

Grand Isle Select Board
Minutes of the Meeting
for Monday, January 3rd, 2022 at Grand Isle Town Office and via Zoom

I. CALL TO ORDER

Board Members Present: Jeff Parizo – Chair; AnnaMarie DeMars – Vice-Chair; Ron Bushway; Adam White; Eric Godin

Community Members Present: Colleen Bushway; Josie Leavitt; Lucille Campbell; Randy Gover; Linda Effel; Joe Steffan; Emily Clark; Joe Longo; Jennifer Morway; Susan Lawrence; Melissa Boutin; John Lafayette; Jean Prouty; Kristina Botala

Board Members to Amend Agenda for Matters Not Listed:

Adam asks for the ‘Vaccine Sites’ item under New Business to be corrected to read ‘COVID testing sites’

II. GUEST OPEN COMMENT

III. REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 6TH AND DECEMBER 20TH

Adam White moves to approve the minutes of December 6th, 2021. AnnaMarie DeMars seconds. No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.

Adam White moves to approve the December 20th, 2021 meeting minutes. Ron Bushway seconds. No discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.

IV. HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT / BUILDING FACILITIES MANAGER UPDATE

Ron says that power at the old garage has been turned off, and the lines have been removed. Ron says that there was also a light on top of one of the poles that was removed. Ron says that he is in touch with Duane Cormier about generator quotes for the town garage and for the town garage, which will be the second of the 3 quotes. Ron says that Howard DeMars hasn’t gotten the quote for the Annex furnace supplies yet, but that it will be forthcoming. Ron says that himself and Jennifer Morway met with another potential renter for the Annex building, and he will let the planning commission talk about it. Ron says that there was a question about the new garage being used as an emergency shelter for the Annex. Jeff Parizo says he doesn’t see why not.

Town Loader: Ron says that the town’s bucket loader’s hydraulic valve bank blew out. Ron goes on to say that nobody wants to give a quote to repair a 20-year-old machine, as generally leads to large costs and replacing the loader would be the better option. Ron says that in the current market, a loader of that age in working condition is worth about \$20,000. Adam White asks Ron what year the current loader is. Ron says that it is a 2000 model. Adam asks how many hours are on the loader. Ron says there are 7100 hours on the loader, currently. Ron says that it is a necessary piece of equipment, as it is used to load salt and sand into the trucks during winter storms, as well as used at the transfer station frequently. Ron says that the highway department has rented a Volvo bucket loader, at a cost of \$4,000

per month to use while the town finds a workable solution to the problem. Ron says that the best option is to buy a new loader, and he has gotten 3 quotes on machines to present to the board. The first quote discussed is from Volvo. Ron points out that there isn't a lot of specifications given, but a 2022 L70 would cost \$179,900, which would come with an extended warranty for 84 months or 3500 hours. The dealer would offer \$22,000 in trade for the current loader, but the town would have to repair it to working condition. The second quote is from Beaugard. This quote is for \$190,000 bottom line price. Ron says that in talking to Randy Gover, and looking at the Volvo loader that has been rented, he feels that it is larger than the town needs. Ron says that Brad Sheridan also priced out a John Deere 544B model. The town's current loader is a John Deere 544H, but is 20 years old. Ron says that he contacted the John Deere dealer to ask about the price and was told it would be \$171,000, which is the lowest of the three. Ron goes on to say that he was told by the dealer the town could have the new loader within two weeks, which is much sooner than the other two dealers. Ron then says that in talking to the dealer, they determined that the 524 model would be more comparable to the loader the town has been using, and costs \$20,000 less than the other model. Ron says that there are currently two 524 models available, one with 7 hours on it located in New York and the other has 66 hours and is located in Maine. Ron says that he doesn't feel a decision should be made tonight, as he thinks the new loader should be tested out before it is agreed to purchase it. Adam White asks if the other two dealers were asked if they had smaller models we could try. Ron says that he has not, but feels that based on the pricing models based in the current quotes, the other dealers would be more expensive. Adam asks if the John Deere price would include delivery. Ron answers that he feels it does, as the dealer is planning on moving the machine to Vermont regardless. Ron says that rather than have the decision be made unilaterally, he wants to form a small committee including Randy Gover and Shaun Mercy of the planning commission to discuss and decide what to do. Adam agrees and says he feels that it's good to have several different voices speaking to the issue. Adam asks that when a proposal comes to the Select Board, if a plan for payment for the loader could be included. Ron agrees. Jeff asks if Ron could have a proposal for the next meeting. Ron says that he can, and indicates that there has been an offer from a private buyer for \$22,000 for the town loader as it sits. Ron asks if he should put the old loader out to bid. Jeff says he thinks we should put the loader out to bid, as he would rather have cash in hand when we go to get a new loader. Jeff also points out that the town would have to pay to fix the loader before a dealer would give us \$20,000 for it.

