

2020 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Meeting comes to order at 9:00am on March 14, 2020 at the Groton Town House Community Room

Antonio Tavares, Moderator

Select Board Members present: Ron Madan, John Rescigno, Tony Albert

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

Moderator, Tony Tavares, introduces Town Officials, Ron Madan, Tony Albert and John Rescigno - Select Board Members; Sara Smith, the Administrative Assistant; Ruth Millett, Town Clerk and Michael Bagan, Chief of Police who is not a resident but will be allowed to speak on any Police related issues without having to go through the voting process for a non-resident.

397 registered voters in Town;

Ballot Articles

March 10, 2020

Ballot Article 1:

To choose all necessary Town Officers for the year ensuing.

Based on the Elections that were held on March 10, 2020

List of elected Officials incumbent and newly elected:

Selectmen - John Rescigno, Ron Madan, Tony Albert

Treasurer – Pam Hamel

Town Clerk/Tax Collector - Ruth Millett

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

Cemetery Trustees – James Gaffey, Stephen “Slim” Spafford

Local Auditor - Ann Joyce

Moderator - Tony Tavares

Trustees of the Trust Fund - Michele Lacroix, Gina Rescigno

Library Trustees – Ruth Gaffey, Gina Rescigno, Bonnie Lane

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

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

Petition for anyone to sign if they wish, to facilitate access to broadband internet, high speed internet, and would be worth looking at before you leave today that the electric company is looking to supply in this area.

Election results for the School for the Town of Groton; Article 2, expendable trust fund – rejected by town voters; Article 3 operating budget – accepted; Article 4 petition article- accepted. District wide all three articles passed.

Moderator led the body in the pledge to the American Flag.

Moderator states that the moderator rules are in the Town Report bringing attention to number 18 on the rules – According to RSA 40:7 – everyone is to “be silent at the desire of the moderator, on pain of forfeiting \$1 for each offense, for the use of the town.”

Moderator reads Article 2:

Article 2:

to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **seven hundred sixty-four thousand, seven hundred ninety-six dollars (\$764,796.)** 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 a motion to accept the article as written. Tony Albert seconded.

John Rescigno speaks to article 2 briefly:

The operating budget is up about \$1800 from last year, With warrant articles up due to management of some of the grant monies that we're looking for.

Moderator opens the floor for comments.

No discussion, so Moderator calls the vote and reads Article 2 again.

Article passes.

Moderator reads Article 3

Article 3:

To see if the town will vote to raise an appropriate the sum of **five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000)** for the purpose of the Sculptured Rocks Road upgrade project with the amount of **two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000)** (50%) being offset by a Northern Border Region Commission (NBRC) Grant the Town applied for and was awarded and the remaining Town share of **two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000)** (50%) to come from general taxation. (Majority vote required.)

(The Select Board recommends this article 3-0)

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

Tony Albert speaks to Article 3:

Sara and Bubba applied for the grant last year, and we weren't expecting anything of it. But we were awarded it last year. What it will be for is a rebuilding of Sculptured Rocks Road from North Groton Road through to a little bit beyond Sculptured Rocks Park. This will be a total rebuild, replacing culverts upgrading everything to be done this summer. There were a lot of other towns applying for this grant, so we weren't expecting to get it. I'll have Sara speak about the process.

Sara Smith:

We had to go to a meeting up north. There was a certain amount of money they were appropriating to different towns. Many of the towns were there for technology/Internet and came with presentations and were asking for a lot of money. Bubba and I thought it was just an informational meeting and weren't prepared for a presentation and we left there thinking there would be no way we would get this. We filled out the application. We have a huge stack of paperwork that we had to gather together with details concerning the road project. Usually grants take forever to hear back from, but within a month we heard back saying that they would love to award the town this money. It's a once in a once-in-a-lifetime chance to receive this money set aside through Northern Borders Regional Commission. Jeanne Shaheen actually assisted in pushing this for the town because of the flooding so we took the opportunity to jump on it knowing it was a great opportunity and we knew how bad the condition of Sculptured Rocks Road was. We had pushed before with many members of the State because of the condition of the road and because most of the traffic on that road is due to the State Park. We had engineers come out and look at the road and all agreed the work needed to be done but no one was willing to give any money. This rebuild will be 1.3 miles from North Groton to about 1200' past the park.

Robert "Bubba" Ellis:

I want to thank Senator Guida too. He really helped us push this in the right direction and encouraged us to go to some of these meetings to learn about these grants.

Bob Jackson:

Would this improve the situation for future flooding? Would it still be subject to damage from the overflow of water?

Tony Albert:

We have a mitigation grant that we received last year which will upsize the culverts and that is going out to bid. This will be upsizing the culverts along this road. We'll try our best, mother nature may fool us but these will be about twice the size of what's in there now. These will be bottomless box culverts/bridges.

