

Grand Isle Select Board
Minutes of the Meeting
May 17th, 2021 – 6pm 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; Adam White; Diane Cota; Eric Godin

Community Members Present: Randy Gover; Linda Effel; Mitchel Richardson; Charles Hollan; Todd Boutin; Rachael Griggs; Ron Bushway; Susan Lawrence; Buddy Meilleur; Esther Blow; Joe Longo; Lucille Campbell; Jean Prouty; Mary Parizo; Melissa Boutin; Shannon Bundy; Tonya Poutry; Barbara Patno; Mike Donoghue; Bill Stone; Emily Clark; John Lafayette; Mark Cobb Sr. and Bianca Adams

Jeff Parizo reminds people of the rules and procedures and asks for a civil meeting.

Select Board to Amend Agenda for Matters not Listed:

Jeff Parizo adds Highway Department Update and Building Facilities Manager Report
Adam White says he'd like to speak about scrap metal day, and it can fall under the Highway Department Update.

Eric Godin asks for an update on the federal stimulus money that had been discussed previously. Adam and Jeff indicate Emily Clark from the planning commission may have more information.

II. **HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT UPDATE**

Highway Commissioner Ron Bushway reports:

- Road Foreman Brad Sheridan has gotten coal patching for the town roads
- Highway Department is doing ditching and replacing culverts on East Shore North, just past Nichols Bay with the assistance of Randy Gover
- The Town's heavy equipment has been moved to the new Town Garage
 - Air compressor has been installed and plumbed
- Free Metal Day was a success, and busy all day
 - Three thirty-yard cans were packed
 - Adam White asks if it's feasible to have a second Free Metal Day at the end of the summer. Ron agrees and says **he'd** like it to happen before the summer residents leave.
- Permit for laying of pipes and wires will be left at the Town Office for Select Board Signatures

Building Facilities Manager Update:

Facilities Manager Ron Bushway Reports:

- Snake and wasp treatment has been done at the Town Office
- Fire panel at the Fire Department was serviced Thursday (May 13th)
 - Hegeman Electric is the company that installed the panel
 - Hegeman also installed the range hood in the Fire Department, and showed Ron how to access the fire extinguisher
- Ron has been communicating with Elaine Chasse about the closure of Learning Adventure at the Annex
 - Elaine has asked who the contact person would be regarding the utilities at the Annex

Jeff Parizo asks Ron if Saturday, August 14th would be a good date for a second Free Metal Day. Ron says he will check with the other employees to be sure of availability and get back to the Board at the next meeting.

III. GUESTS

Emily Clark – Planning Commission: The Planning Commission recognizes that without Learning Adventure, Grand Isle will be in need of childcare resources. Emily suggests checking with a realtor like Franz Rosenberger to find tenants looking for commercial property specifically for childcare. Adam White mentions the school is commissioning a study based on childcare and the need for pre-K in the community, and asks if Emily has reached out to Mike Inners of the school board. Emily says she has not, but that it is a good idea. Emily brings up that there may be the possibility of federal stimulus dollars that would include targeted funds towards care, whether for children or elderly. Emily says she thinks it would be great if childcare was part of the services offered by the school. Adam asks if the Planning Commission has considered putting the Annex on the open market for either rent or sale. Emily responds that this will be part of the discussion with the realtor. Adam asks Emily how Planning feels about continuing to rent the Annex, citing past correspondence with the town attorney indicating towns shouldn't be in the rental business. Emily says they haven't really discussed it, but the real estate market is hot. Adam says he is glad that the Planning Commission is looking at all the options. Adam asks about federal stimulus and if there was any new information. Emily says the first round of funding will be incredibly flexible, and says that there will likely be future, more tightly targeted funds dispersed. She mentions that we may not want to spend the more flexible first round money on classic infrastructure projects, as targeted infrastructure monies would likely be available later on. Emily says the amount of funding that would come to the town still isn't clear, citing The Islander showing a figure around \$650,000 while the spreadsheet from the state shows \$210,000. Adam asks if the town would get to decide how those funds were spent, which Emily confirms. Emily asks if Jeff Parizo concurs with her assessment, which he confirms. Jeff mentions he had heard that families were eligible for \$300 per month for childcare, and asks Emily if she knows what the financial criteria is to be

eligible. Jeff agrees with the plans for the Annex, suggesting that Franz first advertise the Annex as a daycare. Adam asks Emily to have Mr. Rosenberger look over the current rental agreement to see where it stands in relation to market value. Eric Godin says he would like to see the Annex remain as a childcare center. Emily says the surrounding communities would also likely take advantage of the services offered. Emily says she will contact Mike Inners. Jeff says he will contact Franz Rosenberger and include the Select Board in the email.

