

## Town Of Groton, Vermont – Selectboard Minutes, March 17th, 2016 (Approved)

The duly warned budget meeting of the Groton Selectboard of March 17th, 2016 was held at the Groton Community Building, 1476 Scott Highway.

Attendance for the meeting included Brent Smith, Peter Lyon, Kitty Diggins, Tim Dailey Sr, Nancy Vaughan, David Boyce, Carrie Peters, Lisa Hart, and Dan Robinson.

The Following Selectboard Members were in attendance: Mary Grant, Andrew Dorsett and Wade Johnson

The Meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM

### Review/Approve Minutes:

Lisa wanted to make a correction on page three of the March 3<sup>rd</sup> minutes. The new Listers wage would be set at “minimum wage”. With no other changes Wade made a motion to approve the minutes for the 18<sup>th</sup> of February and 3<sup>rd</sup> of March Minutes. Mary seconded the motion and the motion passed with 2 votes, Andrew had not yet arrived at the meeting.

### Financials and Budget Update:

Lisa wanted to set a policy to present the report to the board and then review. Mary and the Treasurer’s office agreed that emailing the report or handing it out at the first meeting of the month, then the Board could review it and address the report during the second meeting. Lisa wanted to talk to Andrew about the contract with Batchelder, but would wait because he had not arrived at the meeting. She also wanted to go over the Pace and Hawley letter, in which she had received a letter back from. Lisa reported that she had received a check for \$2023.15 from Pace and Hawley, the balance of the retainer we had paid them. Lisa had questions on a Corey Electric bill. Brent was not sure what that one was for. Lisa said she would look into it further. Lisa reported that she had a bill from Power’s Plumbing and Heating for \$672. Mary said to do what you have to do. Lisa went on to report that she had a Workman’s Comp Audit on Monday. She reported that the audit went well. Lisa went on to inform the Board that when a sub-contractor does not have workman’s comp on their insurance, the town gets charged. Lisa said that this is a new change that she was unaware of and the town has gotten charged on five occasions. Lisa said that she will review these charges once she receives the final report from the audit. AT this point Andrew had arrived and Lisa asked him about the contract from Batchelder. Andrew said He would go over everything that he had gotten from them with her later. Lisa informed Andrew about the refund from Pace and Hawley. Mary caught Andrew up with the first couple items on the agenda. Lisa wanted to pass along the Library’s concern in reference of whether or not pay increases were going to be retroactive to January 1<sup>st</sup>. Mary said that none of the personnel wages were retroactive, they went into effect the 1<sup>st</sup> pay period after town meeting.

### Department Updates:

Rec Committee Updates – Lisa reported that the Rec Committee had it’s meeting the previous week. She reported that the committee felt that it was not set up to hire and supervise, that they were lucky to have a few volunteers. Mary said that if the Rec Committee doesn’t want to hire someone, that is perfectly fine. Andrew added that the money doesn’t technically exist without some revenue support. Mary said that if the committee doesn’t want to manage the position, then the Board will withdraw the position. Nancy Vaughan said that the committee has Anne, who is ultimately doing what that position is and she feels like Anne should be compensated for what she already does but to ask her to

fund raise on top of that is too much to ask. Anne's concern is that if the Rec Committee has to start charging for things then it will be harder to get the community to come out.

Mary said that the position was to develop and coordinate activities that would help generate revenue to put back into the Rec Committee to help pay for the free activities that have gone by the wayside because of funding concerns. Andrew added that there are some activities that would be for people from the surrounding area that they could charge for like a bike race/ride-in, and other events that would be held for free. Nancy added that the focus of the Rec Committee has never been to fund raise and that Anne is already doing so much to coordinate events for the community that she should be that person, but fund raising is just too much on top of what she does. Mary said that she understands and that was fine.

Mary asked Peter to update the Board on Solar, Library Building and Sidewalks. Peter began with an update on the proposed solar project, reporting that solar installations are on hold because the legislature has taken up solar placement and revenues that can be captured. He felt that a Board member should take up following this project working with Green Mountain Community Solar to help keep the other Board members up to date on how things progress. That way he could step away and let the Select Board take over that project. One of the key issues is rates of recovery. He advised that the Town should advocate with our legislators, keeping the rates of return competitive. Mary said that Wade would take that on. Peter said that he would pass on all of his notes and materials so that Wade could get up to speed, and send an email to Brue Genereaux to let him know who his new point of contact is.