John Rescigno:

It will increase the stability of that road.

Tony Albert:

The grant was to help with the damage that occurred last year.

Gary Easson:

We should send a thank you letter for the Senators who helped with this grant.

Stephen "Slim" Spafford:

These culverts are going in where the work was done last year, is that correct?

Robert "Bubba" Ellis:

Yes, that is correct.

"Slim" Spafford:

Can the work be done so that there is no "bump" as you go over these culverts?

"Bubba":

Yes. Once the culverts are done it will be new pavement from the end of Sculptured Rocks to Province Road.

Sara:

We looked into using the same engineer that we used to for the culverts to do the road project too so that it could be done all together and streamline the project but because they are two different grants with two different government agencies, we have to put out bidding. If the same engineer wins both bids it could still be this same engineer, but we can't just make it happen.

Al Paladino:

I live at 88 Sculptured Rocks Road and I am very thankful that this is finally getting done because that road is horrible. My concern is Hammerhead Road washing out. Everything that is running down from the park runs right across my yard, runs across their road and I end up with a tangle full of sand every year. Is the drainage in that section going to be addressed? I think on that road I have the worst problem right there. Is there going to be another meeting with these guys, will there be some discussion? I would like to know how much of my front yard they're going to chew up and if it will fix this problem. My yard is lower than the road right now and I think there are 3 or 4 layers of tar out there.

"Bubba":

We should be able to address those issues. I must meet with the engineer so this project will be engineered to deal with any issues like that. Under the power lines there may be 50 years of pavement and it's marshy there. It will be dug out and there will be underdrain where it needs to go. We will rebuild the road so where it needs to be fixed we will be doing that, not just repaving. We'll make sure to come see you.

No more comments so the Moderator calls the vote and reads Article 3 again.

Article 3 passes.

Moderator reads Article 4

Article 4:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **sixty-nine thousand dollars (\$69,000)** to be added to the previously established Capital Reserve Funds. The Selectmen recommend this special article.
(Majority vote required)

Town House CR Fund (December 31, 2019 balance: \$47,192.85): **\$5,000**
Disaster Relief CR Fund (December 31, 2019 balance \$5,135.52): **\$25,000**
Heavy Equipment CR Fund (December 31,2019 balance \$62,085.72): **\$5,000**
Atwell/Orange Brook CR Fund (December 31, 2019 balance \$6,220.41): **\$2,000**
Assessing Reval CR Fund (December 31, 2019 balance \$27,623.77): **\$7,000**
Public Works CR Fund (December 31,2019 balance \$46,624.98): **\$25,000**
Total Capital Reserve Funds \$69,000

The Select Board Recommend this Article 3-0

Tony Albert makes a motion to accept the article as written. Ron Madan seconded.

John Rescigno:

We increased the Disaster Relief Fund last year was \$5,000 this year \$25,000 because the money was nearly depleted with all the storms that we've had we also removed the Truck/Sander trying to take this amount down a little bit.

Clinton Parrish:

What is the Atwell/Orange Brook fund?

John Rescigno:

We were looking to put money aside should the bridge need any type of repair work and putting money aside for the future when eventually the bridge will need to be replaced.

Gary Easson:

How much tax money was brought in last year?

Ruth Millett:

The Tax Collector deposits were \$1,272,495.84.

Gary Easson:

If we pass this Article, we'll be up to approximately \$1,083,800. I hate to see the tax bills go up. It's always something, especially the schools and the older I get I need the money just to pay bills. I'm getting worried as I'm adding all this stuff up. If we pass everything through Article 6 we're going to be over \$1,300,000 and that is making me a little nervous. With this and some of the other Articles is there any way we can trim some of this?

Moderator:

I want to remind all of you that you have the right to amend any of these Articles in writing so if you wish to change an amount you can do so.

John Rescigno:

We recognized as we were going through the Warrant Articles that we would be increasing the tax burden as the amount was going up, but the Warrant Articles that are here are important for the Town and we decided to put them in here and leave it up to the Town to decide. We have projects that we started last year that we want to finish this year, such as North Groton Road and we want them to be complete and done properly. There is grant money that became available to us this year and if we don't take advantage of that money it will just cost the Town more money in the long run. It's interesting that we have a huge turn-out to dispute the money that we're spending in our own Town, but when the school decides to spend \$800,000 of our money, no one shows up. That's a bigger part of your tax money that you need to be concerned about. We are here to discuss these Articles and amend them if we so choose.

"Slim" Spafford:

Let's not forget what our taxes would be if we didn't have those wind towers. Many people comment that we aren't getting anything from them. We get about \$600,000 from the wind farm and without that you can imagine what our taxes would be.

