

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

Select Board: Peter Lyon, Gary Lamberton, Nathan Puffer

Town Residents: Shawn Crown, Steve Genereaux, Clear Water Filtration: Steve Parker, Building Committee: Kitty Diggins, Lise & Mark Shallberg, Treasurer: Roberta Dana, Highway: Brent Smith, Emergency Services: Phillip Palmer

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM

Peter reported that Emile Bedard had, as a volunteer, delivered telephone poles that were donated by Fairpoint which will be installed at the entrance (and improve the appearance) at the highway garage. Emile is also going to be delivering additional poles to be used to mark culverts.

Gary reported that Jacqueline Sinclair donated \$150 to the Fast Squad to thank Henry, Dorothy & Wayne Knott for the care they provided her after falling off her horse (that had shied from a fox). Gary also reported that Bob Skinner donated \$300 to the Fast Squad for the help they provided him for his injuries (from hitting a tree with his car).

Steve Parker provided an overview of the work his company (Clear Water Filtration) is proposing to complete on the Community Building water system based on the bid they gave the Building Committee. For \$2,422 they would clean up the piping coming out of the pressure tank, re-mount the filter, and replace the anode in the water heater with a new aluminum rod and then shock the system with 12% chloride. The Board asked if this was the best solution from a tax payer's perspective. In response to the Board's question, Steve said that the source of the problem is not going to go away and that this fix would only be temporary. To fix it permanently for the taxpayer (and if it was his money) it would require the installation of a carbon filter (a Clack 1248 Sulfur guard system) that would need to be replaced every 3 to 5 years (each replacement would cost \$404) and there would also be the need to continue the use of Chlorine (approx. 12 gal. per year). Steve proposed his company providing the permanent solution by both the cleaning of the existing system and installation of a carbon filter at a cost of \$3,349.14. Gary moved, Nathan seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to approve \$3,349.14 to install the permanent solution as proposed by Steve.

Steve Genereaux provided an update on the solar project (located at 1035 Scott Highway) stating that the Public Service Board review has been completed and an approval is forthcoming. Due to flood plain requirements, it will cover less than one acre and contain approximately 500 panels. They will be providing access through the property to the brook at the fire departments request. They have sold about 20% of the production and wondered if the Town would be interested in participating. Peter provided an overview of earlier efforts to install solar for use by both the Town & Blue Mountain School at the Town owned land at the old dump site. The solar supplier had confirmed that the site has an ideal orientation for solar panels and since it is a "brown field" is a perfect use of the land. Green Mountain Power had identified the location for the connecting power line across the Puffer family property which the Puffer family supported as long as it was buried and funds were available to assist with the installation. Peter noted that it would be a higher return on investment for the Town if it was to install panels on its own land.

Shawn Crown explained that North County Road needs gravel and has too many water bars. He said it has not been graveled during the 13 years that he has owned his property. Brent said that that he was

willing to work with Shawn to help noting that the section of road that Shawn is talking about had not been graveled in 20 years. General discussion took place on Class 4 roads and the fact that there was no description available for the level of maintenance required. There is \$4,000 available in the highway budget available for maintenance of class 4 roads. Peter proposed installing 10 loads of gravel (total cost of \$750.) and Shawn volunteered to remove the large rock that is in the road and all agreed with the proposal. Brent asked Shawn, and Shawn agreed, to mark the section requiring gravel. Peter moved, Nathan seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to install 10 loads of gravel on the section flagged by Shawn with the agreement that Shawn would remove with his equipment the large rock in the road.

Gary reported that Phillip Palmer had attended a Vermont Local Roads class titled "Stepping up to Supervisor". Phillip reported that he felt that the class was very helpful.

