

GRAND ISLE SELECTBOARD MINUTES

Monday, April 19 , 2021 - 6:00 PM via Zoom

I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Jeff Parizo called the meeting to order at 6:00PM

Board Members Present: Jeff Parizo-Chair, AnnaMarie DeMars-Vice Chair, Diane Cota, Adam White and Eric Godin

Community Members Present: *See last page for entire list of names.

Selectboard Members to Amend Agenda for Matters Not Listed:

Community Members Open Opinion: Mitchel Richardson regarding minutes.

II. **GUESTS: Brett & Joan Sylvester -DRB Proof of Letter:** The Sylvester's did not attend but sent a letter to Jeff Parizo requesting a letter of approval from the Selectboard to approve Passage View Lane as their private road. Jeff said private roads fall under the purview of DRB. David Capen, DRB Board member said there is one more step in the Sylvester's approval process to a final plan needed. It is the DRB's authority to review of plans of private roads. The board agreed Jeff will notify the Sylvester's letting them know they do not need Selectboard approval for the private road of Passage View Lane.

Ellen Paradee-Friends of Northern Lake Champlain:

- Ellen Paradee said the Friends of our New Lake Champlain holds a bike ride to raise money to raise awareness for the lake and secure grant funds to make restorations to reduce erosions and approve water quality.
- Friends of Northern Lake Champlain is a non-profit
- Ellen explained the routes, how the approximate 300 riders leave in groups
- Has contacted Sheriff Ray Allen
- Usually around 300 attend
- Paradee said if there are places as a run-off or ditches that need repair they might qualify for grant funds and to notify her as they may be able to help with this
- Jeff will send her the Special Events form to fill out

III. **GUESTS OPEN OPINION:**

Mitchel Richardson – Donation Policy:

- Mitchel Richardson questioned the goal of the Donation Policy
- He said the Fire Department, Library and Cemetery are their own entities so they don't need to abide by it, they are all funded by the tax payers
- Adam said that while it is for all town entities it the intention was regarding building and property alteration.
- Adam said Selectboard as the Town Governing body, needs to make sure donations are appropriate and safe and make sure they come before the Board for approval.
- Mitchel said this isn't explained in the policy and is already addressed with the zoning laws
- Rachael said the reason it was brought up was because of what happened with a couple change orders for the new garage. They were done without the rest of the Selectboard's knowledge or approval and that was the reason for the policy.
- Diane explained with this policy donations have to go through the Selectboard for approval and money is to given to Melissa (treasurer to put in proper account)
- Mitchell brought up donations of \$400,000 given to the fire department
- Bill Baron explained the goal was to raise \$400,000 for raising funds and that goal was not reached. An MOU was in place on how money was to be used. The amount was nowhere near \$400,000, it was somewhere around \$70,000
- Adam said any Town policy is open to amendment and review.

Donation and Change Order New Garage– Melissa Boutin – Moved to Old Business

IV. Highway Department Update:

Randy Gover-Donation of Time:

- Ron Bushway thanked Randy Gover for his many hours he put in at the highway department
- Jeff said Randy wants to donate more time and do the road and parking area grade work (at the new garage). He said he wanted the Board to be aware due to the donation policy.
- Randy is thanked by the rest of the Board.
- Diane said since there isn't any money involved she doesn't think there needs to be a motion.

Grant Funds: Jeff reported money was received from two grants that we applied for through the State of Vermont for the highway department. One from Northwest Regional Planning for \$6,710 and one from State of Vermont Grant for Better Roads for \$15,548. He asked Melissa where the money will go. Melissa said it went into the highway fund balance.

- Ron said for right now they are done the tree cutting on several roads. There were a lot of dead trees. Brad Sheridan will contact Bill Baron, Grand Island's Tree Warden who will from now on inspect trees with Brad and Bill will mark the trees to be cut. Adam asked Ron if they have a planned estimated date to move into the new garage. Ron said they are still cleaning items in the old garage before moving them. Ron also mentioned no move in date yet.
- Ron Hall mentioned a large pot hole on Donaldson Road.