Miles Sinclair:

The Atwell/Orange Brook Fund was discussed at last year's Town Meeting and an assertion was made that you could not use those funds for maintenance because it is a Capital Reserve Fund. Has that been clarified or have we determined that is not the case? You did mention, John, that this would be used for maintenance.

John Rescigno:

I believe you are correct. These funds cannot be used for maintenance.

No discussion, so Moderator calls the vote and reads Article 4 again.

Article 4 passes.

Moderator reads Article 5

Article 5:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000)** for repair/reconstruction of the North Groton Road project. (submitted by the Highway Department and Road Committee).

The Select Board Recommends This Article 3-0

Tony Albert makes a motion to accept the article as written. Ron Madan seconded.

"Bubba" Ellis:

This will put a final layer course from Halls Brook Road to about Helen Santoro's house/Nadeau Lane which is where they started years ago with the beginning of the road project on North Groton Rd. I spoke with a couple of paving contractors and last year we had a little money left over when we finished paving all the rest

of North Groton Rd, so it was suggested that we use a leveling course for Helen's to Hall's Brook. It stood up pretty good. It has taken a beating as this has been a horrible winter for roads. That was the one part of the road that they suggested it would be better to repave rather than grinding and reconstructing the whole road. So that is what this money is for to put on a finish coat and if oil prices remain the same we may be able to get up past Christina's house, maybe another 1000' because it has already started to deteriorate on the places we did 8 years ago when we were digging down the whole 4 feet. I'm not blaming anyone for what we did in the past but it obviously didn't work as well as we thought it was going to.

Doug Hutchins:

Why are we always doing work on the North Groton Road and doing nothing on the Sculptured Rocks Road? Why don't we cut this money in half? We're spending \$250,000 on Sculptured Rocks Road and we can lower this amount to our taxes won't keep going up.

"Bubba" Ellis:

\$50,000 won't do that whole section but it's whatever everyone wants. It's totally up to the voters. It just won't cover what we have already started.

Doug Hutchins:

Instead of spending, spending, spending, why don't we cut this in half? For years Sculptured Rocks Road has been neglected and they have put all the money towards North Groton Rd.

"Bubba" Ellis:

"They" are the voters

Ruth Gaffey:

I take your point and I guess I may have selfish interests because I go over North Groton Road to see my parents. It is a main road and I really appreciate all that has gone into it to fix it. It has been hellacious to try to get over that road. I would like to see that it is all kept up to standard.

No more comments so the Moderator calls the vote and reads Article 5 again.

Article 5 passes.

Moderator reads Article 6

Article 6:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **One hundred thirty thousand dollars (\$130,000)** for the purpose of purchasing and equipping a new Dump Truck with a front/wing plow with a sander for the highway department and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to trade-in the 2014 Dodge 5500 with any proceeds received to offset the total purchase amount. With **Fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000)** anticipated to be received by a USDA grant, **eighteen thousand dollars (\$18,000)** to come from the Truck/Sander Capital Reserve Fund and the remaining **sixty-two thousand dollars (\$62,000)** to be raised by general taxation. If the grant is not received, the amount of **one hundred twelve thousand dollars (\$112,000)** will be raised through general taxation. (Majority vote required.) (submitted the Highway Department)

The Select Board Recommends This Article 3-0

John Rescigno makes a motion to accept the Article as written. Tony Albert seconded.

“Bubba” Ellis:

We are trying to replace the 2014 Dodge that we have that seems to have been a “lemon” ever since we got it. We’ve put over \$30,000 into it since 2014 and that isn’t including regular maintenance or the 9 plus months that it was down and we had nothing to plow with. We bought the new pick up and were hoping not to use that as much to plow with but we’ve ended up having to use it quite a bit just to fill in when the Dodge was broken down. We’d like to be able to tell you that the \$50,000 is a given and we know we’ll get it. We got it two years ago to purchase the truck we’re replacing now, but we don’t find out about that grant until August, so we can’t promise anything. They divide the money up throughout the towns so if more are asking for it, it may end up being \$40,000. I don’t know what the trade in value will be by the time the next truck is actually ready.

Joe Koslow:

Do we know what type of truck we’re replacing it with? Do we have something in mind?

“Bubba” Ellis:

It’s a newer International/GMC that’s been out a year now. It’s bigger than a 550 but it’s still under CDL. That’s another problem we have is trying to find CDL drivers for what we want to pay and for part-time as well so we wanted to stay under CDL, but looked for a bigger and better truck. The Ford trucks have been having trouble with frames breaking. Ford is coming out with a new truck this year, a 600 but it’s the same frame, they are just putting heavier springs under it. The International has a straight frame like the big 6 wheelers.

