

November 6, 2014 Select Board Minutes, Groton Community Building (Approved)

Select Board: Peter Lyon, Gary Lamberton

Town Resident: Shawn Crown, Auditors: Debra Johnson, Martha Crown, First Constable: Jim Downing, Highway: Brent Smith, Building Committee: Kitty Diggins, Treasurer: Roberta Dana, Clerk: Linda Nunn

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM

Jim Downing reported that the siren on the cruiser needed replacement and he had a proposed price of \$835.20 from Rinkers. There is \$1450 in the budget and Jim has spent \$512 to date so there is enough money in the budget to cover the cost. Peter asked Jim to do a comparison with other suppliers to ensure he is getting the best price. Jim also asked how to approach his request for 4 wheelers on town roads. The board suggested that he submit a petition to add to the Town meeting warning that list his desired roads so the details can be discussed at town meeting.

Jim presented his proposed budget for 2015 with a goal to keep it level with the current year. Jim proposed \$9,792 (2014 is \$9,877) for his constable budget and \$3,000 (2014 is \$3,000) for the cruiser budget with his salary and insurance not yet defined.

Gary expressed a concern about a trailer by Little Italy/Clarks Landing being in terrible shape and the yellow house next to the Post Office as being dangerous. General discussion took place on a number of similar problems in Town with the Board taking a position that it would take action only if State Statutes were followed and everyone was treated the same. Linda said she would contact Ryegate (as per her comments at Town meeting) to obtain a copy of the regulations that they are creating, Peter agreed to contact the NVDA to see if they had proposals on how to handle, and Gary said he would write a letter to the owners of the yellow house asking them to address the condition of their building.

Shawn Crown wanted to know when the town was going to complete the work on North Country Road and reported that he had removed the large rock. Brent reported that he has spread 10 loads where marked. General discussion took place on the condition of the road and it was agreed that everyone would meet on site in the next week or so to review the status.

Debra Johnson and Martha Crown reported that they recommended that a professional auditor be hired this next year. Discussion took place on Dan Robinson's recommendation to eliminate the elected auditors and hire a professional auditor. Deb and Martha both believe that the town should continue to with elected auditors. Peter did not support spending \$12,000 to \$15,000 that they had requested this last year since it was a lot higher than the cost of the previous audit. It was agreed that they would contact other towns to see what they had been paying for auditing and then discuss at a later Board meeting. Deb also reported that they want to add an article to the Town meeting warning that ask whether or not the town report should be mailed.

Deb also reported that they had sent out bids to print the town report to five different firms and received two proposals, one from L Brown & Son for \$3,163.50 and one from Repro for \$2,170. They also noted that the current year cost of printing was \$2,519 so the Repro bid was particularly good. Peter moved, Gary seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to accept the bid from Repro.

Kitty Diggins reported that she had good news, the filtration system is in and there is no need to buy a new filter saving about \$45 per month. Kitty noted that they did put in a new canister which will need to

be replaced every 3 to 4 years as originally presented by Clearwater. Kitty also said that there is a need for a new electrical outlet however there will be no cost to the town for the installation as Brent will do the work and Brent reported that he will use an existing permit to cover the project.

The Board reviewed the notation on the agenda by Dorothy stating that the over spending by the Fire Department this year will be balanced out by under spending in the FAST and Fire Supplies.

Gary requested that Linda have the final draft of the reserve funds descriptions ready prior to the next Boards meeting with a goal to include the details in next year's town report.

Brent Smith reported that the crushing of 5,000 yard of gravel in the town pit is almost complete. Brent also reported that the (Free) culvert for Railroad Street has been delivered (36' long, 10' wide, 7' high) and that the permit request is in process with a plan to install it next year. The goal is to reuse the existing culvert. Brent also noted that the culvert was also loaded for trucking at no cost to the town by the Bolton Valley Ski Area which was another great savings. They are also working with AOT on a design to use an invert on the large culvert on Boulder Beach road.

Brent reported that they are working on a Better Back Road grant that will be a five year plan to address water quality issues and as an example identifying sites for erosion control which will also include items such as improvements to Ricker Mills road.

Linda Nunn reported that she had sent a warning to the neighbors on their dog barking.

Brent reported that he, Gary and Steve Hart are on a Blue Mountain School budget committee and they are looking for input. Peter responded that the issue is that the school cost are going up while the student population is going down and that is not sustainable for the taxpayers. He also expressed a concern that the school officials stated that approximately 25% of the students are special education and labeling kids is not good noting that the school officials responded that the state average is around 12% and Peter has been told that the National average is 8.5%.

Roberta Dana reported that there is \$134,000 in delinquent taxes and that she has borrowed \$20,000 from the reserve funds to cover operating cost this last week. Roberta also reported that FEMA has additional questions on the Welton Bridge project. Gary recommended that the Engineers coordinate the required response to FEMA. There is \$68,000 still outstanding to be recovered from FEMA for the project.

General discussion took place on employee health insurance. Roberta was asked by the Board to provide a worksheet at the next Board meeting with combinations of employee contributions of 5%, 10%, 15%, and 20%. Roberta was also asked to contact neighboring towns, BMU, and the State to find out what the percent contributions were for their employees.

Peter moved, Gary seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to approve the Oct 16, 2014 minutes. Peter moved, Gary seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to approve the Oct 23, 2014 minutes. Peter moved, Gary seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting (at 9:33 PM)

