

Grand Isle Select Board
Minutes of the Special Meeting
Monday, June 14th, 2021 at 6:00pm via Zoom

I. CALL TO ORDER

Board Members Present: Jeff Parizo – Chair; AnnaMarie Demars – Vice-Chair; Diane Cota; Adam White; Eric Godin

Community Members Present: Ron Bushway; Bill Stone; Joe Longo; Lucille Campbell; Linda Effel; Randy Gover; Jean Prouty; Melissa Boutin; Tonya Poutry; Stacy Dumas; Kristina Botala; Bianca Adams; Mary Parizo; Mike Donoghue; Mitchel Richardson; Mr. Picard; John Lafayette; Esther Blow; Mark Cobb

Board Members to Amend Agenda for Matters Not Listed:

II. GUEST OPEN COMMENT FOR MATTERS NOT LISTED

III. OLD BUSINESS

Request for Select Board Action/Audit RFP: Jeff Parizo says he has completed the audit RFP and sent it to the Board, along with a list of local auditing firms. Jeff asks if there are any questions. Diane Cota asks what item number 8 on the RFP was. Jeff says number 8 states that if the town were to hire a different auditor, they would have to work with the existing auditor so the new auditor can understand the steps the existing auditor has taken. Diane states that it sounds like this is the same kind of audit that we get done annually, and asks if we are questioning the results from our current auditor, and what the purpose of the RFP is. Jeff says the purpose is to have an audit over and above the annual audit going back three years. Diane says that years previous to the three mentioned had been brought up in the meeting. Bill Stone asks how many auditors will be sent the RFP. Jeff answers that there are six accounting firms on the list, and he doesn't see why it would hurt to send the RFP to all six. Bill then asks if there is a target timeline for this audit to completed and if there is budget. Jeff says he thinks it is prudent to ask the auditor what a good timeline would be, and says that the purpose of the RFP is to determine the cost. Bill asks if the board would be okay with any cost the auditing firms come back with, or if there would be another discussion. Both Jeff and Eric Godin state there would have to be further discussion once costs were obtained. Diane asks if we know how much is in the town's 'Rainy Day' fund, mentioning that we shouldn't be letting that fund drop down. Jeff says we don't know anything about costs at this point, and that the purpose of the RFP is to determine how much an audit will cost. Diane asks if any more specifics will be provided, saying she isn't sure what the RFP is looking for. Jeff states that if the auditing firms have clarifying questions, he will gladly answer them. Adam White asks if the current auditor, RHR Smith had any adverse findings in the three years being requested by this RFP. Diane and Jeff concur that they had not found any problems. Jeff states that the auditor had not attended any meetings to discuss the annual audit findings. Adam asks if any

members of the Board had asked the auditor to come into a meeting, which it is agreed upon that they had not. Diane says that he likely would have come if there had been a discrepancy found, and that now it looks like the Board is questioning his legitimacy and integrity by doing another audit. Jeff says that we have been discussing this for three months, and says none of these questions got brought up until the RFP was complete. Jeff expresses frustration that there seem to be new roadblocks every time a step forward is taken on this issue. AnnaMarie says this audit should have been done when the Town Clerk changed, but nobody else agreed. Adam points out that this RFP is not to change auditors, but to audit years that were already audited by the current auditor. Mitchel Richardson asks if HRH Smith was hired publicly by the board. Jeff answers that when the previous auditing firm, Angolano, got done, the Town Clerk had come to the board with the suggestion of RHR Smith, and the board agreed to hire RHR Smith. Mitchel says he doesn't feel that due diligence was done in regards to that decision. Jeff agrees that an RFP should have been sent out for an auditor at that time and that if he knew then what he knew now, he would have done things differently. Mitchel then says that it's a State Statute that the board hires the auditor, not the Treasurer. Jeff says that the board did approve the decision. Bill Stone asks what information Jeff has now that he didn't have then that would change his approach, and Jeff answers that what he has learned about how state statutes are listed, and what the expectations of the Treasurer and the Select Board are. Jeff says that the Board can either approve this RFP and see what's available, or do nothing, and let the Town circulate a petition for a special vote. He says either way, we will likely end up back in the same position. Diane says she feels the town should be involved, either way. Mitchel asks why there is reluctance to this, which will cost no money. Adam asks for a motion to be brought to the floor. **Jeff Parizo moves to approve the request for proposal for municipal audit services, to be sent to the six municipal auditing firms. AnnaMarie Demars seconds. Jeff calls the vote: Jeff, AnnaMarie Demars and Eric Godin vote Aye. Diane Cota and Adam White vote nay. Motion passes.** Bianca Adams asks for an explanation for the nay votes. Adam says that he was content with the annual audit that had been done. Diane says that she feels the current auditor is certified and trusted, and that there has been no allegations of wrongdoing brought forward, outside of the two statutes that were mentioned in the request for action. Diane further states that the Board took action on those two items, and says that she doesn't agree that this is the right path, and that our current auditor is going to be insulted, as we're checking his integrity. Bianca points out that sometimes auditors miss things. Joe Longo asks if this will hurt the borrowing power of the town. Jeff says he doesn't think sending out an RFP for an audit would hurt our borrowing ability. Ron Bushway says he doesn't feel we are questioning RHR Smith, but given the number of questions that have been raised recently, we should move forward on this issue and have the audit done. Jeff reiterates that the RFP is being sent out to gather information and cost estimates, and there will be further discussion about this issue when the bids come back in.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

AnnaMarie Demars moves to adjourn the meeting at 6:26pm. Jeff Parizo seconds. No discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.S