

Grand Isle Select Board Meeting Minutes for Monday, June 6th, 2022 06:00 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

Board Members Present: Josie Leavitt (vice chair), Jeff Parizo, Adam White (chair), Couper Shaw

Community Members Present: Colleen Bushway, Rachael Griggs, Diane Cota, Mike Donoghue, Ron Bushway, Suzanne Moquin, Joe Longo, Mary Parizo, Esther Blow, Lucille Campbell, Emily Clark, Mitchel Richardson, Susan Lawrence, Kent Henderson, Lesa, Kristina Botala, Glenda Leake, Bianca Adams, KC Fantoni, Jeanne, Shannon Bundy, Ellie Parody, Bill Stone, Linda Ethel, Randy Gover, Jean Prouty

Board Members to Amend Agenda for Matters Not Listed:

Josie: Food shelf to be added to Grand Isle website

Jeff: Discussion about VLCT internal controls

Adam: Road Survey

II. GUEST OPEN COMMENT

Add agenda items: Ron: Highway letter of intent (VTRANS)

Esther: Marks on Adams School Road (tire)

III. REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES

Adam makes a motion to approve the May 16th 2022 Select Board minutes, Jeff seconds. No discussion. All board members in favor. Jeff Parizo, Couper Shaw, Adam White, and Josie Leavitt approve. The motion passes.

May 26th 2022 minutes to be pushed back with 2 board members abstaining.

IV. HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT / BUILDING FACILITIES MANAGER UPDATE

1. Letter of intent for VTRANS due June 24th needs to be signed by select board for road upgrade grants. Need to get SAMS number to complete form, working with federal government to obtain, the town office address initially entered as a P.O. box and needs to be corrected.
2. Free Metal Day: 30-yard containers filled x 3. (Better than last August only filled 2). Rusty Fire Dept. trailer frame has been removed.
3. Road Crew has been brush cutting for 2 weeks, this will be the last week. Roadside mowing will start next week.
4. Signs were delivered to the private property owners whose land is next to the town beach to post.

5. Discarded tires left on corner of Donaldson and East Shore South (6).
6. Fire Marshall inspected Annex for Carol Egan's license:
 - a. 2 outlets and ceiling fixtures were not grounded, Cormier fixed.
 - b. Furnace missing servicing tags for last year, will accept invoice in lieu of tag.
 - c. Locksmith changed emergency door lock facing Highway 314- key was missing.

47 Adams School Road has black tire marks out front. Jeff will speak with homeowners.

Adam makes a motion to sign the letter of intent to participate in the SFY 2023 Municipal Roads Grant and Aide Program. Josie seconds. No discussion. All board members in favor. Jeff Parizo, Couper Shaw, Adam White, and Josie Leavitt approve. The motion passes.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Friends of Northern Lake Champlain Bike Tour Saturday, June 18th, 300 participants with varying start times. Kent shares that this is the 11th year, over 250 people have signed up. Maps will be accessible to participants on phones, safety is the main concern.

Diane asked if the sheriff will be involved. Kent informed her staff is low, and the sheriffs department will be unable to help.

Racheal asked if the participants will be wearing bibs? Kent answered no. Adam explained another bike tour uses bibs for identification when issues with cyclists arise. Kent stated previous tours have not had this issue and it has never been brought to his attention.

Jean asked if Route 2 will have large groups of cyclists at the same time. There won't be a mass start, groups of 6 to 12 at time. Participants are being asked to follow the law of no more than 2 cyclists abreast.

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/23/013/01139#:~:text=Persons%20riding%20two%20abreast%20shall,ride%20within%20a%20single%20lane.>

Ellie described the tour as a low-key ride, good crowd, most cyclists abide by laws and are experienced. Glenda agreed stating it is not a race, she has participated previously, it is fun and well organized.

Adam stated Permit was submitted to the town \$10 was paid, map was provided. No additional questions.

Liquor License for Sunset Vista Enterprises

Adam makes a motion to approve the 2022 Liquor License Renewal Application for Outside Consumption Permit for Sunset Vista Enterprises, LLC. Jeff seconds. No discussion. All board members in favor. Jeff Parizo, Couper Shaw, Adam White, and Josie Leavitt approve. The motion passes.

Animal Control License Warrant Trevor Boutin (town constable/animal control officer) to contact dog owners who have registered their dogs previously and remind them to register this year.