Buildings Facilities Manager Update:

- Ron reported that on the 14th the asbestos testing was done with nothing alarming but will have to wait until the test results come back. He also said the old blown in insulation at the old garage may be a problem.
- Adam had emailed Ron last week notifying him the fire extinguishers at the new fire station have not been checked.
- Ron said someone is coming in on Friday to update the extinguishers at all the buildings. He said we have three different companies who check them so this spring they will put out an RFP and get quotes to do all the buildings and end up with just one company to get a better price. Bill Baron wanted Ron to know there is another COVID vaccine clinic on Friday setting up at 7:30AM. Ron said he will be there at 8:00AM and Bill said that works for him.

V. REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES: April 5, 2021 – Adam White motions to accept the April 5, 2021 Selectboard minutes. Diane Cota seconds the motion. Discussion followed.

Mike Donoghue stated there were several errors he noticed. He had asked for corrections about what really happened at the BCA meeting regarding the public record requests and these minutes didn't put the corrections in but rather said he wanted it noted and no further explanation. He said he never said the sentence that he had an objection to the Letter of Interest from Diane Cota. Adam said the minutes need be tabled until the next meeting to be able to look at the recording. Mitchel Richardson mentioned nothing he had said was written except for one line. Diane said the minutes are supposed to be the flow of the meeting and bullet points work best. Rachael explained after she writes the minutes she sends them to the Board for their review. If they don't respond she sends the final draft out. Mitchel said he was caught off guard that she didn't write what he wrote.

Appoint new Selectboard Scribe to begin May 1, 2021: AnnaMarie DeMars motions to appoint Eric Godin to be the next Scribe of the Selectboard. Discussion continued regarding the amount of pay. Rachael said this is not an hourly position, but is based on salary.

AnnaMarie DeMars motions to nominate Eric Godin to be the next Scribe of the Selectboard to begin on May 1st at \$4,500 for the year. Diane Cota seconds the motion. No further discussion. Jeff Parizo, AnnaMarie DeMars, Diane Cota and Adam White vote in favor. Eric Godin recuses himself and the motion passes.

V. NEW BUSINESS: Liquor Renewal Requests for The Island Hub : Moved to the next meeting.

~ **Emerald Ash Borer Tree Cutting:**

- Adam said he wanted clarification because at our last meeting Ron reported the highway department was cutting trees on East Shore South near the State Park and noticed some poor conditioned ash trees believed with EAB signs in it. He said Bill Baron is Tree Warden and on the EAB Task Force as well as Al Crist. His question is if they do come upon trees with EAB signs are they reaching out to Bill with concern.
- Bill said we certainly are concerned as they are monitoring throughout the Islands. He said there has been some miscommunication between him Ron Bushway, Brad Sheridan, road foreman and the tree service they hired. Ron said they will be reaching out to Bill. Also Dave Capen, Al Crist and Beth Deimling did a lot of work on a roadside inventory of ash trees. Bill will get a map of inventory of ash trees from the state for Brad.
- Al Crist said it seems they are cutting down healthy trees. He explained his experience of over a dozen years with EAB in Indiana. He said he is pretty certain there hasn't been any EAB found in the Town of Grand Isle.
- Jeff asked if the inventory of Ash trees taken was of live or dead trees.
- Al said they inventoried every ash tree. He said they found healthy Ash trees and have not found any EABs in traps.
- David Capen said he wasn't involved in inventorying the trees. He is concerned that one day a large amount of trees are going to have to be cut down. Some land owners are going to want to keep their trees and he feels they should know if they want to undergo the expense this would be available. Communication will be important and we should be aware if there are any EAB's present.
- Adam and Jeff thank everyone for attending

~ **Transfer Station Organizational Plan:** Jeff asked if the Board members received the information sent to everyone. Adam said it's very straight forward. The transfer station attendants and road crew would report to Brad Sheridan who reports to Ron Bushway who reports to the Selectboard. Diane said we need to let Northwest Regional Planning Commission who the contact person is.