Fire Department Coin Drop Request:

Grand Isle Volunteer Fire Department Chief Todd Boutin says he has checked with VTRANS and Sheriff Ray Allen and they are okay with the coin drop. It will be held Saturday July 10th in front of St. Joseph's Church. Times will be 9am to 3pm. Todd says if it slows down or things gets too congested, they will shut the coin drop down. AnnaMarie Demars asks if there have been any problems with the Farmer's Market, to which Todd replies that he's heard both good and bad. Jeff Parizo asks if either entrance to the Farmer's Market is blocked, and Todd replies they are not. **Jeff moves that the Grand Isle Volunteer Fire Department coin drop request for Saturday, July 10th, from 9:00am until 3:00pm is approved. AnnaMarie Demars seconds. There is no discussion. Jeff calls the vote. All vote 'aye', with the exception of Adam White, who abstains.**

Grand Isle Listers – Request for extension to file Grand List/ Form 411:

Lister Susan Lawrence says the Listers will be asking for a 30-day extension with the State of Vermont for filing the Grand List. The usual date to file is June 4th. Susan says the delay is because there has been so much construction and so many transactions that they have had a hard time keeping up. Susan also says they are hindered by not being able to go into homes due to the pandemic. Susan says the letter is at the Town Office and requires the signature of Chair Jeff Parizo. **Adam White moves to approve the Grand Isle Lister's extension to file the Grand List to July 2nd, 2021. Diane Cota seconds. No discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.** Jeff says he will locate and sign the necessary form.

IV. **GUEST OPEN COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON AGENDA:** None

V. **REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES FROM MAY 3RD MEETING AND MAY 6TH SPECIAL MEETING:** **Adam White moves to approve the May 3rd meeting minutes. Diane Cota seconds. No discussion. Jeff Parizo calls the vote, which passes unanimously. Adam then moves to approve the May 6th, 2021 Select Board meeting minutes. AnnaMarie Demars seconds. No discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.**
Adam says he would like to continue the practice of including referenced documents at the end of the minutes, in the interests of transparency and ease of access.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

RFP – Town Insurance: Jeff Parizo states the amount budgeted annually for insurance for the town is \$41,000. Jeff says he would like to send out an RFP to see if we can find less costly options, or more comprehensive coverage at the same cost. Jeff says our current insurance company, PACIF, is self-insured, meaning if they go out of business, the entities they cover are liable for their debts. Jeff mentions that Milton had switched to Hickock and Boardman recently. Adam White agrees and says he feels that all town services should be put out to an RFP every 3 to 5 years. Adam also says to take into account the grants, trainings and on-site inspections the town received through PACIF when making comparisons. Susan Lawrence asked if all entities in the town were covered. Jeff says it will be a lot of work to gather all the information. AnnaMarie Demars says that she and Susan Lawrence had made a list the last time PACIF came down. Melissa Boutin says the list was submitted to the insurance company, and that everything was added. She also says there is a binder in the vault with all the buildings listed and the insurance company checks annually to see if there are any changes. AnnaMarie says that if any of the town departments acquire anything that should be insured, they should bring it to the Select Board so it can be added to the insurance policy. Adam White asks if the Worthen Farm building at the historical has been added. Jean Prouty says the building is insured by the Historical Society currently, and that was done because they were still adding items to the policy. Jean says the Historical Society are going to try to open July 4th weekend, from 11 to 4.

Open Meeting Law Training Session Review: Adam White reviews a few of the items covered during the open meeting training:

- Draft meeting minutes must be on the record. Draft minutes must be documented alongside Final versions so revisions can be seen.
- ‘Daisy chaining’, which is the practice of Board members calling individual board members discussing issues is discouraged. Any discussion needs to happen at a warned, open meeting.

Rachael Griggs says that she was unaware of the requirement to keep draft minutes, and there were probably several missing. Adam White says that the boards and departments are learning a lot about the open meeting laws in the state.