Jeff makes a motion to approve the warrant of the town constable. Josie seconds. No discussion. All board members in favor. Jeff Parizo, Couper Shaw, Adam White, and Josie Leavitt approve. The motion passes.

Sheriff's Contract For FY 2023 starting July 1st. \$151,424.00 for period of contract which is about 52 hours/week at hourly rates. With 3.5 deputies, getting 120 to 140 hours monthly (30-40 hours per week).

Jeff makes a motion set the sheriff contract for the year 2023. Josie seconds. No discussion. All board members in favor. Jeff Parizo, Couper Shaw, Adam White, and Josie Leavitt approve. The motion passes.

Concern was addressed that publicly sharing the information about the reduction in sheriff's staff could encourage crime. The sheriff has been quoted in the Islander, this information is public.

VELCO Street Lights 3 street lights fall under municipality: 1 on Hyde Road, 1 on U.S. Route 2 by Hyde Cabin, 1 on Hanson Lane and Pearl St. intersection. The one on Hyde Rd. has cost \$31/month. The other 2 will be \$31 a month (were not previously on bill). Electric representative to be contacted regarding upgrading lights. These lights are needed for safety and board members would like to keep them on.

Blaisdell Permit Refund Request Zoning permit application to remove camper and outhouse and replace with 36 X 28 primary use residence on 0.42 acres. The permit was denied. Board recommends talking to Scott Brown prior to submitting permit, and suggests putting some type of outreach on the website to inform potential applicants. The permit states that it is non-refundable.

Emily felt this was punitive, not a lot of work was done. Josie mentioned the need for consistency. Adam pointed out the bylaws are on the town website along with the zoning administrators contact information.

<https://www.grandislevt.org/departments-2/planning-zoning/>

Rachael asked if the permit applicant talked to Scott and was told yes. Ellie asked the board talk to Scott Brown prior to making a refund decision. Board agrees.

Turn to Joy An emergency shelter is needed on Turn to Joy license application, Brad and Ron are fine with providing the town garage.

Bill asked if insurance covers this. Ron said he thought so. Jeff added this evacuation site is important to make sure the children are safe. Adam mentioned the board can

reach out to PACIF insurance company at VLCT and determine if they would be covered, the school uses the fire station as an emergency shelter.

Racheal asked if Turn to Joy has insurance. Yes- it covers the transport of the children to the evacuation location, not once they enter the town garage.

Tentative yes, the board will check with the insurance company.

Town Signs Missing Letters Josie addressed missing letters on town signs. Homeowner picked up and saved them.

Shannon and her partner could repair-do not have router to make the lettering. Structural integrity could be reestablished, stain could be applied, and flowers planted underneath. Shannon is asking for reimbursement for the cost of stain only.

Racheal added that the sign on the North Hero side is split. Shannon and her partner can glue/clamp to repair.

Josie asked How much stain is needed and for a cost estimate. Shannon estimated 2 gallons of stain, at \$35/a gallon.

Adam will contact a local owner of a computer numerical control router to see if they would work with town to cut the letter(s) and possible seagulls. Mitchel agrees this should be done. Shannon added new letters will need to be primed or stained, then be screwed or caulked onto the sign.

Linda asked about the contest for new signs that she submitted a plan for, desires to know outcome of the contest. Nothing was decided, Karen McCloud determined that it would cost \$10,000 per sign and have a lifespan 15 years. The current signs have been up for 36+ years. The request for new sign designs was submitted prior to the cost estimate. A decision was not made by the sign committee and the select board had not budgeted for it.

Home owners need to be contacted to get permission to work on the signs annually, Josie will do it this year. (Meddie and Danielle Gingras are the owners of 1 property).

Shannon stated repairs will take multiple days. She would like to complete 1 sign by the last week of June. Bill paid \$65 a gallon for outdoor stain 2 days ago.

Josie makes a motion to authorize Shannon Bundy to spend up to \$ 150.00 for 2 gallons of stain for the southernmost and northernmost Grand Isle signs. Jeff seconds. No discussion. All board members in favor. Jeff Parizo, Couper Shaw, Adam White, and Josie Leavitt approve. The motion passes.

Food Shelf to be added to the town website Josie would like the food shelf hours of operation added to the Grand Isle town website. They will be added to the municipal

directory. Donations need to be called prior to drop off and this number will be added, along with the food emergency number.