“Slim” Spafford:

I know when we got the first grant through USDA which we got for the “lousy” truck we have. They do remember us because we have a track record with them. That makes it a little bit easier to get the grant. I wouldn’t be all down-in-the-dumps about whether we’ll get this or not. We have a good track record with them and that means something.

“Bubba” Ellis:

I just don’t want to promise something we may not get. Sara and I met with another USDA person concerning another grant. She was surprised that we received the \$250,000 grant.

Sara Smith:

Because we have that good relationship with the USDA, we have applied for another grant to be used for the building which we have not been able to find. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and we are applying for a \$250,000 grant for the building. Nothing is certain and there is a lot of paperwork that goes into this but Bubba and I are working together on this.

Mike Lemieux:

What size is the pickup truck?

“Bubba” Ellis:

It’s a 1 ton, 350.

Mike Lemieux:

Would we not be better served by putting a sander on that, and an ezdump rather than getting a new truck? Do we really need 3 trucks?

"Bubba" Ellis:

We'll be getting rid of the Dodge. We have 3 trucks now, we'll be getting rid of one truck and getting the new truck so we'll then have 3 trucks again. The pickup does have a sander on it that I rebuilt that's about 26 yrs. old.

Mike Lemieux:

My question is why do we need 3 trucks?

"Bubba" Ellis:

The Dodge that we are replacing is the main truck that we use all the time to plow the roads. We try not to use the orange truck. Just coming over the roads takes a lot out of it. We didn't buy the pickup truck to take over for a big truck. It was actually there as more of a spare, but because of the problems with the Dodge, we've had to use it a lot more. There is a plow and sander on the pickup that we use all the time but that isn't what that truck should be used for. The orange truck does a better job of pushing back the snow and we're hoping to get another 5-7 years out of that truck. That's 5-7 years past what anyone thought we'd get out of it.

Doug Hutchins:

That's a lot of money, that \$112,000 and we don't know if we're going to get this grant money. I think we should wait another year before we get this truck. We don't have that many miles of road to take care of. The DOT has been very good about coming in and helping us. I've seen the DOT come and plow this section of North Groton Road and Hall's Brook Road the last two storms.

"Bubba" Ellis:

This is State Road out here and Hall's Brook. We did take care of it for a few years, but they've always taken care of this. They don't plow our roads. We have North Groton Road from Hall's Brook to 118, but this section from Hall's Brook to the Town line has always been State road.

Doug Hutchins:

Even without the Dodge we still have 2 trucks to plow with.

"Bubba" Ellis:

You can't plow all the roads with a pickup truck.

Doug Hutchins:

The Department of Transportation has always helped us when we needed it, look at North Groton Rd, they had it open in days after the flood.

"Bubba" Ellis:

The State has never plowed our roads, not as long as I have been here.

Doug Hutchins:

I still think we ought to wait on it. These downsized trucks are very fragile. They don't hold up anywhere near as well as the orange truck has. They aren't very strong. We don't know if we're going to get the grant. We can't keep spending money or our taxes will be outrageous.

"Bubba" Ellis:

We have been putting money into that Dodge the amount it would have been to purchase a new truck to replace it.

Back and forth between the two.

Jeremy Elder:

Do we need the money appropriated before we get the grant, or is there a certain amount of time we have to raise the other amount that we need? Can it be pushed off till next year?

“Bubba” Ellis:

No, the grant money is for this year. There will be a whole other round for next year. We’d need to apply again for next year.

Sara Smith:

Grafton County received more money this year. Normally the truck grant would have been \$30,000, but we were told to ask for a little more this year because the county was allocated a little bit more. We have a better opportunity so we went for the \$50,000. There is a chance to apply for it again next year. It’s one of the grants you can go for every year, but we may not have the opportunity to go for \$50,000.

“Bubba” Ellis:

Yes, we have the orange truck but Jeremy and I are the only ones who have a “class-B” license and it’s getting harder to find people for the money that we pay. That is not the main truck, it’s mostly the 1-ton that we use. When the roads are closed, we would be able to use the new truck to go get a little sand or gravel. The 6-wheeler only hold a couple yards more than the 1-ton anyway. And we can’t use the orange truck when the roads are posted.

Jeremy Elder:

When you spend money you don’t have, I think it is irresponsible. No one spends money based upon what they speculate they are going to have in 6 months. All these things are good and yes, we should do them, but I’m with Doug, I think next year and we’ll take the chance that we don’t get the grant because we won’t have the \$100,000 spending up there or the \$250,000, we’re spending this year. The taxes have gone insane in this town, and I know you’re right, the school is killing us. The enrollment is going down and yet they always need a million bucks for something. Maybe we should repair the truck for another year. All these things are good but we can’t approve everything.

