a place where the Town will go in hock to continue. I would hope they would consider if that is an appropriate way to spend the Town's money. It could be part of the regular Select Board meeting. If we don't have that type of confidence in them, then maybe we should throw them all out and start over.

Gina Rescigno:

This discussion didn't start with whether the Town wanted to recycle or didn't want to recycle. It is about cost and that the "recyclables" are being thrown into the land fill. You may think you are recycling when you throw things into the bin and your aren't and the real answer is to reduce.

Pam Hamel:

I don't have a problem with the Select Board having that leeway. They need to work within a budget and if they went over that amount they'd be taking it from someplace else in Town. There are a lot of constraints to be thinking about on their end as far as continuing. Having said that, I have always thought that single stream recycling is a joke. Real recycling is really separating your things. No matter what happens with this vote going forward and hopefully the Conservation Commission will take this up we should actually educate about that type of recycling and get that implemented as some point at our transfer station; actually separating the garbage the way we should. This way if there is something that isn't making any money or is not worth doing we wouldn't have to scrap recycling as a whole and it would also keep contamination down.

John Rescigno:

The original verbage was to stop recycling. We started to vote on it and when I realized that people didn't really want to stop it, I stopped the vote so we could amend it in some way so we could continue to recycle unless the cost is too high. I doubt the Select Board will go away today and decide we're not going to do it.

Gina Rescigno:

From my understanding the system that Pam explained is very expensive right now. John has looked at other communities that do it that way, but I learned from Slim, that we did do it that way in this community and that Miles changed it to make it more convenient for all and that more people would participate.

Miles Sinclair:

I was on the Board when the decision was made to go with single stream and it was based on the discussions and initiatives at the time. The way it was presented is that is the way the industry was headed at the time. It made sense to do it, it was less costly that's why the decision was made then. I did not make the decision by myself.

Gina Rescigno:

I did not mean it that way. I just meant that the decision was made to that it would be more convenient and that more people would participate. I thought the community had already tried to do the separation thing and thought that the single stream would be more convenient and more would participate.

Moderator moves the vote. Voting is on the amendment.

Amendment is read again.

Amendment passes.

Article is read as amended and a vote is taken.

Amended Article passes.

Article 15:

To see if the Town will vote to enter into a contract with Hebron Public Library pursuant to RSA 202-A: 4-b Contract for Services, for a period of one (1) year to provide library services to Groton residence.

(Submitted by the Library Trustees)

The Select Board recommends this article 3-0

Ron Madan moves that we accept the Article as written. John Rescigno seconded.

John Rescigno:

This is everyone's favorite because it doesn't cost the taxpayers any money. We entered a contract with the Hebron Library. Our Library Trustees pay the Hebron Library to allow our residents to go and use their Library at no cost.

Ruth Gaffey:

This is my opportunity to tell you all about the Library services that are available to all Groton residents. I can sign you up for a library card here. This library has completely changed. It is fully functioning right up to the computers; books you can download onto your phone or tablet and someone is there to help you do that. There are DVDs, books, magazines, and a free interlibrary loan service. There are free passes to Squam Lake Nature Center, and New Hampshire State Parks and Newfound Lake. There are programs and upcoming events. There is not a web site, but it will be up soon and will have dates of special activities. The Library Trustees will be making one mailing out to every Groton resident so they understand what's available to them. All the books in the other room are free for the taking.

Dave Leone:

Does this cost us any money?

John Rescigno:

No, it comes out of the Library Fund.

Dave Leone:

Does the Town of Groton have a library?

Ruth Gaffey:

No, we do not.

Dave Leone:

I'm a little confused. When I was a Select Board member, I signed the check for the Library which was somewhere in the line of \$25,000.00. So that money is in the Library that we don't have.

John Rescigno:

That's in the fund that's paying for this.

Ruth Gaffey:

We do not have a physical library in Groton.

Annie Tobine:

Just to clarify, because I was a Library Trustee at that time. That money was insurance money. It was supposed to be used to replace the books in the Library that got flooded. Many of the books at that time were replaced when we had the Library. So that money is pretty much gone.

Gina Rescigno:

Elizabeth Jespersen was the Library Trustee. She met with the State Librarian and it would have cost a lot of money to build up the Library, so Ruth Gaffey is now a Trustee. As long as the money holds out we will contract with the Hebron Library and after that we'll need to come to the Town to see if it is something the Town wants to continue.

Ruth Gaffey:

This arrangement has been made so that Groton will have Library Services.

Lou Lieto:

When the money was reimbursed for loss after the flood, the money was to be used by the Trustees as they saw was appropriate. Now it is being used to provide library access. It would be difficult to use these funds outside of what is stated to provide Library Services.

Sherry Nelson:

That money is \$2000 per year.

Ruth Gaffey:

It is currently, I could be raised in the future.

(Discussion on the floor)

Ruth Millett:

There is a computer set up in the front room and is funded by the library and is available for anyone to use when the building is open.

Stacy Darlington:

There is a line item in the budget for Library Services which is paying for Library Services through Hebron.

Moderator calls the vote and reads the Article again.

The Article passes.

Miles Sinclair:

Point of order. Based on the votes that were taken on Articles 12 and 13, I was considering moving to reconsider that action on the budget if it made sense financially to change the Police line, but would need to know how much has been expended from that budget year to date; from January 1st to end of March.

(There was much back and forth so the Moderator calls for an amendment if there is to be one.)

A motion is brought to reconsider Article 16. Steven Spafford seconded the motion.

Moderator calls the vote to reconsider Article 16.

Motion is defeated. Article 16 will not be reconsidered.

Article 17:

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

John Rescigno:

A couple things I want to go over, please stop by if you are interested in serving on the Police Committee. There's a donation jar for donations for the Fireworks display. Thank you to all who have donated already.

The calendar online is the best place to get all the information about upcoming meetings, dates, times, etc.

Please come to those meetings. They're critical and you get all the information at them. We are doing our Hazard Mitigation meetings and people can come to those meetings as well.

We urge everyone to sign up for the App "Code Red", which notifies you whenever there is an emergency in your area.

There's a volunteer form out front. This form you fill out if you are able to help in times of emergency so if we do have a disaster in Town we'll know who we can contact to help out. There's also another form. If you are a person who has special needs if you're handicapped in some way, it helps us respond to you in a faster time.

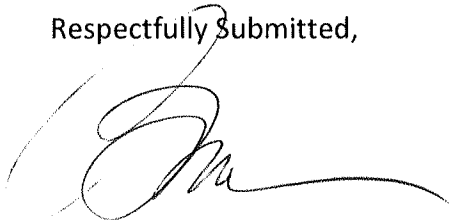
There's also another form for the 911 signs. These signs help the emergency/fire to find you in an emergency.

I just want to thank Elizabeth. Elizabeth has moved from the Town. She helped out with many different events in the Town. I also want to thank all the volunteers and committee members. There are still Committees that need people. If you'd like to help out with the Town, we'd appreciate your help.

Thank you for coming out today, thank you for staying for the whole meeting. Votes do count, we listen to your votes. We do listen to what people say regardless of what some people think. Come talk to us. We can all benefit from suggestions.

Town Meeting adjourned at approximately 2:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Ruth Millett, Town Clerk/Tax Collector