VLCT Internal Controls Need an inventory of what internal controls exist so VLCT can help identify what can be done to improve and assist. There will be a select board training on July 28th. Jeff has a VLCT checklist that he will share with board members. Josie will organize a meeting with Melissa and Sue to discuss internal controls.

Bill sees this as 2 separate processes: Developing Standard Operating Procedures, Checks and balances creation and enforcement.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

Audit RFP Decision Bids were opened on May 26th, and had a deadline of May 23rd. RHR Smith and Sullivan Powers & Company submitted bids by the deadline. Batchelder and Associates mailed using a Swanton zip code, and the bid was not available to open on the 26th. References were called for both auditing agencies. RHR was \$16,500/year, SP&Co. was \$26,000 for the first year.

Josie investigated RHR Smith's price jump- partially COVID expenses, the cost of retaining good help, and the previous bid is 5 years old. Both companies had excellent references. \$7,500 was budgeted for an audit for this year. Josie asked if RHR Smith could supply new auditors for this audit.

Rachael wanted to note that the Islander stated that RHR Smith has been auditing for 6 years, this is not the case they have audited for the last 5 years. Angolono had previously performed audits for 10 years and stopped doing this type of audit once the sons took over the business.

Esther does not recommend using RHR Smith for the audit this year. Jean agrees with Esther.

Racheal feels that Ron Smith was badgered, treated disrespectfully, and he defended himself.

Jeff mentioned how the town attorney disagreed with RHR Smith and RHR Smith would not admit when he was incorrect. Now that the town is no longer reacting to issues, they have an opportunity to be proactive.

Josie brought up the unbudgeted \$20,000.

Racheal asked if Melissa had been asked who she would recommend. Adam confirmed Melissa is open to both bidders.

Esther stated cheaper isn't always better, we should go with someone new.

Bianca desires to move on from RHR Smith citing his negative demeanor, condescension, and the town attorney's statements about RHR Smith's lack of knowledge.

Jeff mentions that there are \$168,000 in unassigned funds. Adam mentions an emergency fund, Jeff responds it could be placed on the November ballot.

Couper feels that the select board can handle the demeanor of the auditors and this should not be a deciding factor. With regards to the funds, he feels that because we can spend money doesn't mean we need to.

Jeff states that this is only for 1 year and \$10,000 difference between RHR Smith and SP&Co., then it can be put on the ballot for the next year to decide on the budget.

Mitchel brought up RHR Smith put a \$75,000 cost in the assigned funds because he "can't let you [the board] spend it".

Ellie urges the select board to use someone new. She cites intimidating tactics and providing examples, as well as mentioning how he claims to have the ability to interpret statute equal to an attorney-he does not have that qualification and the attorney's letter supports this.

Josie mentions SP&Co.'s references stated they made them better at their job and provided year-round support. She is still concerned about the cost.

Both agencies will present the audit findings to the board.

Adam added that the school board provided a good reference for SP&Co. with the caveat of short staffing and COVID making some things take longer, and a draft audit would be delivered earlier (January where RHR provides a draft in April).

Ron feels a change should be made, spending more money for 1 year is worth it. Glenda agrees with Ron.

Bill states that there is a need for checks, balances and procedures in place, the auditor should help produce these. He feels that RHR Smith's personality conflict might prohibit this. Select board should direct the auditor to provide what the town needs.

Mitchel stated SP&Co. is providing more labor. Josie mentioned more labor does not always equal efficiency, and RHR is self-correcting prices for all of his clients.

Ellie brought up that she asked RHR Smith what was in place for internal controls he said 'the Vermont statute' and 'the select board' she does not see this as internal controls.

Couper does see the benefit of going with someone new. He is concerned that if SP&Co. is chosen, \$10,000 extra could be spent, and it might be found out afterwards from Batchelder that RHR Smith was doing a good job. Ellie asked what if something is found.

Racheal wanted to know who the audit is about, Melissa or the auditor. Adam replied that RHR Smith was not warned about the request for action. The audits were supposed to be a comparison, and have turned into auditing the auditor. When the results arrive, there will be differences. It might be wise to do 1 year with a new company.

Adam makes a motion that the town of Grand Isle for the fiscal year 2022 audit for \$26,000 goes with Sullivan Powers & Company. Jeff seconds. No discussion. All board members in favor. Jeff Parizo, Couper Shaw, Adam White, and Josie Leavitt approve. The motion passes.