Contract for Grand Isle Sheriff’s Department: Melissa Boutin says the contract was for the amount approved in the budget for fiscal year 2022 and that the Board just needed to sign a copy for the Sheriff and a copy for the town. Board members agree to go to the Town Office and sign the contract.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

Town Signs: AnnaMarie Demars wants to replace the welcome signs at either end of the town. She would like have a contest for the design of the signs, with gift certificates as

prizes. Anna says the flower boxes were too difficult to maintain. AnnaMarie suggests also having a flag with a light next to the sign. Jeff agrees with Anna, and mentions that Karen McCloud had designed the sign for the Masonic Lodge. Both agree the saying 'Beauty Spot of Vermont' should stay. Diane mentions the flowers in one of the boxes had already been replanted this year. Adam White suggests putting a list of requirements together and presenting it to the community. AnnaMarie will spearhead the effort. Rachael suggests a small committee and volunteers to help. Shannon Bundy also says she can help.

Grant for Town Garage: Jeff Parizo says the grant is for cameras and a few other items inside the Garage. Jeff says they had to modify the grant a little bit due to additional items requested by the insurance company. Jeff says the total amount for the grant was \$3204.33, half of which will be paid for by a PACIF grant. The town must send in a copy of a detailed receipt and copy of the check used to pay it, then PACIF will review and send a check to the town. Jeff asks if the Board would like to move forward with the cameras. Adam asks if the monies paid by the town would come from the Highway fund, which Jeff confirms. ***Eric Godin moves to approve the installation of the cameras at the Town Garage, at a cost of \$3204.33 – with the town being reimbursed \$1602 and change from the grant. Diane Cota seconds. No discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.***

Face Masks in Town Office: Diane Cota asks that since the CDC guidelines have changed to allow fully vaccinated people to remove their masks, should the Board change the mask ordinance so people working in the office can remove their masks if vaccinated. Adam White suggests repealing the mask ordinance and issuing guidance to follow the State of Vermont and CDC guidelines. Jeff Parizo asks if this means the Town Office will be open again, as other places are opening up as well. Emily Clark says commercial spaces are opening up at different rates. There is then several minutes of discussion about how masking is handled at the different facilities within the town prior to the changes in CDC and State policy. Emily Clark expresses concern that moving simply to CDC and State guidelines but the burden of enforcement on small businesses and municipal employees. Ron Bushway says he believes the policy should change, but the masking signs should stay up and that employees can ask if people have been vaccinated. ***Diane Cota moves to rescind the motion (of June 1st, 2020) about requiring masks in town offices. AnnaMarie Demars seconds.*** Adam White says that part of the intent of the policy is to have the Select Board be responsible for the decision, rather than having the Town officers who interact with the public daily take the blame. Eric Godin says that trying to implement new policies could result in revisiting the issue every two weeks, as the guidelines keep changing. There is discussion about the level of protection the vaccine provides. Emily Clark again expresses concern that the responsibility for enforcement is being put on the employees. Emily says she has amended the sign in her business to say 'Mask required, unless fully vaccinated for two weeks'. Melissa Boutin says she likes the wording of that. Esther Blow expresses frustration that the Town Office was still closed. Jeff says that with this change in policy,

the Town Office should reopen. ***No Further Discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously. Adam White moves that the Town Offices adhere to the State guidelines for COVID restrictions, including mask wearing. Eric Godin seconds. No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.***

Old Fire Station Demolition: Jeff Parizo asks if the Board received his email regarding the demolition, and the Board acknowledges they have. Adam White asks what the difference between a foundation and no foundation removed. Jeff says leaving the slab would save the town \$3000. The bid to remove the fire station would be \$3200 if they left the slab, and \$6200 if they take it out. Diane Cota asks if there would be any repercussions to leaving the slab. Jeff suggests it could be used for parking, or an ice rink. Jeff says he consulted with Randy Gover about solutions. Todd Boutin says it's uncertain what is underneath the slab, and says there are rumors that there could be large chunks of concrete underneath the slab. Ron Bushway says that Bill Baron confirmed there is more concrete underneath, and suggests getting rid of the slab. Eric Godin asks if the possibility of more concrete will cost the town more money to get rid of. Jeff says he doesn't know the answer. Randy Gover says we either pay now or pay later, and the concrete is going to have to come out at some point. Jeff says that three bids that we received were Kings Trucking and excavation for \$29800, Goodhue was \$6200, Complete Demolition Services was \$53,695. Diane Cota asks if we have to disclose to the contractor about the extra concrete. Bill Stone says to be up front with the contractor, and ask them what the potential charges would be if there was extra debris to be removed. Adam asks where the money to pay for it was coming from, and Jeff says that has not been determined yet. Adam offers to work with the Treasurer to determine where the money would come from. The Board agrees.

