

Town Of Groton, Vermont – Selectboard Minutes, March 3rd, 2016 (Approved)

The duly warned budget meeting of the Groton Selectboard of March 3rd, 2016 was held at the Groton Community Building, 1476 Scott Highway.

Attendance for the meeting included Brent Smith, Dennis Walton, Roberta Dana, Donna Robinson, Dorothy Knott, Wayne Knott, Phillip Palmer, Lynne Palmer, 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 6:05 PM

Election of Officers:

Andrew nominated Mary for the position of Select Board Chair. With no other nominations, Mary was appointed.

Updates/Adjustments to the Agenda:

Mary wanted to add Review Black River contract for sprinkler system design, Lisa asked to add Review letters to Pace and Hawley and NEMRC, Personnel Policy, Rate of Pay Worksheet Review, Budget Reports to Review, Contract for Batchelder Assoc. and Invoice, and Banking proposals. Brent asked for an executive session to discuss the Sidewalk proposal. Dan asked to add a quick discussion of the Library building and the Rec Committee questions about the Event Coordinator position.

Public to Be Heard:

Dennis Walton wanted to make a statement of support and encouragement in regards to the policy on prayer at Town Meeting. He was hoping the Board doesn't make rapid or rash decisions based on some opposition expressed at Town Meeting. Andrew also mentioned a news article in Vermont Digger which stated that the ACLU has threatened to sue the town if it continues its behavior at future Town Meetings. Dennis pointed out that the Christian Law Foundation has committed to represent the Town if the need arises.

Review Declaration of Health Care Coverage:

Lisa said that she has some questions on how to figure Linda's, but submitted the Highway Departments for review. She said that because the pay period starts on Saturday and ends on Sunday, the deduction would start the following week. Lisa said that the way that Linda's premiums fluctuate, it is hard to determine how to figure her 5% contribution. Mary recommended a monthly payment for her insurance, Linda will have to give Lisa copies of the bills for her premiums.

Community and Economic Development Committee Appointments:

Dan informed the Board that according to the Rec Committee minutes of their last meeting, Paul Berlejung had volunteered to be the committee's representative on the CEDC. Wade moved to accept Paul's nomination as the Rec Committee's Representative, Andrew seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Review Highway Equipment Rates & Certificate of Highway Mileage:

Mary asked Brent if this had been filed, Brent said yes. Mary said that the Equipment rates will be discussed at the next meeting when the equipment page of the CIP is ready to review.

Review Proposed 2016 Highway Plan & Better Back Roads Grant Application:

Dan reviewed the minutes of the previous minutes with the Board to explain that a motion had been made on the projects Brent wanted to work on had been made but not seconded or voted on. The Secretary provided a copy of Brent's priority list to review. Wade made a motion to except Brent's planned projects 1, 3, & 4 of the Highway Department Infrastructure Priority list. Andrew seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously to approve. Mary asked if there was a digital copy of the priority list that could be posted with the CIP online for the CEDC to review. Brent said yes he would get a copy for the Secretary. Mary asked the Board if they were ready to approve the Glover Road paving project so Brent can start planning. Andrew moved to authorize paving the section of Glover Road as described in the Paving Project List presented to the Board at the previous meeting. Wade seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. Andrew mentioned that he had walked that section and paving seemed like the best way forward. Mary mentioned that the CEDC will help Brent finish up his Capital Plan and get it submitted so that the committee can begin work on the next department. Brent wanted to recognize Gary Lamberton for all the work he has done in assisting him prepare his spreadsheets. Brent also wanted to add that the Town Truck is back in service.

Review/Sign Updated Road & Bridge Standards & Certificate of Compliance:

The Secretary presented the Certificate to Andrew for his signature, the other Board Members had already signed. Dan said that he would get it in the mail to Shauna Clifford in the morning.

Review Reimbursement Letter to Pace & Hawley:

Lisa said that she had drafted this version of the letter, but she wanted Batchelder to give her firmer numbers before she sent them the letter. She had hoped to have the numbers before tonight's meeting, but had not heard from them. Carrie added that Batchelder had recommended waiting until they had a list of findings to substantiate a refund. Mary wanted to clarify that we have already paid them, we are asking for a refund. Lisa said yes, Carrie added that we weren't asking for all of it, just the portion that would be reflected based on the findings Batchelder noted. Carrie also added that not all of the retainer has been spent, Lisa acknowledged that there was still \$3400.00 unused. Lisa asked if there needed to be more in the letter and asked who would sign it. Mary said that the letter looks fine and she would sign it. Mary said that Pace and Hawley needs to be notified that their services are no longer required. She added that if they are unwilling to return the retainer, then we should provide them with a list of findings that we would like to be refunded for. Lisa said that the other part of this is the NEMRC bill for services that Batchelder said had created issues. Andrew said that he would sit down with her after the meeting to help draft the letters. Andrew asked if the training sessions are helpful. Lisa said they had been there twice and are scheduled to be there for a full day the next week. Mary asked if we had contracted them, Lisa said no that they gave us an overview letter and took us on instantly. Andrew said yes because we were in an emergency situation. Lisa said that she finds it hard to believe that they are working without a signed contract. Mary said that it's going to be very expensive to get the Town's financials back on track, but we're going to have to get it back inline where it needs to be. Wade added that we have to be careful moving forward, that we don't jump the gun, because we'll end up being liable for it.