“Bubba” Ellis:

This truck should have been gone last year. We spent \$7,000 in the first month of the new budget. If the truck goes down this year, we will need to hire out to get done what we would do with that truck, plowing and sanding and we’ll probably spend another \$10,000 on that.

Gary Easson:

I agree that I think we should go for this, but what worries me is that it’s like a chicken farmer counting chickens before they hatch. The grant people should try to synchronize with towns so that they award grants a lot sooner than August so it’s not at the last minute. Maybe we should amend the article so that if we don’t get the grant money we can postpone till next year. If we don’t get the grant money in August it will put an extra burden on us and again, we do need the truck. Perhaps we could make this contingent on whether we get the grant or not.

"Bubba" Ellis:

If we order this truck on Monday, we'll be lucky to see the truck by September. Tony and I went to look at the place where they make these trucks and Rumney is thinking also of getting one, they told them that they probably won't see the truck until January so if we push this back even further, we won't get it in a timely fashion before winter.

The Article was moved from the floor.

No more comments so the Moderator calls the vote and reads Article 6 again.

Hand count of votes:

Yes – 30; No - 16

Article 6 passes.

Moderator reads Article 7

Article 7:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and 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

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

"Bubba" Ellis:

This money is what we've used in the past 2 years just for upkeep and repairs on all the roads. We're trying to do some culverts on River Road which hasn't received much attention over the past few years since a lot of work was done two years ago. Half of my budget and all the police budget needed to be used last year for road repairs after the 2019 flood. Many things that needed to get done didn't get done because we had no emergency money left.

Bob Jackson:

Why isn't this in the general operating budget?

John Rescigno:

We didn't think of it but it could be in the general budget next year.

No more discussion, so the Moderator calls the vote and reads the Article again.

Article 7 passes.

Moderator reads Article 8

Article 8:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **thirteen thousand seven hundred eighty-five dollars (\$13,785)**, for the construction of slabs for the dumpsters at the Transfer Station. (submitted by the Transfer Station Supervisor).

The Select Board Recommends This Article 3-0

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

Norm Willey:

We want to improve the area where the dumpsters are. The pads that are there are starting to break up due to age, they are 20+ years old. What we're proposing to do, Phase 1, we want to make one large slab that will have room on it for 6 dumpsters. Eventually, down the road, we want to put some type of covering over the dumpsters. I was down there on Tuesday and there were two dumpsters that had 6 inches of ice in the bottom. When those dumpsters go out, we pay for whatever weight is in it. If we get a 2 ft snowstorm, all that weight adds to what we will pay for that dumpster by the ton whatever is in it.

Comment from the floor, no name:

What is the long-term plan?

Norm Willey:

We plan to put a cover over top. This is what many of the Transfer Stations have gone to. It would be like a carport. The Select Board has been looking at a 3-story building in town for really short money, but we'd need someone to put it up. We're not looking to have some elaborate building, just a roof over the dumpsters to keep the water out.

Ruth Gaffey:

I really like hearing about the covering because, and I know I'm not alone in this, I am distressed that we aren't doing any recycling in Groton and this may be the first step in addressing that issue. There are towns doing single stream recycling and making money even now. We can keep that in mind and look forward.

Bill Jolley:

You got a couple bids for that, correct?

Norm Willey:

I got one bid which is way cheaper than anyone else is going to do it and he lives right here in town. I could get another bid, but this amount is for the one given.

Gina Rescigno:

Everything we thought was getting recycled was not because they cannot take anything that is contaminated, so in order for real recycling to happen we would need a covering.

Norm Willey:

Just to let you know, we do recycle, aluminum cans, batteries, tires, metal, electronics.

Joe Koslow:

Those that are recycling they want your cans and bottles to be spotless. They don't want pizza boxes because of the oil which contaminates the cardboard and the minute they get that stuff they contaminate the whole load.

No more discussion, so the Moderator calls the vote and reads the Article again.

Article 8 passes.

Article 9:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **ten thousand four hundred dollars (\$10,400)** for the demolition of the old library and old Town office building.

The Select Board Recommends This Article 3-0

Tony Albert makes a motion to accept the Article as written. Ron Madan seconded.

John Rescigno:

This matter we've talked about for quite some time. The building is becoming an eyesore and it is in an unsafe condition so we would like to finally take it down.

Jeremy Elder:

Have we received any bids on this yet for the demolition work? If so, what were the bids coming in at?

Sara Smith:

Yes, we have received these and the \$10,400 was the lowest and it is a local company. Last year the Town gave permission to do the demolition, but we did not have the funds for it.