Library Building Update. Mary said that there was an information meeting the following Monday night at the Library and Peter was attending, and the Trustees asked for at least one Board member attend. Peter said that he had spoken with Diane Kreis earlier in the week and brought her up to speed on the current status of the building. Peter said that at some point there needs to be a joint meeting. That way all parties can think their way through it and decide what they want to do in the best interest of the town. The major milestones are, we have established beyond a shadow of a doubt that the town made a \$50,000 loan to Gilman Housing. The next part of that is that the intent was to transfer that building to the town at low or no cost, with if anything, soft debt which is non-recoverable or would be given relief on. So those two milestones give you a negotiating point. The issue is that Gilman Housing put more money into the building than they planned on and Rural Edge is looking to recover some of that. Peter added that was not part of the deal. So the Town needs to decide what they want to do about the \$50,000, and what do they want to do about the offer to sell the building to us to recover their monies. Peter said that you could hold firm and say that you want the deal as it was originally booked or back away for it. There are a series of motivators. A few years ago, they tried to raise the rent to \$1000 a month, but they held it back to the current level because of the negotiations that were ongoing. There is also an issue with the taxes. Currently the town loses about \$6000 a year in taxes, we would make that back in revenue if we owned the building, because the upstairs apartment is a market rate rental. However there are liabilities that go along with owning a building. He went on to say that he and Diane are not recommending any course of action, they are simply putting together the facts. Discussion continued around amounts of rent and taxes, and who pays what portion of the Library's rent. Mary said that she would attend the Monday meeting, and then they could schedule a meeting that everyone could attend. Peter added that the town has appraised the building at \$370,000 and they want \$270,000 for the building. A few years ago they had appealed the appraisal saying that the building was only worth 80 to 85K. Peter said he has asked the Library to come up with a list of concerns, he also said that before any deal is brokered you have to have a professional inspection of the building, and the Board agreed.

Sidewalk Update. Peter reported that NVDA has had to get the grant approved and handed it off to VTRANS and VTRANS has been fantastic to work with. It then got handed off to the engineers and they have done a fantastic job up to this point, it is now back at VTRANS and they are finishing up and what you'll see this upcoming week is the finalized plan which I think, Mary will come to you, and you will want to review it and sign it. Peter added that he has not seen it. Peter said he wanted to say up front that he missed the deadline he gave Andrew. He had wanted the project ready for bid in the January-February timeframe, but he missed that mark. The engineer was done, but there was some administrative work that had to be finished before it could be released for bid. He added that the administrative piece was done and it should be ready to go out by the end of the following week. Peter added to bring the Board up to speed, that because we don't have local companies involved, we used the industrialized process, we went to bid using the State process and the State documentation, and the State was in the middle of the decision process. They gave us a list of over 20 contractors that they thought were appropriate, they highlighted 6 that should be contacted individually, which we did to encourage them to look at it. And then we got the bids back and VTRANS and I went through it and picked the best contract. The best contract had, the best date, best time, most experience, right skills and could meet the date we wanted originally to meet our goals. One of the other reasons they had an advantage was that they were the contractors for the Gilman Housing sidewalk project. So they were familiar with the town, and knew the project. Andrew said that's for the engineering not the actual work. Peter said correct, that will go out on the 25<sup>th</sup> or there about. He went on to say that somewhere after that we should have a meeting because you need to be part of that decision so that he can step away and hand the project off to the Board. Andrew asked if part of the grant does the town have to do a technical and cost review. Peter said that is part of the component. The money we had was \$35,000, that's with a 20% contribution from the town and \$8,000 left over to use as you see fit plus \$7,500 you got this year. Engineers think this is going to be a \$60,000 deal. Peter told them that was going to be a problem, they said to go to bid because they don't know what their numbers are and may be able to make some adjustments, there are things that can be negotiated. Peter added that the most important piece to the update is that it goes out to bid on the 25<sup>th</sup> and they will be scheduling a meeting for the Board to open Bids and making a decision and it will be the Board making the decision. VTRANS help us do the 1<sup>st</sup> phase, but now it comes back to the board's table. Andrew said that if we are able to come up with curbing, it could potentially save \$5,000. Andrew asked if VTRANS would help with the technical review, Peter answered that they have done that already. He went on to say that another matter of concern is hiring a local project manager. There is a local person in town that we have used before, he has 30 plus years experience, and Peter said his name is John Lynch, and he asked John if he would volunteer to do the job, John agreed, so that will again save the town some money having a volunteer. Peter added that John is quite good. Andrew asked if he would act as the on site manager, Peter said yes, and wanted to make sure the record indicated that this was volunteer work. Andrew explained to the Board that on these types of projects you have to hire a Local Project Manager, (LPM) and the cost is built into the project, having a volunteer would save some of that cost. Wade wanted to make sure that Brent was kept in the loop, Mary said yes, because we moved sidewalks into Highway. Peter said that the Board would get weekly reports on status and financials and all of that. Wade said that he wants to make sure that Brent has some input. Andrew said that because it's a State project our only input was "it starts here and it ends here", but he agreed that Brent should be in the loop. Wade asked Brent if he had any questions. Brent said that we are already talking going over budget. Andrew responded that we don't know until we get the figures back, the engineering estimates came back high. Peter added that is why we cancelled the other section. Andrew went on to say that we have no commitment except to look at

the bids when they come in and if they are outside of the budget we can ask VTRANS to cover what the town doesn't have or we can only do what we have in the budget.