Request for Select Board Action:

Jeff Parizo moves to have the Town do an in -depth audit for the last 3 years. AnnaMarie Demars seconds. Diane Cota asks why we aren't waiting for the answers from the auditor. Jeff says he's done talking about it and his mind is made up as far as what he feels the town needs to do. Adam White asks why the last three years, if the question is in regards to the time the current Treasurer has been in office, which is six years and then asks if people are going to ask for the remaining three years afterwards. Jeff says they might, but he thinks the Board should start at three years and see what is found. Jeff also mentions cost is a concern. Adam then asks for clarification as to what an 'in-depth' audit is, citing the multiple kinds of audits the Auditor Ron Smith had mentioned at the last Board meeting. Jeff answers an in-depth audit to look at everything and see where we need to be looking. Adam asks if we shouldn't wait to make a motion until we've heard back from the auditor. Jeff says he will not rescind his motion, saying that this has gone on long enough. Diane asks who will pay for the audit, and mentions that she thinks if there is a large cost, the town has to vote on it. Jeff says the Board has spent money without the town voting on it before, and that we don't know what the costs will be. Randy Gover says that he feels an in-depth audit would cost 10 to 15 thousand dollars, and if that turned anything up, then you would have to

do a forensic audit. Randy says he thinks the town should spend the money and doesn't understand what the hold up is. Jeff says people are hung up on the word 'forensic' and he was trying to word things differently so he could get estimates from auditors on what was available and costs. Eric Godin points out that even if this motion were to pass, we would still have to revisit this issue again to approve expenditures for whichever type of audit is decided upon. Ron Bushway asks what the town is paying for it's annual audit now. Jeff answers that the annual audit costs the town \$6,000. Ron says that in his view, \$6,000 isn't much money and says we must be getting a very small audit, pointing out that he isn't an auditor or a bookkeeper. Ron says he thinks we should get a more in-depth audit, and points out that state statute says that the Select Board hires the auditor. Ron then asks if the Board was planning on using the same auditor that has done the annual audits, and says he'd rather see a different auditor used. Jeff says he wants to see how this motion goes, and if it passes get quotes from three different auditors. Ron says he understands that people are worried about the costs and the word 'forensic', but as a property owner and taxpayer of the town he would like to see the audit happen to answer questions the towns people have and let the Board get on to other business. Adam says that asking for quotes for an 'in-depth' audit is like asking for quotes on a 'car', saying that the request is too vague. Adam says more specifics are needed. Ron asks if that means the Board should check out three different companies. Adam says we would get quotes from multiple companies, but need to have more specifics as to what types of audits the Board wants to have done. Randy Gover says a lot of town residents signed the petition, and he feels that the Select Board isn't working for those townspeople. Bill Stone says he is frustrated that during the special meeting we agreed to get some answers from the auditor and there need to be more parameters for what is being looked for. Bill asks if the questions from the auditor have been answered, to which Jeff replies they have not. Bill suggests we get the answers, and let our current auditor know that we are putting out an RFP for other auditors. Joe Longo asks how many people submitted questions to the Board. Jeff says three people, with about six questions. A heated debate ensued about whether the term 'missing monies' had been used and by whom. Mitchel Richardson says this isn't a new issue and there is further discussion about events in 2012 and 2015 involving the Board having difficulty getting requested reports. Ron says that when he was chair of the Board in 2012, he was having difficulty getting financials from town Treasurer Cheryl Titus, and said Ms. Titus told Ron she had been locked out of the computers by Melissa Boutin. Melissa says that is completely false. Bianca Adams says she agrees with the motion, and says she would like to have the receipts and payouts, and the transfers of funds analyzed but doesn't know what kind of audit that would be. Bianca says she would like to find out where things stand. Adam White says we have to be specific about what we're looking for, and once we have the information, we can move to put out bids for the type of audit we want. Eric says that no matter which way the motion on the floor goes, the Board will have to come back to the issue once more information is obtained. Joe Longo states the auditor Ron Smith had pointedly asked what we were looking for and says he hasn't heard any answers to that question. Jeff says that he would like to get a second set of eyes the town's books. Jeff also says the purpose of the motion on the

