

**Grand Isle Select Board**  
**Meeting Minutes for**  
**Monday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at Grand Isle Town Office and via Zoom**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**Community Members Present:** Linda Effel; Randy Gover; Jean Prouty; Ray Allen; Colleen Bushway; Lucille Campbell; Josie Leavitt; Joe Longo; Joe Steffen; Melissa Boutin; Beth Deimling; Charles Hollan; Jen Morway; Emily Clark; Panos Lekkas; Mike Donoghue; Doug DiSabito; Marie Prescott; Elise Whittemore;

**Board Members to Amend Agenda for Matters Not Listed:**

Ron asks to move the generator quote discussion to the next meeting.

Adam asks to remove the duplicate 'COVID testing sites'

Jeff moves the Bill and Char Kennedy letter to 'Guests'

Eric moves the review and approve minutes to the next meeting

**II. GUEST OPEN COMMENT**

**Bill and Char Kennedy Letter** – Sheriff Ray Allen: AnnaMarie DeMars reads a copy of a letter received from Bill and Charlotte Kennedy, requesting that the speed limits on the town roads be reduced, and mentioning that there is no sidewalk on US Route 2. The letter references the large number of new homes that have gone up on Pearl Street, which has led to an increase in foot traffic. The Kennedy's letter indicates that they feel that 30 miles per hour would be a much more acceptable speed limit. AnnaMarie says that she has been working on this issue for quite some time, and that a traffic study must be completed before the speed limits can be changed. AnnaMarie explains that Northwest Regional Planning will conduct the traffic study at no cost to the town, and they will be updating the town shortly on the progress on the study. Adam White says that AnnaMarie has worked very hard on this issue, and work had to be paused in 2020 due to the pandemic. Jeff Parizo says that he feels that all town roads should be set at 35mph, unless the road is already posted lower than that. Ron says that money for new signs should be budgeted for the upcoming year. Grand Isle County Sheriff Ray Allen says that the county is over 4 years without a fatality on the roads. Ray says that if a road is not legally posted, the speed limit is 50mph. Ray says that they generally start pulling people over at 10-15 miles per hour over the limit, and that he feels that the residential areas in town should have a speed limit of 30mph. Jeff asks about enforcement, asking if the Sheriff's department will need time to put patrols in place once the speed limits change.

Beth Deimling asks about openings on town committees and how they are advertised.

Jeff Parizo says that there are two Select Board positions becoming up for election and a petition needs to be submitted by January 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm. Eric Godin says that the general practice is for the committees with appointed positions is to advertise the

position is becoming open and let people submit letters of interest, from which a new appointee is selected. It is determined that the library, listers, and cemetery commission would all have positions coming open for the next election.

**Doug DiSabito – Courthouse Update:** Grand Isle States Attorney Doug DiSabito updates the board on his recent communications with the state government regarding the situation with the Grand Isle County Courthouse. Doug says that he was invited by state senator Cory Parent to testify before the Senate Institutions committee regarding what is going on with our county's courthouse during the COVID pandemic. Doug says that this committee handles the 'brick and mortar' operations of the courthouse. Doug goes on to describe the current staffing conditions and access conditions to the courthouse, listing a few examples of cases being dropped or forgotten due to the staffing shortages. Doug says that he feels the biggest issue at this point is the HVAC system in the building not being up to standard for COVID measures. Doug says that estimates have been contracted, but not received as of yet. There is further discussion about the discussions taking place with the judiciary and the impact on individuals who need the justice system. Doug says that the issues still persist, but that he feels that things are starting to move in the right direction.

#### **HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT / BUILDING FACILITIES MANAGER UPDATE**

Ron Bushway says that the furnace parts and service for the Annex are on hold, because the replacement parts have gotten so expensive that it is better to just buy a new pump at \$1300, as opposed to paying over \$2000 to get parts for the existing one. Ron says that they will wait until spring to replace the furnace parts. Ron confirms that the Annex is still being heated to 55 degrees. Ron says that with the winter watchman installed at the Annex, he doesn't think there is a risk of the system freezing, so waiting to perform the service will work. Ron says that he showed the Annex to another potential daycare tenant for the Annex. Ron says that the highway crew has been busy due to the snow and high winds.

