

The Town of Groton, Vermont Select Board Minutes, May 7, 2015 (Approved)

The duly warned meeting of the Groton Select Board of May 7, 2015 was held at the Groton Community Building, 1476 Scott Highway at 7:00 PM

The following members were in attendance: Peter Lyon, Gary Lamberton

Attendance for the regular meeting included: Ryegate Select Board: Andrew Smith, Paul Keenan, Claudette Sortino, Pastor Dennis Walton, Fire Department: Wayne & Dorothy Knott, Shaun Stetson, Phillip Palmer, NVDA: Doug Morton, Constable: Jim Downing, Highway: Brent Smith, Treasurer: Lisa Hart, Visitors: Dave Spencer, Janet Locke, Walt & Dianne Wosko, Shawn Crown, Jim Langlois

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM

Background: The Board is interested in teaming and gaining value from the experience of our neighboring communities. The Ryegate Board had graciously agreed to come to a Groton Board meeting to exchange ideas, suggestions, and questions on the operation of our respective communities.

The Groton Board was looking for ideas on how to improve the Town sidewalks. Andy, Paul, and Claudette explained the approach they followed in the construction of their new sidewalks with particular emphasis on the hiring of Ryebrook who is a very skilled contractor. Ryebrook provided the design support and also completed the construction and the Board is very satisfied with the results. Both Boards discussed and supported completing professional audits every three years or so, with the Ryegate Board pointing out that they reserve funds each year toward the ultimate cost. There was general agreement that the recycling center controlled by Gene Perkins served both communities very well. General discussion took place on participation on the FAST Squad. Dorothy Knott provided service numbers demonstrating both communities have effectively the same number of service calls. The Ryegate Board would like to receive quarterly reports on the budget versus actuals and the Groton Board agreed to support their request. It is noted that Ryegate covers half the cost of the operation of the FAST Squad which exhibits real teaming across the two communities. The Ryegate Board was interested in ensuring that the equipment is distributed appropriate to the level of training so the FAST Squad members can respond quickly to request for help. Dorothy and Wayne confirmed the equipment is distributed to members to enable rapid response. The Groton Board thanked the Ryegate Board for reaching out and coming to the meeting and considered it very helpful.

Background: The yellow building next to the Post Office is a safety concern within the Community.

Jim Downing reported that someone has taken a door so now kids have access to the building and Jim considers it unsafe. Gary agreed to contact the company that owns the building and also the State to seal the building. The objective is to have the building removed.

Background: Jim Downing is concerned that he does not have enough funds in the Constable budget to cover his training expenses.

The Board explained that Jim is expected to stay within the approved bottom line budget as approved at Town meeting. He may move money from one line item to another as long as his bottom line does not exceed the total approved.

Background: Harv Orr Road (a class 4 road) has been unpassable this spring due to the mud. The neighbors living near or on the road are frustrated. The Town does not maintain and does not plow class 4 roads.

Walt Wosko would like stone to be placed on the road by the Town. Jim Langlois explained how difficult it is to access his property and pointed out that emergency service vehicles would not be able to reach his property with the condition of the road. One solution is to bring the road up to class 3 status. Brent agreed to provide the specifications for a class 3 road. It was agreed to conduct a special Board meeting on June 11 with the property owners and neighbors to discuss what it would take to bring the road up to a class 3 status.

Background: Prayer at Town meeting has not been conducted for the last couple of years due to the question on whether or not it is legal and uncertainty on what approach could be taken to satisfy the various interest.

Pastor Dennis Walton reported he supports conducting an opening prayer at Town meeting explaining that it is the Practice not Tradition. Dennis feels it is time to stand up and vocalize our preferences. It was agreed that it would be best to have a written policy for all to review and follow. Dennis agreed to create a proposed policy for consideration that could be shared with the Community. Peter agreed to request the VLCT to review the proposed policy that Dennis creates to obtain their feedback.