~ **Salvage Yards:** Jeff reported on the issue on Sloop Road that the land owners around this property is looking for help from the Town. Scott Brown, ZAO has a letter written and is ready to send it to the owner. Diane said there are a lot of places that need to be notified. Jeff suggested putting notification on Front Porch Forum that Salvage yards will be looked into by Scott Brown prior to issuing warnings. Adam said this is a good time to let people know that free metal day is coming if they want to utilize this service. Several community members thanked the Town for getting this done. Jeff read the attorney's decision. Basically he encourages Scott to send a warning letter out to offenders encouraging them to clean up their property. The Selectboard has no authority to issue notice violations but does have authority to enforce after the ZAO files a notice of violation. Jeff said if anyone would like a copy of this letter notify him and he will send it to you.

~ **Drawbridge Summer Construction Update:** Eric said he doesn't have much to report. He did contact Senator Mazza and Mr. Flynn, Secretary of Transportation, without any response. He plans to email Senator Mazza again as well as contact VLCT for legal opinions. Emily Clark said there is a lot of noise at night and some towns have ordinances. Eric plans to contact VLCT on this as well.

~ **Large Items – Transfer Station:** Adam said at the transfer station large items were suspended due to COVID and wondering if they will be opening up soon. Ron said it's getting very expensive. One problem is mattresses and furniture. Jean Prouty said it is easy to take a mattress apart, take out the springs, burn the wood and cut stuffing up and bag it. AnnaMarie said if people can't take them there what will they do? Joe Longo said he is telling people to go to North Hero as they are excepting these items. Ron will talk with Brad and get prices.

~ **Request for Grand Isle Selectboard Action :**

Jeff said the Board received many sheets signed by 150 people. The request states the following.

1. The Grand Isle Selectboard has not received a quarterly financial report from the Grand Ilse Town Treasurer in the last two years as required by State Law. (24 V.S.A. Section 1571)

04-19-2021

2. The Grand Isle Selectboard has not approved the investment or reinvestment of any monies received by the Grand Isle Town Treasurer on behalf of the Town in at least two years as required by State law. (24 V.S.A. Section 1571).

Therefore, we hereby request the Grand Isle Selectboard make and approve a motion to immediately contract with a public accountant licensed in the State of Vermont to perform a forensic audit of all funds of the Town of Grand Isle for at least the past three years.

- Diane said a lot of what is in that petition is not true.
- Melissa Boutin, Town Treasurer said this isn't a petition as Diane mentioned, it's a request for action. She said she has found lots of reports over many years that would have been supplied to the Selectboard and other Boards to give quarterly, semi-annually and monthly reports over a period of time at different points in time. She said she finds the first (item on request) to be inaccurate. Melissa said she is not sure where this was prompted or why.
- Jeff asked when the last time was the Selectboard received a report of quarterly financials
- Melissa said in December they got everything as to where we are at and the Board had ample time to ask questions and the quarterly report was included in that report updated through the end of December and included all Boards and Commissions. Melissa said she has a lot of reports she sent over many years. (She held up a handful of papers) She said whenever the Boards and Committees have asked for information she has met with them many times in person giving them information they ask for and to go over any questions.
- Jeff asked when they will receive the 2021 quarterly reports which ends March 31. All the Selectboard has to do is ask.
- Adam said looking at the petition (requests) he feels it shouldn't be pinpointed at our treasurer or even past assistant treasurer, Linda Effel or current assistant treasurer Sue Moquin. The blame also falls on the Selectboard as he believes none of the five of us knew that they were supposed to receive these reports or ask for them. Going forward he would like to propose he and Eric meet with Melissa to discuss what the Selectboard would like going forward and having a written document with what is requested and when and that the Selectboard vote on it each year at the organizational meeting.
- Adam also said when he hears the words forensic audit it is for when you pinpoint a deficiency or an area of concern and it isn't that the Selectboard hasn't received quarterly reports. We can get any documents at any time from Melissa. This could have repercussions not mentioned that if we want to get a bond (a loan replacing the bond) for the new Town garage and we are in the middle of an ongoing audit we may have issues with banks.
- AnnaMarie said many years ago when Cheryl (Titus) finished being the Town Clerk and Melissa started being the new Town Clerk, Fay Chamberlin said there should be a forensic audit to be sure the books were good. Jeff said at that time it should have been a more in-depth audit.
- Bill Stone said the auditor attended a meeting in February and he pointed out the differences between a forensic audit and a regular audit. To be proactive you might want to ask him to be on your next meeting and explain the types of audits available to you and the benefits of each. He said another suggestion kind of concurs with what Adam was talking about. You should have a schedule that you task your treasurer with as far as deliverables. Whatever the Board expects for deliverables, rather than having to request them each time and the auditor should be able to help with deliverables. Melissa then would know exactly what she has to prepare and when the auditor should be able to help with suggestions.
- Jeff asked Adam and Eric if they are feel comfortable in talking with Melissa regarding doing deliverables and they both said they are willing to meet with Melissa.
- Adam said last year's audit should be finalized soon and suggests the Selectboard members really read the 70 pages and bring it to the meeting.
- Mitchel Richardson asked who hires the auditor. Melissa said when she came on board the company was Angeleno and because they had a good working relationship they continued to use them.

