

December 4, 2014 Select Board Minutes, Groton Community Building (Approved))

Select Board: Peter Lyon, Gary Lamberton, Nathan Puffer

Caledonia Judge: Roy Vance, Fire Department: Wayne & Dorothy Knott, Auditor: Deborah Johnson, Highway: Phillip Palmer, Brent Smith, Treasurer: Roberta Dana, Clerk: Linda Nunn

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM

Roy Vance submitted his 2015 proposed budget for Caledonia County totaling \$349,684 which is approximately \$20,000 lower than last year. The reduction is due primarily to the change in the fiscal year to July 1 through June 30 (it was Feb 1 through Jan 20). As a result of this change, Roy expects to see a reduction in the request for funds from the Town of Groton. At the board's request, Roy explained that the largest line item increase was for Training/Education for a new Judge. Roy also agreed to send to the Board the rate that they use for reimbursement for travel.

Deborah Johnson submitted a proposed auditor budget of \$6,630 (current year is \$6,890) which was accepted by the Board.

Dorothy Knott submitted a proposed Emergency Service budget of \$11,677 (current year is \$11,445). Dorothy submitted a proposed Emer Serv. General Expense budget of \$23,745 (current year is \$20,900). Dorothy submitted a proposed Fire Department budget of \$27,096 (current year is \$25,296) Dorothy submitted a proposed FAST budget of \$15,607 (current year is \$15,500)

The Board explained its overall objective of limiting the budget increase for the Town to a maximum of 1.4% and for any one group to no more than 2%. Since the proposal submitted by Dorothy was above the objective, they requested that the proposal be reassessed and reduced to support the goal.

The Board asked Phillip for the status of the Emergency Services Door project. Phillip responded that he is still looking for the engineering to be completed and is looking for a free solution.

Gary expressed his family's deep appreciation for the support recently provided to his family by the Emergency Services team.

Phillip Palmer read his letter (the letter is on file in the Town office) to the Board stating that he is identifying the Christmas tree placed at the intersection of Flag street and Scott Highway as a road hazard. Phillip requested that the tree be removed immediately, that action needs to be taken and requested a written response from the Groton Select Board as to what they are going to do stating that waiting is not an option. Gary stated that extra effort was taken to select a tree that is more narrow and would not block the intersection and before responding would like to talk to other residents of the town of get their opinion. Peter explained that this type of activity is what makes him proud of the Community where volunteers get together to do something nice for the Town. He stated that getting this tree cut and installed was a lot of work and from his view the location is great as it is in the center of town and in front of the Church which makes for a beautiful entrance to the Community. Peter felt that rather than Phillip complaining that he should work with the volunteers and help with a safe placement of the tree. Peter volunteered to work with a group of citizens to identify the best location for the tree in that area and asked Phillip if he would help. Nathan encouraged both Phillip and Brent to join and help with Peter's effort. To close the discussion, the Board told Phillip that they would take it under advisement.

Roberta Dana submitted a worksheet for Clerk, Treasurer, Foreman, and Highway crew which showed the wages, hours worked, type of health plan, % of health premiums paid by the employee & town, and amount of deductibles paid by the Town for the following Communities: Wells River, Barnet, Marshfield, Orange, Ryegate, Corinth, Newbury and Groton. Also included was Blue Mountain School (data for the State was missing). After significant discussion, it was decided that to remain competitive the current insurance plan would be maintained. Nathan moved, Peter seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to maintain the Blue Cross/Blue Shield policy at the Platinum level at a total cost of \$54,046.

Gary reviewed that status of the reserve fund descriptions and requested a few changes to further improve the format. It was agreed that these descriptions would be added to the Town report and would include the year end dollars available in each account.

Linda Nunn provided an update on the status of the Herbert's chickens at Clarks Landing stating that she sees this as a civil complaint between the people of Clark's Landing and the Herbert's. Peter reported that Donna Carbee had received input that there was a new State Statue in place that required Chickens to be fenced and asked if Jim could check this out. Linda agreed to contact Jim to followup.

Linda submitted a proposed election budget of \$1,417 (the current year is \$1,417) which was accepted by the Board.

General discussion took place on where to place the \$500 donated by Janet Puffer to be used to maintain the signs at the entrance to town. Nathan moved, Peter seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to place the \$500 in the Recreation fund.

Gary tabled discussion on the repeater grant to the next Board meeting.

The Fire Department submitted their unanimous support for Wayne to continue as their Fire Chief. Peter moved, Nathan seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to appoint Wayne Knott as the Town of Groton's Fire Chief.

Gary reported that the NEMRC server crashed and that NEMRC migrated the backups onto the new computer under warrantee. Gary is planning on updating the Treasurers system shortly and is looking into having a separate line for Fax to provide reliable service. Significant effort has been ongoing in this whole area by Gary for quite some time, the Town is very fortunate to have Gary doing this work as a volunteer.

Nathan moved, Gary seconded to approve the August 20, 2014 minutes. Nathan and Gary voted in favor, Peter abstained (as he was not at this meeting) and the motion passed.

Peter moved, Gary seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to approve the November 20, 2014 minutes.

Peter reported that he had talked to Mary Grant about replacing the broken refrigerator in the Community Building kitchen with a large/energy efficient one at a cost of under \$1,000. It could be paid for by the money that has been saved on interest expense. Peter volunteered to work on the purchase and remove the old refrigerator. The Board supported the request.

Nathan moved, Peter seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to adjourn (at 10:14 PM)

Gary Lamberton, Chair

Prepared by Peter Lyon