Josie to contact RHR Smith and SP&Co.

Batchelder & Associates Audit Update Jeff stated payroll and two expense test documents took 2 weeks to be submitted. Couper replied over 200 pdf files have been loaded to the portal and a bill for \$20,000 was received.

Jeff described the plan as once testing is wrapped up; they will do a site visit. Couper feels 200+ docs should be enough for them to be done testing and visit. Jeff will ask Bonnie to come in to address status.

Josie wants to know how close we are to giving Batchelder all of the documents she needs. Ellie, Bianca and Mitchel asked how many of the original 44 items Batchelder requested are completed. Couper responded Batchelder keeps adding on more urgent items while they are trying to submit the original 44 items. Some of those line items have multiple documents and years for each line.

Joe asked if the \$20,000 bill will be paid without results. Josie responded the contract was monthly; they haven't paid anything yet Jeff will ask for itemization. Emily is surprised bill has taken so long to arrive, agrees with asking for invoice.

Bill supports Couper and finds it unconscionable that the auditor has not entered the building.

Ellie asked when the first information was sent to Bonnie, Josie thinks January.

Adam reminds the community about the amount of work that happens between meetings that is unseen. He informed the board personal emails should not be used for town correspondence.

East Engineering Quote - Old Town Garage Bid Package Tyler Billingsly will assemble the bid package for \$2,500.00 and bill \$125.00/hr. for check-ins during demolition if accepted.

Josie asked if there is enough money in the highway department budget for this. Yes.

This is an effort to finalize the demolition budget by mid-January so it can be placed on the ballot for March. The highway department agrees with moving ahead with the bid.

Joe asked if a committee will be assembled to watch over demolition. Tyler Billingsly will oversee the bid winner(s).

Jeff makes a motion that we hire Tyler Billingsly to move forward with the bid package for \$2,500 and the money to come out of the highway department surplus fund. Couper seconds. No discussion. All board members in favor. Jeff Parizo, Couper Shaw, Adam White, and Josie Leavitt approve. The motion passes.

Joe requests Tyler's correspondence to be distributed to all board members. They agree.

IT Update 2 companies haven't responded, 2 have. Need to identify what the town needs: one time service, training, or round the clock support. A security audit could be performed, the number of town devices needs to be determined.

S&S charges \$1,000/month, Internetwork Engineering charges \$2,000/month

Diane needs assistance, the listers office only has Microsoft programs available on 1 computer and needs the programs added to another computer. Susan needs documents transferred from one computer to another. Couper will help Wednesday.

Jeff asked Couper to contact South Hero about the service provider they use. Josie will contact North Hero. Adam recommended investigating ARPA funding for town government infrastructure. Jeff added the phones need the ability to transfer and it should be part of the IT process.

Ellie asked if the board considered teams for file sharing. They will.

Joe stated a former town employee has all of the passwords and a change should be performed to eradicate this vulnerability. Couper agrees. Chuck hasn't provided a list of his responsibilities since his exit.

Storage Policy Moved to next meeting.

Road Survey Changing Speed limits: Speeds were assessed on town roads with a reading device. 2006 town ordinance sets speed limits, and the signs will need to be inventoried

and changed. The ordinance needs to be reviewed and updated. Aluminum signs are expensive and have federally mandated requirements. Esther disagrees with lowering the speed limit citing low road use in the winter.

Susan filed the grand list as of June, grievances will start the 20th. The grand list is not on the website, letters were sent Friday. She asked if there will be enough money in the budget for the highway department with increased fuel prices. It needs to be examined further as there are many factors such as heating fuel and equipment fuel.

Jeff asked about the memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the fish hatchery. The highway department is allotted \$28,944 in funding from the hatchery but has been receiving around \$4000 of this money to maintain the road. Initially this was to offset bond costs. To be voted on at next meeting- it was not warned in this week's agenda.

VII. REVIEW AND SIGN WARRANTS

Jeff makes a motion to allow the chair to sign the warrants. Josie seconds. No discussion. All board members in favor. Jeff Parizo, Couper Shaw, Adam White, and Josie Leavitt approve. The motion passes.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Jeff makes a motion to adjourn at 8:48 p.m. Josie seconds. No discussion. All board members in favor. Jeff Parizo, Couper Shaw, Adam White, and Josie Leavitt approve. The motion passes.