Background: Matt Puffer has requested the septic design that the town had completed on his land when it was being looked at for a possible Fire Station site. It was reported that there was a handshake agreement which the Board had no knowledge of.

Dave Spenser reported that he as a Board member and Warren Tripp as a building committee member had agreed to provide the plans to Matt. Dave explained that there were no minutes recording this transaction, that it was a personal arrangement. The consensus of the Board was to give the septic design to Matt.

Background: The voters approved \$15,000 at Town meeting for sidewalk improvements. The Board is looking for suggestions on how to best maximize the use of these funds.

Doug Morton from NVDA reported that the VTRANS sidewalk grants were announced yesterday. There is a 80/20 matching requirement which means that there is an opportunity to apply for \$60,000 of grants to match with the town's \$15,000 which would then support a \$75,000 project. Doug explained to qualify for the grant a Board member would need to take a training class on May 27 or 28 and the application would need to be submitted by July 17th. Doug agreed to draft the grant request upon receipt of input from the Board. Peter agreed to coordinate an on-site meeting with Doug and all members of the Board to decide on the desired approach.

'Round the Table;

The Vermont Better Back Roads Grant deadline is May 15th and Brent recommends applying for the Ricker Mills Road Project. Peter moved, Gary seconded and the motion passed unanimously to support the Ricker Mills Road Project.

The Structural Reinforcing of the Community Building roof framing will be taking place this summer. For planning purposes, the gym will not be available from mid-June until the end of August. Exact dates will be available once a contractor has been selected.

Peter moved, Gary seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to appoint Mary Grant and Stan Pierce to the Building Committee.

The Board agreed that the Building Committee will create and adopt the template for going out to bid for future building projects.

Andrew arrived at 9:20 PM

Financial Policies 5 and 6 will be finalized at the next Board meeting. Andrew will provide recommended limits to be included in those policies prior to the meeting. Financial Policies 7 and 8 will be sent out by Peter for initial review at the next Board meeting.

Phillip Palmer reported that DeWolf has completed the engineering design for the replacement of vehicle doors on the Emergency Services building. Phillip is coordinating finalizing the specifications for the project to include items such as siding, electrical, doors, etc so it can be put out to bid.

Lisa Hart reported that she has a \$402 bill for legal services on the financing for the new fire truck. Gary moved and Andrew seconded a motion to pay the bill out of the emergency services vehicle reserve fund. Gary and Andrew voted in favor, Peter abstained and the motion passed. Peter explained that he is not concerned if it is paid from the Board's budget or the Fire Department budget.

Wayne Knott reported that they have incurred Emergency Service expenses with the Septic issue for the Station. Wayne also reported that five firemen have taken their pretest which required some serious training.

The Local Emergency Operations Plan was reviewed. In order to process the plan, Andrew committed to complete ICS 100 training. Gary moved and Andrew seconded a motion to approve the plan as submitted. Gary and Andrew voted in favor of the motion, Peter voted against the motion and the motion passed. Peter explained that he does not feel the plan is adequate in that the back-up locations identified in the plan do not have adequate handicap access.

Andrew volunteered to coordinate the response to the Vermont Public Service Audit.

Gary reviewed the Purchasing and Credit card procedure, additional changes were requested.

Andrew moved, Gary seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to approve Kitty Diggins and Mark Shallburg resignation from the Building committee.

Lisa reported that the water filtration system has a new filter and the system should be cleared up in a month or two. The problem was caused by the chloride reserves becoming too low, they need to be checked monthly.

Phillip reported that the spring honing of all town roads has been completed. They are now applying chloride as they have received some complaints.

Peter moved, Andrew seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to approve the 4/16/15 minutes.

Peter moved, Andrew seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to approve the 4/22/15 minutes.

The consensus of the Board was that Peter would prepare the agenda and warning for future Board meetings.

Peter moved, Andrew seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to adjourn (at 10:52 PM)

Gary Lamberton, Chair

Prepared by Peter Lyon