**Loader Update:** Ron says that his task force did a lot of research into buying a new loader and got three quotes from 3 different dealers. Ron says that there was unanimous agreement among the task force members to purchase the Volvo loader, with the dealer allowing us to keep the rented loader at no cost until deliver of the new loader. The Volvo dealer is willing to give the town \$20,000 in trade for our current loader as is, where all the other quotes wanted the town to fix the loader before they would offer any trade. The quotes are as follows: The John Deere loaders are a year old and have hours on them already. Ron says that he feels the John Deere loaders are underpowered. Ron says the cost of the Volvo would be \$134,300 after trade. The Case loader would cost \$129,825. Ron points out that if we buy the Case, we would still be on the hook for the \$4,000 rental fee for the loader we have been using. Ron says that the Volvo has a longer wheelbase and is more powerful. Ron says that the consensus is to spend \$134,300 for the Volvo loader. Adam White asks where the funding for the purchase will come from, noting that there is money set aside in the highway budget and in the capital equipment fund. Ron says that they have not come up with a solid plan for the allocation of funds. There is general discussion about different places the

money could come from. Melissa Boutin says that the Capitol Equipment fund stands at \$109,000 and change, and the reserve fund is at \$248,000. Jeff suggests paying \$100,000 from the capitol equipment fund to pay. Randy Gover, a member of the committee to choose the loader says that the Volvo was the best machine for the town. Eric Godin asks if the capitol equipment fund should be depleted by that much. Adam White suggests having more money come from the highway reserve fund. There is discussion about how the capitol equipment fund will be used and how to allocate funds. It is confirmed that the town would rather buy the loader outright, rather than finance any part of it, to avoid interest payments. Adam suggests taking \$50,000 from the capitol budget fund, and \$84,300 from the highway department reserve, saying that it would leave a good amount in the capitol equipment fund and still leave room in the highway department budget. Town Treasurer Melissa Boutin says that as of June 30<sup>th</sup>, another \$30,000 will be added to the capitol equipment fund for FY22. ***Adam White moves for the town to purchase through CR Woods a 2022 L60H Volvo Loader, trade in of the current John Deere 544 loader at \$22,000, adding in a purchase of forks for \$5,900 which brings the total purchase price to \$134,300, with the \$50,000 coming from the capitol equipment fund and \$84,300 from the Highway Fund balance. Eric Godin seconds. No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.***

**Highway Commissioner / Building Manager Appointment:** Jeff says that per the town policy, a person must be nominated after the position has been posted in three places in the town. Adam White says that he wants to re-clarify the policy, and that any position with a stipend should be posted at the end of the term. Adam agrees to look at the policy and suggest some changes. ***Jeff Parizo moves to appoint Ron Bushway as Highway Commissioner and Building Manager for a term of 3 years. AnnaMarie DeMars seconds. No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously with Ron Bushway recusing himself from the discussion.***

### III. NEW BUSINESS

**IT – Charles request to address the Board:** Grand Isle IT officer Charles Hollan addressed the Select Board concerning his position within the town. Charles says that he is worried about how training is being conducted, as he has not been kept in the loop. Charles says that he can make training materials to help people learn how to update the website, but there does have to be consistency in the training and use of the town's digital infrastructure. Charles says that with the new job that he has taken, he will not have time to host Zoom meetings, and asks that the town move forward with training individuals on DRB and other boards to host their own meetings. Charles says that he would like to see more communication from the boards and committees if he is to continue in the position. Eric Godin says he knows that the town would not be able to find IT support for less than what is currently being paid, and thanks Charles for all his work. Charles says that he just wants to make sure that people who have access to alter the websites are trained properly so that they don't accidentally change something in the website that can't be fixed. There is general discussion about what aspects of the website users can alter and what Charles has control over. Charles says that there had been some security concerns since his last update, but the town's digital infrastructure

is at low risk and is protected. Adam White asks Charles if he could update his scope of work for the Board to make sure that he isn't being pushed into doing work outside the scope of his position. Charles agrees. There is discussion about website permissions and how to handle security and stability of the town's digital infrastructure. There is further discussion about training and budgets in regards to any changes to IT policy. It is agreed to have Charles back for the first meeting in February to revisit the issue.

**Laptop Computer – Fire District 4:** Jeff Parizo states that town IT officer Charles Hollan received a letter from Fire District 4, requesting the use of one of the town laptops and a town email address. It is determined that Fire District 4 is not affiliated with the town of Grand Isle, but provide a service to the townspeople. It is decided that the town laptops should be restricted in use to town boards and committees.

**New Laws – Covid Testing and Town Meeting:** Adam White says that there are two bills before the governor to ease some of the open meeting law rules for municipal boards. Adam summarizes the laws to say that a physical location was not needed for public meetings, and changes to the process to getting on the ballot. Adam goes on to say another part of the legislation is to allow individual towns to count the consolidated school ballots, rather than having them all sent to the location where the school board clerk is, saving time for municipal officers. Adam goes on to speak about possible COVID testing sites within Grand Isle, as there is not a testing site within the county. Adam says that there are still hurdles involving staffing a testing site, and contracting with a private company, who have been unresponsive thus far. Jeff points out that tests are in high demand, and that the state had given out over 250,000 tests recently. Adam says he will be in touch with the Health Department and will have updates at a future meeting. Adam says that Town Meeting would normally happen the first Tuesday in March. There is discussion about having the town meeting in person and on Zoom. AnnaMarie DeMars suggests having town meeting at the Town Garage, as there is a lot of room. Melissa Boutin points out that the same discussion happened last year, and there were concerns about using the garage due to the plows coming and going. Colleen Bushway asks if the school can be used. Jeff Parizo asks if the Board would have to hire a sanitation company to clean the area when town meeting is finished. Adam agrees to reach out to the school about using the facility. Adam says he will also follow up with the Sheriff's station about using his conference room about town meeting.