Road Commissioner and Building Facilities term Expires: Jeff Parizo says that Ron Bushway's term as Road Commissioner and Building Facilities manager expired on December 31st. Jeff says that it is for a 3-year term. Eric Godin says the normal procedure would be to note the position expiring ahead of time, post the position for letters of interest and then appoint after the letters had been received, but the Board had failed to notice the expiration of the term. ***Jeff Parizo moves to appoint Ron Bushway to the position of Road Commissioner and Building Facilities Manager for another 3-year term. AnnaMarie DeMars seconds.*** Eric asks if there is any guidance from the state for a town in this position, as this feels like the entire letters of interest policy is being circumvented. Adam White points out that three members of the current Select Board overturned a policy requiring

boards to request letters of interest before appointing someone for a position. Eric points out that this is an issue that needs to be on the Board's radar. Eric says that he is aware of the policy in question, and that he has argued against just rubber stamping the same people into appointed positions multiple times, but have been overridden every time. There is discussion about implementing a policy to ensure that letters of interest are sent out and how it would impact currently appointed people. It is determined that the Board needs to have a better handle on it's policies and practices. Jeff asks Ron if he would be willing to continue to serve without a guaranteed term until the policy can be looked at. Ron agrees. It is decided to discuss this at the next meeting.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Covid Testing Sites: Adam White says that he noticed that there are no testing sites in Grand Isle County at all. Adam says he reached out to State reps Morgan and Morgan to ask about a health department contact. Adam says that he was contacted by the health department at 9:00pm on the 28th saying they had a site for 150 PCR tests at the school from 9am to noon the next day. Adam says that the health department said they were having trouble finding a site to use for testing. Adam says he reached out to the Sheriff and the chief of the fire department and sent their availability to the health department. Jeff Parizo voices frustration that Grand Isle County gets left behind again.

Town Restricted Funds Review: Jeff says that Adam White had provided the board with fund balances dated June 30th, 2021, which is the close of the last fiscal year. Adam says that the fire department balance was corrected, as previously discussed. Jeff says that quarter 2 ended December 31st, so updated numbers should be available by January 31st. Adam says that there were two unexpected large legal bills. There is no further discussion.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

Scribe Position Update: Eric Godin says he has an ad drafted but hasn't had a chance to send anything out. Eric indicates the issue is slightly less critical as his workload is decreasing. Eric says that he still wants to send the ad out, as he feels the scribe position should be filled by someone not on the Select Board. Jeff says that he would like to have a conversation about altering the scribe position to more of an administrative assistant position to help alleviate the load on the Select Board members. There is discussion about the workloads of elected officials and ways to streamline the process.

Budgets: Adam White says that the listers budget needs to be discussed. Melissa Boutin hands a letter to Board from the Grand Isle Volunteer Fire Department. The letter says that the fire department is requesting \$75,000 for fiscal year 2023. The letter says that for fiscal year 2022, the town appropriation was \$67,156 and FY 21 was \$65,500, while the fire departments expenditures were \$84,719, and that donations made up the difference. Jeff goes on to say that the FY 23 budget monies would be used for equipment testing and for recruitment efforts. AnnaMarie DeMars asks why the fire department doesn't submit a line-by-line budget like the other departments. Eric Godin says that he thinks GIVFD operates the same way that Grand Isle Rescue does, as an independent organization. Adam confirms this. ***Jeff Parizo moves to accept the fire department request for \$75,000 for fiscal year 2023. Eric Godin seconds. No further discussion. Motion passes with 4 ayes, with Adam***

White abstaining as a member of Grand Isle Volunteer Fire Department.

It is determined that the DRB, the Listers, and the general town office budget were left to look at and approve. Adam says that he had a discussion with the listers about the town reappraisal amount. Adam points out that any funds in the listers budget that aren't used are put back into the town general fund. Adam says that there were two options for town-wide reappraisal, with one option to do the whole town in one year, or to go with the option that South Hero uses, which is to appraise one quarter of the town each year for four years, and on the fifth year, all the data is compiled and a reappraisal report is issued. Adam says that the listers are planning to use the second method. Adam says that the reappraisal reserve fund stands at \$136,000, which would cover the 5-year re-appraisal costs in full. Adam says that the \$24,000 reappraisal item would be removed, and salaries would be increased to \$35,000, which makes the total budget \$59,305, but with the understanding that the Board and the listers would get together and really hash out the specifics of doing a reappraisal. Adam says that the town is at a point right now where we need to make a decision to start the five-year process or schedule a reappraisal in the next few years. There is further discussion about the various differences between the two reappraisal ideas. Sue Lawrence says that another problem we will face is finding someone to perform the reappraisal, as there are very few people available. There is further discussion about how properties are assessed and how market sales affect the town's CLA, which has an impact on town property taxes. Sue points out that there hasn't been a town wide reappraisal since 2008, which means new houses built are assessed at 2008 schedules, which causes problems. ***Adam White moves to approve the Lister budget for \$59,305. Jeff Parizo seconds. No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.*** Adam White says the town clerk budget, the general budget, the sheriff and the county still need to be looked at.

VII. REVIEW AND APPROVE WARRANTS

Eric Godin moves to have Jeff Parizo sign the warrants. AnnaMarie DeMars seconds. No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

AnnaMarie DeMars moves to adjourn the meeting at 7:14pm. Ron Bushway seconds. No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.