When Angeleno decided they didn't want to continue she did some research and with the amount budgeted she decided on the present audit company. She did discuss it with the Selectboard. Jeff agreed the Board was contacted. Mitchel also mentioned an out of state auditor concerns him. Melissa said he is fully licensed in VT and is a resident of VT.

- Jeff will contact auditor Ron Smith to see if he can attend a meeting.
- Randy Gover said he disagrees with this because there are 152 people who warrant a forensic audit and a regular audit isn't going to do
- Sue Lawrence said our audit is in place and it is doing what we need it to do. Government audits and forensic audits have a huge price tag. If the government audit is doing its job what is the reason for a forensic audit?
- Randy said it seems to him he heard the auditor said at the last meeting he can only audit what Melissa gives him.
- Mitchel said the Board should verify what Randy is saying.
- Melissa said that (Randy's statement above) is not true. She doesn't choose what they audit. She puts everything on the table and they look through every statement, invoice and income that comes in. There is nothing left out.
- Diane said for a forensic audit it is usually like when a business is going bankrupt and that is what causes it
- Linda Effel said the request for Selectboard action states two reasons for a forensic audit. Because there wasn't a quarterly report provided to the Selectboard by the town treasurer and that the Selectboard has not approved or disapproved any investment or reinvestment of the funds the treasurer holds on behalf of the town.
- Melissa said she has a whole stack of files (that were not requested). She said she has never invested or reinvested any funds that were outside of the operating financial institution that we do business with for our regular operating account. She said she only moved money on a short-term basis into a thirty-day CD to earn extra income for the town.
- Linda said you just told us you just invested in CD's without the approval of the Selectboard.
- Melissa said yes and she has never invested town money outside the financial institution and in a different name other than the Town of Grand Isle at all unlike the annuity that was done by the previous treasurer was not in the Town's name.
- Eric said there has got to be a discussion about it and we don't have all the information in front of us right now.
- Adam said research needs to be done to find out what different the (audit) terms are
- Sue would like to say the Cemetery has a lot of different pots with monies in them. Melissa very graciously came to their meetings and explained their questions. She said she can't say enough about her and Melissa is not a mind reader, if you want something from her you need to ask.
- Mitchel Richardson questioned a huge that was mentioned at a previous meeting that the general fund balance of the town was around \$800,000.
- Adam said the confusion was as a Town we have restricted and unrestricted funds. As of year-end of FY ending June 30, 2020 the unrestricted fund was around \$370,000 and that was the number we went off from but the issue was from July 1, 2020 to present funds within that unrestricted fund monies had been allocated to various projects. We were going off a number that was the year-end number not the true number. So that when it came up we had used more money from the general fund for the highway project which was over budget. The number was actually less than what we thought it was because it was based on year end 2020.
- Adan said that this item is something the Selectboard is going to have to fix and the Selectboard is going to need to hear from the treasurer.
Melissa said she spoke with Garret Baxter at VLCT and he said it is being recognized now as what to do and how to move forward. She said she wasn't aware about the statute. She said with the money investing or reinvesting it's not anything she would have done and done inappropriately in advance had she known.