"Slim" Spafford:

The steel roof that is on that building we may be able to use for the shelter at the Transfer Station. There are salvageable things there.

"Bubba" Ellis:

The bid is already taking that into consideration. They will be scrapping the roofing, so they are taking that into consideration in the bid.

Doug Millett:

You might ask them about this, because if we need to go buy new roof it may cost us more that they would get to scrap it.

"Bubba" Ellis:

I'm just not sure if we want to put a 30-year-old roof when we want to start with something that will last a while.

John Rescigno:

You'll be replacing that roof in a couple of years if we do that. It only has a certain life span, and we aren't guaranteed the size so we may end up piecing things together. It would be better to put something up that is proper.

Gary Easson:

Not a good recording of most of his comments. Did anyone contact Habitat for Humanity. It seems there should be a lot to salvage out of that building.

John Rescigno:

There is a lot of mold inside that building so it would be a health concern to donate that to someone.

Doug Hutchins:

Would the Hebron fire department be interested in burning the building for training?

John Rescigno:

We looked into that, but they are not interested due to the power lines that are right nearby.

Rick Belanger:

Does that include disposal and how will the asbestos be handled?

John Rescigno:

That is part of the bid.

Rick Belanger:

Was it addressed in the bid?

“Bubba” Ellis:

I’m not sure that the asbestos was addressed. The building is stripped down inside down to the 2x4’s.

Tony Albert:

The asbestos must be addressed.

John Rescigno:

We can look into this, but is it part of the proposal, and will have it in the bid when we have it written up.

Rick Belanger:

If you have a bid for a \$10,400.00 and asbestos what not a part of that bid, in all likelihood it will not be an accurate bid. If this is for the work and for the disposal the third leg would be the asbestos. If that hasn’t been thought about then this bid will not be accurate.

John Rescigno:

I understand what you are saying and we are assuming it is part of it, but we will review the bid. If it is not part of the contract and if it will cost more, we can either cease that contract at that point and raise the additional funds next year, but we’re not sure there is asbestos in that building. They did go in a look at it.

Tony Albert:

I know the person that gave us this bid does work with asbestos abatement and has torn down buildings before so I’m sure he has this in his mind that this would need to be done.

Rick Belanger:

Who was it that gave this bid?

John Rescigno:

Gordon Coursey and Sons.

Bill Jolley:

In the event that asbestos or any other hazmat has not been considered and we vote in favor of this, though it is not a huge number, what happens if it is significantly greater? What happens to the money?

John Rescigno:

We can encumber the money and raise the additional money next year if you choose to put that through, if not it will go back into the general fund.

Doug Hutchins:

Why couldn't we put it out to bid for someone to come and push it down with an excavator, put it into a pile and burn it away from the power lines? We could still save the roofing for the dump. It wouldn't matter if it has nail holes in the roofing, you going to cover garbage.

Tony Albert:

You can't just burn it if there's asbestos and chemicals and things. It's not that easy. They will need to come and inspect to make sure the asbestos abatement has been done. There's a special place to get rid of the asbestos.

Doug Hutchins:

What does it cost to find out if it has asbestos in it? It probably doesn't have any in it.

John Rescigno:

I don't think you can just put it into a pile and burn it.

Lots of back and forth which I can't make out/talking over one another.

Pam Hamel:

It had to go to bid, so there are opportunities. That building has been a problem since we moved out of there. It has flooded numerous times. I think for \$10,400 to get that cleaned up, it's long overdue. It's unfortunate because part of it is historic but it is ruined and there's nothing that can be done about that. We need to get this building out of the flood plain and get it out properly.

Gary Easson:

Part of what he said is not clear... It can't be burned because of environmental laws, plastic wood, paints, plastic electrical boxes and fixtures, the EPA would come down on us.... Unclear again... the only way you can burn a building down today is if it accidentally catches fire.

Deb Johnson:

First part was unclear... Gordon Coursey does a good job. If for some reason the price goes up because someone finds something like asbestos, the Select Board is not able to increase and take that bid, but put the money back into the general fund therefore we'll get a tax break next year. It's an eyesore, it's a liability to the town and it is getting to be a health issue and it will put us into a favorable light for FEMA so that if in the future we apply for FEMA grant, we can say we're trying. We are beginning the process of moving out of the floodplain, give us additional grant money, and we may find ourselves in a position because of this little tax to get a much larger grant to help build our building or to repair roads that are washed out. In addition, I agree with John, there are so many things we don't do for this town and I'm on a fixed budget now that I'm retired, a lot of us are, but there are things we need to do to the town to make it attractive and to decrease liability. Liability for our town employees and liability for some child that decides it might be fun on Halloween to sneak in there or worse set the place on fire and get caught in there. We really need to take care of this, and I applaud the Selectmen for trying to go forward on this.

