

January 16, 2014 Select Board Minutes, Groton Community Building (Approved)

Select Board: Gary Lamberton, Peter Lyon, Nathan Puffer  
Auditors: Martha Crown, Dan Robinson, Treasurer: Roberta Dana,  
First Constable: Jim Downing, Highway: Brent Smith, Town Clerk: Linda Nunn

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM

Jim reported that he had met with the AOT experts at their central garage on the Barre/Montpelier Road to have them look at the video in the Town cruiser. Their recommendation based on their experience was to discard it. He noted that a new video camera would cost \$4,800 plus installation. Jim asked for the status of the spare key for the cruiser and Gary reported that it was in the Town office and available any time it was needed. Jim also asked for the status of the Caledonia Sheriff contract proposal and Peter reported that he had met with the Sheriff last Friday and the Sheriff has concluded that the only way that we could book a deal would be for Jim to become one of their employees.

Martha and Dan reported that they are working on a proposal to have Brown's take care of the labeling and mailing of the Town reports. Their objective is to identify the most cost effective way to handle the reports and get them out to everyone. They also raised a concern in that they need to audit Annie as the Collector of Delinquent taxes in order to complete their work and they were having trouble contacting her. Gary agreed to let Annie know that it was important to connect with them. Peter reported that he had talked to Martha, Dan and Debbie and he has agreed to package up a contract bid proposal for the external auditor for their review and approval.

Linda reported that Jim Cilley has complained to her about the sewer smell coming toward their property. Linda said it was the sulfur smell. Linda also reported that the Health officer has received a complaint from people living in the Gilman housing (known as the Welch block) that they could smell sulfur in their water. She also reported that the town health officer had been contacted by the hospital concerning a local family that had their own dog bite one of their children and since the dog was not licensed with the Town and we are not sure that the dog is up to date on its rabies shots. The dog had to be quarantined to be sure it did not have rabies.

General discussion took place on the best date for the collection of property taxes. It was agreed that it was best to continue with the current schedule (the second Friday of October) and that if changes were to be made it would be important to be first discussed with the voters to obtain their feedback. Nathan moved, Peter seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to set the due date for taxes as October 10, 2014 at 5:00 PM at the Town Clerks office, postmarks not accepted.

The process for placement of articles requesting funding from various organizations was discussed. Linda stated that the approved process is that an organization has to present a petition with at least 5% of the registered voters to be included in the warning for Town meeting. Once an organization has presented a petition for three years in a row, then for the fourth year and thereafter all that is required is a letter documenting their request and it is included in the warning. If an organization wishes to raise their amount requested a new petition has to be filed with the Town Clerk.

Roberta provided a report on the status of the reserve funds. The "12/31/13 Fund balance" was \$597,873.30, the "Owed to fund from General fund" total was \$134,441.00 and the 2013 "Ending Bank Balance" was \$463,432.80.

Brent reported that sand consumption was up due to the bad weather conditions that are being experienced.

Since no proposal has been received from Annie, the Board decided to maintain the 2014 Collector of Delinquent Taxes budget at the 2012 level of \$2,935.

Gary stated that in his research of the streetlight budget he has concluded the majority of the increase is due to the WEC lights. Peter confirmed with Steve Blood that the GMP cost would not be expected to increase. Brent suggested that an inventory of the light poles be placed on file in the Town office. Peter said that he had an inventory of the poles due to his work on the LED conversion and could get a copy for file.

Gary and Brent reported that VTEL has postponed the request for feedback on the proposal to place a tower on Brent's property.

The ANR project to remove the Franconia Paper Company Dam in the Wells River (near Vance Road/Rt 302) is on file in the Town office. Brent reported that the town may get the gravel and concrete that is removed which would then be crushed and used as gravel on the town roads.

The board agreed to budget the reserve funds for 2014 as follows;

- Community Building Improvements: \$15,000 (2013 was \$20,000 and 2012 was \$15,000)
- Emergency Services Building Improvements: \$5,000 (2013 was \$5,000 and 2012 was \$5,000)
- Emergency Services Vehicles: \$20,000 (2013 was \$20,000 and 2012 was \$10,000)
- Reappraisal & Tax Maps: \$2,000 (2013 was \$2,000 and 2012 was \$1,000)
- Recreation Fund: \$250. (2013 was \$250 and 2012 was \$500)

The board agreed to budget pay adjustments for 2014 as follows;

- Jim Downing (First Constable): \$15.77 (2013 was \$15.00)
- Kitty Diggins (Lister): \$15.53 (2013 was \$13.00)
- All Ballot Clerks: \$10.00 (2013 was \$8.94)

The Board made the following final adjustments to the 2014 budget;

- Added \$500 to the Treasurer budget for GAAP training
- Reduced \$1,000 from the Collector of current taxes wages
- Added \$700 to the Highway budget for purchase of an IPAD for project control

Peter requested a revenue report showing 2013 budget and actuals along with projections for 2014. Roberta agreed to create the report for the next board meeting.

A decision on approach for the Fire Truck is on hold as the Fire Department is continuing their discussion on how to best solution their needs.

Gary reported that the Fire Department voted to recommend Wayne to continue as their Chief. Gary moved, Peter seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to approve Wayne Knott as the Fire Chief of the Town of Groton.

Peter moved, Nathan seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to approve a final budget total of \$742,318.30. (The 2012 budget was \$727,699 and the 2013 budget was \$806,395). The board extended

its deep appreciation to all the staff members that worked so hard to be fiscally responsible for the tax payers of the Community!

Peter moved, Nathan seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to close the meeting (at 10:40 PM)

Gary Lamberton, Chair

Prepared by Peter Lyon