Phillip Palmer reviewed the status of his effort to coordinate the replacement the current three doors in the Emergency Services Building with two doors (one 18' wide x 12' high and one 12' wide and 12' high). Phillip requested approval from the Board to spend up to \$15,000 on the project. Phillip said he expected it to cost between \$11,500 and \$15,000 and noted that he had one proposal that was significantly higher than \$15,000. Phillip described the project as requiring new doors as well as rebuilding the brick & cement block frame work around the doors and that he had several items he was trying to balance to obtain a cost effective solution. The Board responded that they would want to follow the normal bidding process where design specifications are to be placed out to competitive bid. They also recommended that a single contractor be responsible for the total results. Since Phillip is worried about cold weather coming the Board agreed to have a special meeting the next week (Oct 23) to help move the project forward.

The Board approved \$756.10 toward the payment for tables for the Community Building. This was reduced from the actual total cost of \$896.10 due to the receipt of \$140 of donations.

Gary reviewed a Purchase Order for \$1,627,550.35 to be paid to Blue Mountain Supervisory Union with a due date of October 30, 2014. Nathan moved, Peter seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to approve the payment of the PO to Blue Mountain not before October 30, 2014. Roberta reported that there currently is \$130,000 in delinquent taxes.

The Board also confirmed its intention to continue its policy to not borrow money on a line of credit if we have money in our own reserved funds that we can use.

The Board reviewed a letter received from Dan Robinson. Dan is resigning from his position as Town Auditor (due to his need to focus on healing from cancer surgery). Dan, in the letter, also asked the Board to consider asking the voters on Town Meeting day to eliminate the 3 elected auditor positions and opt for an annual external audit noting that many towns across the state do this. Peter moved, Nathan seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to, with regret, accept Dan's resignation. The Board also agreed to include Dan's recommendation in the schedule as part of the upcoming budget meetings.

The Board discussed the note forwarded by Kevin Dorm which request support to cap the State Wide property tax. The Board noted that the current rate of property increases is not sustainable and has

become a problem for the tax payer. Peter moved, Nathan seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to support the request to cap the State wide property tax.

Brent reported that he had talked to Craig Darling about adjusting the grade of the sidewalk near Craig's property to help with access to Steve Viviano's property and Craig had responded that he would support whatever is required to help his neighbor.

Peter moved and Nathan seconded a motion to move the \$1,500 received for renting Community Building office space that was paid as part of the Weldon Bridge project to the Community Building fund to assist with paying for the new water filtration system. Peter and Nathan voted in favor, Gary voted against and the motion passed.

The Board discussed the process they would like to follow for the 2015 budget with a request that the Department heads have their initial input to the Board by the second meeting in November (11/20/14). They would like to have any proposed large expenditures identified early, keep the increases limited to the Consumer Price Index of 1.4% with a maximum increase of 2%. Brent noted that he does not expect any large increases in the Highway budget as he works to level spending using reserve funds. Brent also said that he is willing to cover the cost of his health insurance however he wants to balance it out with a raise. Nathan asked the status of purchasing the next dump truck and Brent replied that it was scheduled for this year however he was not comfortable with the reliability of any of the truck manufacturers. Peter reviewed a discussion that he and Brent had with Fred, Tristan, & Fred, all respected local owner/operators, where they all said that they would not buy a new truck at this time.

The Board had a question on the increase cost of service provided by the State on Boulder Beach road. The budget had \$2,000 however the State had billed the Town for over \$5,000. The previous year the cost was close to \$2,000. Brent thought it might be due to a new State personnel in place and would check it out.

Peter moved, Nathan seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to approve the 8/7/14 minutes.
Peter moved, Nathan seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to approve the 8/28/14 minutes.
Peter moved, Nathan seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to approve the 9/4/14 minutes.
Peter moved, Nathan seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to approve the 9/18/14 minutes.
Peter moved, Nathan seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to approve the 10/2/14 minutes.

Roberta reported that Janet Puffer had donated \$500 for maintenance of the signs on the RT 302 entrance to the Community. The Board decided to preserve the money by placing in a reserve fund and will decide on the appropriate fund at their next meeting.

Gary moved, Nathan seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to adjourn (at 10:37 PM)