- After further discussion Eric said there are allegations on that paper that people are saying are not correct and we need to do more research before we meet again. We have to be sure we have everything we need and request that documentation before we proceed.
- Jeff tables until such time we can hold a special meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

~ IT prices on Microsoft Office Suit on Town computers:

- Charles Hollon, Grand Isle IT person checked into prices for Microsoft Office Suite for town computers. He said the pricing depends on how much is needed. Diane suggested doing the one-time fee which seems to be the best. Outlook isn't included but other serves could be utilized. The onetime purchase would include Word, Excel and PowerPoint.
- Adam questioned if it's going to be \$3700 and we just did a budget for the next year where would the funds be coming from. Diane asked if grant funds could be used. Charles said if we don't need it for a few computers it would be less. Charles was asked to figure out what is needed and send this to the Board to be discussed at another meeting.
- Also mentioned was getting a professional email for the Town. Charles will send an email to all those with town issued computers asking if they want the Microsoft installation.

~ Security Cameras and PACIF Grant for the Town Garage: Jeff said he did a grant for security cameras and other items needed for the inside of the garage. The grant is for \$5439.10 and if approved PACIF will pay half that amount.

~ Donation and Change Order New Garage: Melissa Boutin said she wanted the Board to accept the donation for change order #14 for \$4600 for the two roofs on the back doors and rescind the motion. Rachael said a motion was not made because the Board decided to look into other options first.

Adam White motions to accept the donation from Jeff Parizo for the cost of \$4600 to be used for change order 14 for roofs on the exterior on the new town garage. Eric Godin seconds the motion. No further discussion. Diane Cota votes no. Jeff Parizo recuses, Eric Godin, AnnaMarie DeMars and Adam White vote in favor and the motion passes.

Adam White motions to pay change order 14 which is for \$4600 to be paid by the monetary donation from Jeff Parizo for change order 14. No further discussion. Eric Godin seconds the motion. Diane Cota votes no. Jeff Parizo recuses, Eric Godin, AnnaMarie DeMars and Adam White vote in favor and the motion passes.

~ Open Meeting Law Seminar: Adam reports he spoke with Catherine Demetrick the executive director of Northwest Regional Planning Commission to hold an open meeting law seminar and she replied she will be happy to host a meeting. Jeff would like to send information out to everyone in the Town of Grand Isle government to attend. AnnaMarie suggested inviting other towns so Adam will ask Catherine if other towns may attend and also let them know what day it will be.

~ Green-up Day: Jeff said after the comment on Front Porch Forum he feels we should allow green-up bags to be taken to the transfer station from now until May 6.

Adam White motions that the Grand Isle Transfer Station from now until May 6 accepts the green-up bags. Diane Cota seconds the motion. No further discussion. All vote in favor and the motion passes.

Notices will be placed in The Islander and on Front Porch Forum.

VI. REVIEW AND SIGN WARRANTS: Eric Godin moves to have Jeff Parizo sign warrants. AnnaMarie DeMars seconds the motion. No further discussion. All vote in favor and the motion passes.

Jeff said he is not going to read the information from the attorney rather he will email the information to the Selectboard.

VII. ADJOURNMENT: AnnaMarie DeMars motions to adjourn the meeting at 9:03PM. Eric Godin seconds the motion. No further discussion. All vote in favor and the motion passes.

Respectfully submitted,

Rachael Griggs, Selectboard Scribe

Jeff Parizo, Selectboard Chair

Date: _____

Date: _____

*Community Members Present:

Rachael Griggs, Sue Lawrence, Ron Bushway, Colleen Bushway, Randy Gover, Linda Effel, Mitchel Richardson, Mary Parizo, Bill Stone, Melissa Boutin, Joe Longo, Charles Hollon, Lucille Campbell, Ellie Paradee, Karen Allen Kristina Botala, Tonya Poutry, Mike Donoghue, Bill Baron, Bill Hall, Stacey Dumas, Dave Capen, Kenneth Mirvis, Ron Shappy, Al Crist, Jean Prouty, John Lafayette, Emily Clark, Dwight Bullis, Jerry Frank, John LaBarge and John Burke

*****Please note this meeting can be viewed on Lake Champlain Access TV*****

DRAFT

04-19-2021