floor was to allow the Board to put out feelers with accounting firms to find out what was available and what kind of costs we would be looking at without sending an official RFP. Jeff acknowledges we would need another motion, but says he doesn't want to keep kicking the can down the road. Jeff says he is fielding a lot of phone calls from town residents who feel their questions aren't being addressed, and that it is stressful. Bill Stone says that the Board will be opening itself up to a lot of criticism if the Board doesn't do this well. Jeff agrees, and says the blame would be on him. Joe Longo states that Jeff isn't the board, and reiterates his question as to what we're looking for. Jeff says that he doesn't feel comfortable with the current auditor. Joe asks what the board thinks. Diane says she disagrees with Jeff. Eric says that he doesn't see any reason to distrust the auditor, but doesn't have a problem having another set of eyes look at the books. Charles Hollan says getting answers first would be the smartest thing to do, and then states he doesn't think that Melissa could intentionally lock anyone out of their computer. Mitchel Richardson says he doesn't understand the resistance to having a different auditor. Eric points out that if the Board is going to move forward with an audit, they would be putting out an RFP as a matter of course, as that is just good business. Mitchel points out that the board had already stated they weren't sure where they stood with funds. Joe Longo says the town report tells us where we stand, and that is backed by the auditor. Eric says that may be true, but there are still questions to be addressed. Jeff points out the town report is also eight months old. Adam White asks if the motion on the floor is to talk to firms or to 'get an in-depth audit.' Jeff confirms that the motion is to 'get an in-depth audit' to look at all the books. Adam says that would be a forensic audit. Jeff says Adam can call it that if he wants, but he wants an in-depth audit. Jeff says that to his knowledge, a forensic audit targets a specific thing where wrongdoing is suspected, and what he wants is for everything to be looked at, including receivables, expendables and CD's. Adam says that his issue with the motion on the floor is that it's too broad: That if the Board goes to an auditor and says 'I want an audit', the auditor is going to want to know what kind of audit they are looking for. Jeff reiterates that everything needs to be looked at. Ron Bushway asks if 'an in-depth audit' would look at all departments, and says he thinks that's the way we should go. Ron also says, in regards to the Treasurer being locked out of the computer that he was told a passcode had been installed. Esther Blow says there are nine kinds of audits: Internal, External, IRS tax, financial, operational, compliance, information systems, payroll and pay. Bill Stone recommends Jeff put into writing the specific things he was concerned about, and says it sounds like it's a combination of audits. Bill says if the Board puts those things together, and we have the basis of an RFP, and should be a part of the motion. Adam White points out that one of the questions asked of the auditor was what each type of audit looked at, and says the Board is trying to get answers for the questions being asked. Jeff says he's concerned that narrowly targeting an audit could miss things, and lists several different things within the town he would like to have checked. Eric says that he's not comfortable with an all-encompassing open ended motion, without knowing what it could cost, and feels that the Board should figure out which types of audits are necessary and make a more specific motion. Jeff says he just wants to make sure that everything gets looked at. Eric says that he understands, and

thinks the best way to proceed is to decide which combination of audits would cover what Jeff wants looked at, and have a motion specifically mentioning those audits. Eric also says he feels that more information is needed before that can be done. Jeff says the answers to the auditor's questions should be done early this week. Eric says he would be fine with having another special meeting once the auditor's questions come in to try and resolve things as quickly as possible. **Jeff Parizo rescinds the motion on the floor.** Jeff says he will do his research and come back to the table with more information.

VIII. REVIEW AND SIGN WARRANTS

Jeff Parizo asks the town treasurer if the town is being reimbursed the \$3,000 that was paid out for improvements to the pickleball court. Melissa says the recreation department made a motion to give that money to the pickleball association. Adam says the money was for court improvements, and was not a donation. **AnnaMarie Demars moves that the Board allow Jeff Parizo to sign the warrants via email. Eric Godin seconds. No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.**

XI. ADJOURNMENT

AnnaMarie Demars moves to adjourn the meeting at 8:10pm. Adam White seconds. No Discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.