#### **IV. OLD BUSINESS**

**Mask Mandate Discussion:** Eric Godin says that the COVID numbers in the county are ticking up, and he noticed that the local supermarket had put up a sign saying face coverings strongly recommended. Jen Morway asks if any businesses had requested the town put a mandate in place. Eric says that Ron Bushway had spoken with the owners of Emmons, and was told if the town put a mandate in place, the town would have to have someone there to enforce it, because they would not. Emily Clark says that she feels a mask mandate would keep the blame for a mandate on the municipal body, rather than the business owner. The Board agrees to continue discussion at a future meeting.

**Budgets:** Jeff points out that the Annex budget still shows revenue, despite the fact that

there is no tenant. There is discussion as to whether the revenue should be left in the budget, in anticipation of a new tenant, or to clear the revenue. Jen Morway says that she is pretty sure that there is interest in the Annex. Adam White asks if the town will have to subsidize a daycare that moves into the Annex. Jen says she hasn't had that conversation with potential tenants as of yet. Adam says he doesn't feel that the town should have to subsidize a business further than the town already has. Jeff Parizo says that the services provided to the town could be worth subsidizing initially. Adam says that he is concerned, as the Annex building has no revenue, and a great deal of time is being spent searching for a daycare, when the building could possibly be rented to someone with a different use and provide revenue for the town. There is discussion about the future of a daycare in the Annex. Jeff says that the continuing discussion about the Annex can take place during the January 31<sup>st</sup> joint meeting. The Board decides to set the revenue for the Annex to \$0, as there is no definite tenant at this time. Jeff asks if the projected town office revenues are attainable. Melissa Boutin says that due to the increase in building in the town, she thinks the number is realistic. Melissa says that PILOT program revenue listed in the general budget can be increased to \$3900. It is agreed to raise the current use number up to \$45,000. There is further discussion about the various budget items. Jeff asks about the lack of any information under the 'hyde log cabin' line item. Melissa explains that this was done at the request of the historical society. **Jeff Parizo moves to increase the capitol equipment fund reserve to \$50,000 annually. Eric Godin seconds. No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.** Melissa Boutin brings up the question of the IT budget, given the ongoing discussion. Eric says that he doesn't feel that the IT budgets should be cleared yet until such time as the current IT situation has been resolved. The Board agrees. There is discussion about the town reappraisal fund, but no changes are made to the lister's budget. Melissa says that there has been no discussion as to the Sheriff's budget. Jeff says that he's pretty sure there is nothing that can be done about the sheriff's budget, given the staffing shortage the department is facing. Adam says that the town should be asking questions about the financial numbers provided by the Sheriff. **Adam White moves to approve the FY23 DRB budget at \$34,954. Jeff Parizo seconds. No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously. Jeff Parizo moves to approve the general town budget of \$464,952 for fiscal year 2023. Eric Godin seconds. No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously. Jeff Parizo moves to approve the Town Clerk budget of \$128,763 for FY23. Eric Godin seconds.** Adam asks Melissa Boutin if there is any additional training they would like to attend. Melissa says no. **Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.** Melissa brings up that with the tax adjustments recently made from the school, the homestead rate is now going to be higher than the residential rate. **Fiberworx Update:** Adam White summarizes the presentation given by Fiberworx during a previous select board meeting. Adam says that there is no financial obligation from the town to join, but the Select Board needs to make two motions authorizing to join and to appoint a representative. **Adam White moves that the legislative body of the municipality of Grand Isle hereby approve the creation of the Northwest Vermont Communication Union District and it's qualifications as a communication union district**

*under the provisions of 30 VSA Cp. 82. Eric Godin seconds. No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.*

**V. REVIEW AND APPROVE WARRANTS**

*Ron Bushway moves to have Chair Jeff Parizo sign the warrants. AnnaMarie DeMars seconds. No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.*

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

*AnnaMarie DeMars moves to adjourn the meeting at 8:48pm. Ron Bushway seconds. No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.*

Select Board Scribe: \_\_\_\_\_  
Eric Godin

Select Board Chair: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jeff Parizo