Rob Johnson:

Do we have insurance that covers this?

John Rescigno:
Yes, we do have insurance that covers this.

Ann Joyce asks to move the article.

Moderator reads the Article and calls for a vote.

Article 9 passes.

Moderator reads Article 10.

Article 10:

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 residents.
(submitted by the Library Trustees)

The Select Board Recommends This Article 3-0

Tony Albert makes a motion to accept the Article as written. John Rescigno seconded.

Jeremy Elder:
Is there anyway to lengthen the contract so it doesn't need to be brought up every year?

Ruth Gaffey:
I'm not sure of the answer to that or if it would be more expensive. Right now, we have funds in a checking account that we're using to pay this and we're doing that year by year. After that we hope to bring it before the Town and we'll see, I think that's what we'd probably do so the people could answer that.

Gina Rescigno:
Just to add to that, there's a certain amount of money there so that anyone in town can go there and get free library services. Once that money is spent then the vote would be if we want that to come out of taxpayer money. Right now, it's free, that's why we have it every year.

No more discussion so Moderator reads the Article and calls for a vote.

Article 10 passes.

Moderator reads Article 11.

Article 11:

By petition of 25 or more eligible voters of the Town of Groton, NH. We the Town of Groton hereby call upon our State and Federal elected representatives to enact carbon-pricing legislation to protect New Hampshire from the costs and environmental risks of continued climate inaction. To protect households, we support a Carbon Fee and Dividend approach that charges fossil fuel producers for their carbon pollution and rebates the money collected to all residents on an equal basis. Enacting a Carbon Cash-Back program decreases long-term fossil-fuel dependence, aids in the economic transition for energy

consumers, and keeps local energy dollars in New Hampshire's economy. Carbon Cash-Back has been championed by US economists (January 17, 2019 WSJ) as the most effective and fair way to deliver rapid reductions in harmful carbon emissions at the scale required for our safety.

We expect our representatives to lead in this critical moment for the health and well-being of our citizens and for the protection of New Hampshire's natural resources upon which we all rely.

The record of the vote approving this article shall be transmitted by written notice to Groton's State Legislators, to the Governor of New Hampshire, to Groton's congressional Delegation, and to the President of the United States, informing them of the instructions from their constituents, by Groton's Select Board, within 30 days of this vote. (Submitted by Petition)

Dawn Lemieux makes a motion to accept the Article as written. Michael Lemieux seconded.

Dawn Lemieux:

Climate change is real and we want our state and federal legislators to act now. Cash-back carbon pricing puts a price on pollution and incentivizes conservation and innovation to replace fossil fuels with clean energy solutions. Cash-back carbon pricing imposes a fee, not a tax. All the money collected, after administration costs is rebated to all New Hampshire households on an equal basis. Two thirds of all households will break even or get more in their equal share of all the money collected than they paid in higher costs due to the fee. When it happens, the federal bill will replace the state bill and uses board of adjustments to push our carbon price around the world. New Hampshire residents want action on climate. Economists around the world believe that this approach is the most cost effective and fair way to keep carbon in the ground. This warrant does not commit our town or state to specific legislation but simply asks our representatives to address this issue and use a carbon cashback solution to do it. You can learn more about it at carboncashback.org and I will vote yes to support this common sense resolution. If anyone has any questions, I will try to help you.

Ruth Gaffey:

I am also in agreement with this particular issue and that we are very blessed up here to have some of the cleanest air in the country, but all around there are places that don't and as an asthmatic and with many family members who suffer from air pollution around the country we really do need to address this and to do this for our children.

Gary Easson:

My question, or concern is will this affect the local vendors for example those that have oil burners are they gonna have an added expense? What about this so-called money that we get back two years later what if we burn coal or wood or pellets how is that going to be affected? It will be affecting us in the bottom line.

Dawn Lemieux:

This fee is for fossil fuel and it would be applied as early in the flow of production as possible so coal would be taxed as it's coming out of the ground. Individuals like you who might be selling burners or servicing...

Gary Easson:

No, I buy oil like everybody else I heat my home with oil. If they are charged, they will just pass it on to the consumer. I don't want my prices going up I want my prices going down. They're getting too much now.

Dawn Lemieux:

It will be a price that's added to the price of oil.

Gary Easson:

In other words it's a price that's going to be passed on to the consumer, that's what I needed to know.

Dawn Lemieux:

That's why there's a dividend. 2/3 of the people get money back it helps encourage the use of other energy sources that might not be as polluting so in the long run those prices will be more competitive.

Gary Eason:

Can you explain how they're going to give us our money back?