Mary asked why we needed John Lynch as the project manager, Peter answered because he has the skill set and to help keep cost down. He offered to have John come in for the Board to interview. Andrew asked if VTRANS could give them a detail description on the position for them to look over. Peter said he would get that for the Board. Peter said that cost was a major factor.

Lister/Building Energy Coordinator: Kitty reported that the smell had returned to the water, so she contacted Clearwater Filtration to service the water filter. Clearwater Filtration noticed that there was an excessive amount of water being used. Upon further inspection, he found that there was a water leak on the outdoor faucet in the front of the building and the upstairs toilet float valve was letting water by. This small amount of water was not enough to trip the filters backwash which caused the filter to fail and trip the bypass. Travis from Clearwater serviced that filter and Powers Plumbing was contacted to repair the leaks. Mary asked if there was anyone in the offices that monitors those types of things, Kitty said that generally the two working up front will let her know if something is broken or not working and she takes care of contacting to appropriate repair person for estimates. When she was aware of the smell, she went to the filter and added chlorine, and called Clearwater when the problem persisted. Kitty went on to ask for the Board's approval to purchase the repair parts for her copier. It had not been serviced in some time and now it was leaving a large dark trail on one half of her documents. The Board authorized the purchase of repair parts.

Recycling Center Update: Tim Daily Sr. wanted to brief NEK Waste Management District charter changes. The first change being that they are doing away with the Australian ballot. The second change is they are trying to add revenue for the district by adding cost to what they picking up the waste at the Ryegate Recycling Center and/or a per capita assessment. Tim went on to say that the budget is already approved when it comes to the towns to vote on. He added that he is leaving it up to the Board to decide. They can approve or disapprove and notify him and he'll take it to the waste management folks and inform them. Tim said that the legislature has to approve a charter change and that may not happen this year or even next year. Andrew asked if he could get a copy emailed to him.

#### Open to Public:

David Boyce wanted to discuss options for using a section of the old railroad bed from the Block house on Powder Spring Road for about 1/8<sup>th</sup> of a mile to a piece of property he owns. He is researching the possibility of build a home on the property and this is the best option for access to the property year around. His concern is that the VAST Trail uses the railroad bed during the winter months and doesn't want to interfere with them. David said that he would be plowing that short section during the winter and he and his wife would only travel the road twice a day, to and from work, so the impact would be minimal. The Board suggested that he talk with a representative from the 302 Buckaroos to get there take on it, get with the Listers to make a copy of the map and come back to the Board at the next meeting to go over his findings. Kitty Diggins, who is also a member of the 302 Buckaroos said she would give David the date of their next meeting as well as assist him with the maps.

#### Review Update Personnel Policy:

Mary asked that the other members look over the Treasurers financial report while we were reviewing the personnel policy. All agreed that the second draft of the new policy was the starting point for developing the new policy. The Board voiced concern that the policy reflects changes in labor policy and that code of ethics be incorporated in to the policy. The Board also stated that the elected officials state their hours of work so long as they are within a normal work day and best serve the public.

Mary suggested adding the sentence in the beginning of the policy that says "This policy may be adhered to by elected officials ". Brent mentioned that the addendums at the back of the policy allow for elected officials to accept the policy. Mary said that really all is left to ensure that the wording reflects both and indicates what does and does not apply to elected officials. Andrew suggested looking at the wage analysis to get a better feel of how Groton compares to surrounding towns. Mary said we will take up the remainder of the policy at next meeting.

Set Agenda for the Next Meeting:

The following items will be added to the agenda for the next meeting-

- \*Cleaning Contract Review
- \*Review David Boyce's request to use a section of the RR bed for year around access to his property.
- \*Appoint Energy Coordinator
- \*Delinquent Tax Collector Update
- \*Continue Personnel Policy

Any additions to the agenda must be made by the Friday prior to the meeting so that the Agenda can be post IAW Vermont's open meeting law.

Andrew wanted to add that he talked to NCIC and had an email he wanted to pass along to Mary. There is a round of grants coming up from the Northern Borderlands Region Association and Andrew has been looking at the possibility of doing some things in town that may be a fit for those grants. Mary said that she was aware of the grants and was looking at those for the Community Building. Andrew said we just need a town plan, Mary said that we have a town plan that is in effect until the new plan is completed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:37pm.

Minutes prepared by Dan Robinson, Select Board Secretary