Review Bank Proposals:

Lisa said that she had two area banks that she was going to schedule to present proposals at the next meeting. Mary said that she thought that the issue had been resolved at the previous meeting. Lisa said that she understood that she was supposed to contact area towns to see who they used and get proposals from bank's that may be competitive with Merchants Bank. Lisa briefed that when Merchants Bank closed the Groton office that they agreed to continue providing services to Groton free of charge.

Lisa said that the biggest feature, other than cost savings, was the ability to do remote capture of checks. After some discussion, Andrew made a motion that we direct the Treasurer to keep Merchant's Bank as the Town's primary bank, Wade seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously to pass the motion.

Review Rate of Pay:

Lisa reported that she had figured out everyone's rate increase. Lisa said that she doesn't believe that budget prep had taken into consideration pay increases across the board, just the full time and key positions. Mary asked how much is the total cost, 1.75% for the whole thing, it's not fair that everyone would not be included. Brent said that it has been a number of years since the Fire Department has had a pay raise. He also said that they would discuss it at their next meeting. Andrew said that the Board would take that up at the next meeting, but we need to look at all departments to see what kind of impact that will have on the budget. Mary made a motion to accept a 1.75% pay increase for all town employees and elected officials minus the Fire Department which will be set after their next meeting. Wade seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mary made a motion to set the new Listers wages at minimum wage, Wade seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously to approve.

Andrew asked about the other wages. Mary said that depending on the position, some need training to learn the position so they start at a lower wage.

Personnel Policy Update:

Mary suggested that the policy be broken down into blocks of 3 or 4 sections depending on content and provided to the Board and Departments for review/suggestions and the Board will take up review of the policy at the next meeting.

Review Budget Report:

Andrew asked what percent we should be at this point. Carrie answered 17%. Mary stated that the budget is tight but we will work through it. Lisa asked Mary if she still would be able to stop in and sign PO's. Mary said yes, she would be able to do that. The Board discussed the purchase order system that the Town uses and agreed that the current system is working the way it should.

Email from the Library Trustees:

Andrew briefed that he had spoken with Christain Connolly and he wanted to know if the Board was looking to have the Trustees involved in the building negotiation/information gathering process. The Board feels that keeping Peter Lyon and Diane Kreis continue working the issue. There have been too many changes over the years and it would be favorable to all involved to have a final resolution. Andrew moved that the Board authorize Peter and Diane to continue to investigate and negotiate with Rural Edge on the Library building and make their recommendations to the Select Board and Library Trustees. Wade had a concern about whether or not it is legal for the Town to make money from a rental property. Andrew said that this is part of the investigation process. Roberta Dana asked if the public will be allowed to hear the details of what is being done before any decision is made. Andrew said that he doesn't know what the statute says, we may be required to. Mary repeated the motion and asked if there was a second, Wade seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Rec Committee Event Coordinator position Questions:

The Board reviewed the questions that Anne Hatch had about the position, #1 The title, the Board agreed that "Activities Coordinator" covered the description, #2 Start and end date, The Board agreed that the Hire date until end of the budget year for the 1st year and ensuing years would be April 1st through March 31st. #3 What is the hiring process, the Board agreed that posting it in 3 locations, then review/interview as needed and make a recommendation to the Select Board for approval. #4 does the position replace the Rec Committee Chair, The Board said no, this position reports to the Committee and Chair . The Secretary said that he would send these answers to Anne so she would have them for the next committee meeting.

Round Table Discussion:

Mary asked if there was any discussion. Brent asked if there was going to be any appointments made. Mary said would be taken up at the next meeting. Andrew brought up the Gym camera estimate and asked the Secretary to cover it. Dan briefed that he had met with Round Hill Security and got an estimate to have a wide angle camera installed in the gym and captured on a computer in the Town Office. The camera was programmable to come on and shut off at specific times and captures that video for later review as needed. The cost of the system was \$2525.00 which Andrew said this qualifies for a PACIF grant which would cover %50 of the cost. Dan also briefed a key pad security system for the gym door which would make scheduling the gym easier as the lock is programmable and takes away the requirement of issuing and receiving keys after events. In conjunction with the camera, if there is an issue with the facility, the video would tell us who to talk to. Andrew suggested that the estimates be given to the CEDC to review and the keyless entry could be put in the Community Buildings capital plan for down the road.

Approve Minutes.

Mary suggested that approval of the February 18th minutes be postponed until next meeting when they have had opportunity to review them.

Mary suggested that letters be sent out to the people who currently hold appointed position to ask if they wish to continue in that position and then make appointments at the next Board meeting. Mary said we should go through the list and Approve who we have at the meeting, Fire Chief – Wayne Knott, Fire Warden – Wade Johnson, Emergency Management Coordinator – Brent Smith, 911 Coordinator – Brent Smith, Select Board Secretary – Dan Robinson, Tree Warden - Henry Knott, Web Master – Dave Spencer, Alt Web Master – Dan Robinson, Planning Commission – Julie Oliver, Renee Curtis, Kelly Emerson, Carrie Peters, Sarah Dennis, Weigher of Coal – Dick Peters.

Andrew moved that the Board go into executive session to discuss the Sidewalk plan asking Brent Smith and the Secretary to remain. Wade seconded the motion and the board voted unanimously to approve. The Board entered executive session at 7:40pm.

Executive session ended at 8:15pm and reported for the record that they would meet to review and discuss the sidewalk plan once the plan and map has been received from Doug Morton at NVDA.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.

Minutes prepared by Dan Robinson, Select Board Secretary