John Rescino:

I have a few concerns, while I fully believe in global warming, It may not be as excessive as they say it is, you can clearly see that there's been a change in the environment the storms that go on, the amount of snow we used to get. I don't think the solution is putting a fee or tax on the product if you collect \$100 and then \$10 is used to administer this, you have \$90 left over. How do you get \$100 back to the people? You don't. We will not get the same amount back; we will get less back and basically your cost will go up. I think we need to recognize the issue and recognize that people around want to make money on the issue. We hear a lot about "plant-based" what does that mean? What does it take to grow vegetable, pesticides and herbicides which are equally as damaging to the environment? You need to look at the bigger picture.

You need to look at yourselves and ask what you do that has an effect on the environment. Do you use reusable bottles? Can we lower the temperature in the house by 1°? How much would that save on our carbon footprint? A tremendous amount. Do we carpool? What about using huge cars that use so much gas with one person in that car? We need to ask what we do as individuals? Don't let the government do anything. We all know the government fails at everything. Except the government of Groton. On a serious note government never succeeded on anything. Now we're dealing with the coronavirus how many viruses has this country gone through? Thousands of them and we're still not prepared? Let's be real or government is a failure. So, don't put this in their hands we need to see what we can do to help the environment because we do need to help the environment. Then we can get clean air and water. We need to make sure that we're prepared for the future and for generations to come.

Jim Joyce:

I just have a couple points, Australia instituted this tax in 2012 and increased electricity and gasoline 15% so they did away with it in 2014; so they had it for two years. That was a bust. And in yesterday's Union Leader Merrimack voters were torn over this and two state reps, Jeanine Notter from Merrimack and Richard Barry are both against it and the Town Council is against it because of the unknowns and cost issues.

Gary Eason:

From where I'm standing you hit the nail right on the head the other thing is alternative energy sources, they cost more to bring it to the market. If you could come up with something that was on the equal price basis and was competitive Instead of always having to be subsidized by the government we still can't afford these elaborate little prices.

Dawn Lemieux:

You mentioned subsidies and the oil and gas industries are the biggest subsidized industries which is one of the reasons why wind and solar have not become more competitive because they haven't been as heavily subsidized. It's not just the energy we use in our homes. I have a great example, I used to own a printing business and I am environmentally concerned, And so whenever possible I would use paper that was made at mills that used solar or wind power and I tried to buy locally from New England mills or eastern Canadian mills. It was hard because I could buy paper at 2/3 of the price that was made in China or Brazil where they use highly polluting methods to make their paper but it was so much cheaper and in a competitive market it was very hard for me to say, "no", but because I care about it in most cases I would use the more expensive paper. This idea would make a more even playing field for companies who are doing the right thing like Monadnock Paper in south western New Hampshire which makes their paper all with water power from the river that runs behind their mill. At this point we're not making it easy for people to do the right thing to be competitive in the market. And this would make it's so they could be more competitive.

James Gaffey:

I do not like the argument that the government is not capable of dealing with this problem and it should all come down

to individual responsibility. Sure, we all want to cut our gas bills, we all want to improve the quality of the air, protect the air we breathe right now. To suggest that the government is going to screw this all up and charge everybody a lot more money than they should I simply do not buy that argument. If you think big oil is going to do something about it I've got a bridge in Brooklyn to sell you. I see this as largely a symbolic gesture. Reading the article, "we expect our representatives to lead in this critical moment for the health and well-being of the citizens and for the protection of New Hampshire's natural resources upon which we all rely", what is wrong with that? Anything that would involve the transfer of money or taxation who's dealt with at a legislative level our representatives would have to vote on any kind of buyback of taxation at some point down the road. It's very important that we at least symbolically support the measures that are being taken. Look what happened this year with the flooding we're going to see more of that. The planet's getting hotter, there's more evaporation, moisture in the atmosphere, more flooding, more severe weather. And to say individuals can take care of this, just buy a more fuel-efficient vehicle that's not going to cut it. It's just kicking the can down the road. I'm very much in support this article.

There is a call to move the vote from the floor.

Moderator dispenses with re-reading the Article and calls for a vote.

Article fails.

Article 12:

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

Article passes.

John Rescigno has some closing comments:

I want to thank you all for coming in today. Even though article 11 didn't pass, global warming is real and we need to do our job to make sure we protect our environment.

I was voted in for the school budget committee and I appreciate all the votes but I will need to turn that down. There are a lot of positions that are open in the town and we really need to help the town out with these positions.

It is better to ask someone if they want you to write them in and see if they actually want to have that position.

There are a lot of scams happening right now with the corona virus, the census and the whole political piece that's going on right now so be very careful when you get phone calls. Don't give out social security numbers, bank information etc., be careful.

Respectfully Submitted


Ruth Millett, Town Clerk/Tax Collector