

Town of Groton, Vermont - Special Select board Meeting Minutes - Saturday, October 14, 2017  
(approved)

Select board Members in Attendance: Wade Johnson, Sr., Deborah Jurist, and Mary Grant

Attendance for the meeting included: Debra Johnson, Henry Knott, Dorothy L. Knott, Nancy Vaughan, Tristan Vaughan, Jim Downing, Linda Nunn, Mark Shallberg, Lise Shallberg, Connie Crown Percy Crown, Brent Abare, Amy Alexander, Brent Smith, Martha Crown, Shawn Crown, Kris Gibney, Shaun T. Stetson, and Gary Lamberton.

Mary called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Mary Grant opened the special meeting by saying the following: That all attendees and Board members, adhere to the following rules of civility, verbal abuse, personal insults, threatening behavior, and intimidation are not acceptable conduct and are grounds for removal from the meeting. Anyone requested to stop unacceptable conduct is expected to comply immediately or they will be asked to leave.

Deborah Jurist said the following:

I think I speak for the whole Board when I say I want to thank all the citizens and officials who have worked and continue to work going forward, on addressing the Resolution passed by the voters at Town Meeting last March. Especially, those who volunteer their time!

I believe we can all agree that the Town, starting sometime in 2013, did excavate on the land belonging to the Estate of Ernest Cilley, while attempting to correct drainage problems in the Community Building and to build a retaining wall at the same time.

The Resolution passed by the Town in March specifically asked that the Select Board address the incompleteness of the Wall which had been set aside and remains uncompleted.

The issue of property damages has not been resolved.

The Memory Wall project remains incomplete.

The property lines between the town and the Cilley property are not legally defined.

Albert Einstein said, "In adversity lies opportunity." I see the events of the last weeks, as not only an opportunity to achieve the resolution of our excavation problem, that the majority of the town can feel good about, but also as a demonstration of how much the voters of Groton care about their town.

We have made a lot of progress towards folks understanding the challenge of what faces us in this particular story. It is a complicated one and we have made progress.

On Sept. 14th it was obvious, from the way our Town Moderator conducted the motion to reconsider the vote, as a specific example, that he is committed to a fair and open process in our town meetings.

Robert's Rule of Order is a complex structure of protocols. It is a useful and necessary tool we need for the conduct of these important meetings.

During that meeting, a rule, which is specific to the Moderator's role in breaking a tie vote that was done by ballot, was overlooked. This fact has been confirmed by several attorneys.

To be clear, our Town Moderator did his best to conduct the meeting in adherence to Robert's Rules. However, an honest mistake was made and it affected the outcome of the vote.

For this reason Deborah Jurist made a motion for the Select Board to invalidate the moderator's voice vote, which broke the tie. This classifies the vote as a tie, which means that the article did not pass. Therefore the passage of the article failed. Wade Johnson seconded the motion and motion passed.

The moderator, Brent Abare, apologized to the community for his mistake and thanked Amy Alexander for bringing this issue up at the Select Board meeting.

Amy Alexander said that she appreciated Brent Abare's effort for being the moderator and admired his tenacity and ability to go forward.

Deborah made a motion at 6:40 PM to adjourn the meeting, Wade seconded and motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,  
Debra Johnson  
Select Board Secretary

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Mary Grant, Chair

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Wade Johnson, Sr.

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Deborah Jurist