

Grand Isle Select Board
Minutes of the Special Meeting/Hearing
Wednesday December 28th 2022 at 6:00 at Grand Isle Town Office and via Zoom

CALL TO ORDER

Board Members Present: Josie Leavitt, Vice Chair, Jeff Parizo, Couper Shaw and Eric Godin.

Community Members Present: Ronnie Bushway, Colleen Bushway, Rachael Griggs, Lucille Campbell, Stephen Schlate, Ray Allen, Tonya Poutry, Jean Prouty, Mike Donoghue, Angie Low, Douglas DiSabito, Kristina Botala, Leslie Wells and Barbara Lynch.

Josie Leavitt for the record mentioned Adam White has recused himself from the meeting as Kevin Low who is the owner of the sheep attacked is a Captain on Grand Isle Vol. Fire Department and Adam is the Fire Chief.

Josie Leavitt reads the following information that was posted for the hearing notice for the reason for this hearing.

The Grand Isle Selectboard is holding a hearing at the time, location and date listed above to discuss violations of the Grand Isle Dog Ordinance Section 3(A) Running at Large

3(B) A dog that harasses or attacks another dog, other animals, or people, unless such other dog, animals or people are trespassing on the private property of the owner.

3E) A dog that damages the property of a person or persons other than its owner, including but not limited to turning over garbage contains or damaging flowers or gardens.

On Saturday, December 24, 2022 two dogs owned by Ashley Larrow attacked sheep on the northern portion of Grand Isle resulting in multiple sheep being killed. This property and sheep were not owned by Ms. Larrow nor were the dogs given permission to be on premises. This is the fourth violation of the Grand Isle Dog ordinance for these two dogs in question.

Jeff Parizo reads a statement prepared by Trever Boutin – Animal Control Officer for Grand Isle, with a summary of experience with the two dogs in questions. Statement from Trever Boutin below:

12/09/2022

On Friday December 9th at 08:26 I received a phone call from Lesley Wells located at 258 west shore road Grand Isle. She told me that she heard a commotion out in her sheep pasture and spotted two dogs attacking one of her sheep. Lesley and her farm hand approached the the dogs and pulled them away from the sheep where she put them in a pickup. She then called her vet Rick from Cold Hollow Veterinary. When he arrived he noted that the sheep had punctured to both hind quarters, punctures to the right front leg, the front left leg was stripped of meat to the bone, the right side of its head was scalped to its eye socket, the snout was mangled, and the hard palate of its inner mouth had separated from the skull. After examining the sheep Rick determined that it needed to be euthanized.

I reached out to Ashley Larrow and explained to her the incident that had occurred. She asked if I had the dogs as they had been searching all day for them. I told her that they were being boarded and that they would be there until further notice. As well I asked about rabies vaccination where she said they were both vaxed but would have to find the paperwork. She did send me Dino's (the male lab mix) and he is vaccinated until 09/03/2023. She has not provided me with Pebbles (the female pit mix) paper work, I mentioned if she can't find it the vets would surely get her a copy. Since they were closed over the weekend I told her I need it by 4 today, Monday 12/12/2022. I told her before she get either of the dogs back they also need to be registered with the town of Grand Isle where she responded with "we are not living here anymore, we were actually just visiting". I further made clear that all fees and citations would need to be paid in full to the town prior to 12/19/2022, 10 days following the incident, including \$50 impoundment fee per dog, \$10 boarding fee per dog per day, \$50 bond for proof of vaccination, and if she is living in the town \$12 license fee per dog, as well as the \$300 in prior fines yet paid, in total as off Monday 12/12/2022 is \$584.00. As I mentioned previously she did provide me with Dino's rabies but not Pebbles as of 11:09 12/12/2022.

Attached are photos of the mallee sheep and the dogs at the scene. Please be advised that the photos are fairly graphic. Also attached is Dino's certificate.

12/19/2022

Ashley Larrow stopped into the town office to pay a balance of \$1,494 due for previous dog violations resulting in fines as well as all kennel fees for both dogs the 10 days that they were held there. I returned both Pebbles and Dino to her explaining that she's very lucky that she is getting to go home with her dogs. I explained that I don't want to see anything happen to those dogs however, the farmer could have put them down in a situation such as that. She told me that they don't live in grand isle anymore and we're actually just up to grab a few items from her fathers house on Hyde road. Her and Scott both said that they would be better about keeping the dogs on leash and on their property.

12/24/2022

*On Christmas Eve I missed a phone call from Josie Leavitt at 10:54. At 12:06 I noticed the missed call and the voicemail that she had left me saying " I am calling to let you know that I just saw the Larrows dog running north on east shore north and I'm right by the drawbridge so they are pretty far from home. I don't know what you wanna do about it, one of them has a leash on but I'm pretty sure it's a little dog. I am just letting you know, my phone number is (***)**-**** thanks bye".*

A few moments later at 12:16 I received a phone call from Kevin Low located at 24 point farm west. He said that he was in Williston and is on his way back but his wife called and said there are two dogs in the pasture chasing and attacking the sheep, one for sure is dead. I arrived at 12:20 were pulling up the driveway I spotted one with a neck wound laying with its head up alone at the north west end of the pasture. I meet his wife Ange and farm hand Fred Mashtare in the front yard. From there I can see one that I assumed was dead at the north east end of the pasture. Fred and myself get into a side by side, enter the pasture where we observe one other sheep limping with the herd and come across another dead sheep in some shrubs near the middle of the pasture. We both searched for the second of the two dogs, tan and medium sized as they had caught one and had it in the green house. We searched for roughly 30 minutes before meeting back up at the house. At this point I went to take some photos and made my way to the sheep who hadn't moved at the north west side and took pictures of her. She had an active bleeding wound under her jaw in the neck area. From there I then headed to the dead one in the middle, took video of the one with the leg wound and made my way to the one at the north east end. When I walked up to it I noticed that it was still slightly breathing, and it's eyes were slowly moving about. As it breathed blood was bubbling out of its nose and it's mouth. Part of its nose had been ripped open and had a few puncture wounds too it's neck where it was bleeding a good bit. I called Kevin

explained what the situation was with her and he said she wouldn't make it and asked if I could put her down, I did. I spoke with Ange and told her to call me if she sees the other one show back up and that I was going to go drive around to look for the other dog. As I was leaving I put pebbles to put her in the rear cab of my truck and I noticed she had blood splatter on the side of her belly, on her chin, and her leash was coated in it and also had bloody ice clumps forming on it. As I was leaving the property I met Kevin and Fred at the beginning of the drive way and told him to call me if they found or caught Dino. I took a look down east shore north and Ladd point private drive as it backs up to their property but did not find him. From there I dropped Pebbles off at the kennel and explained to Christina that Dino was still on the loose and that if we find him that I will be back with him. Shortly there after Fred and Kevin caught Dino and Fred dropped him off at the kennel. All of the sheep were/are pregnant with either one or two lambs. Kevin reached out to me today and does not know what the outcome of the two survivors as they are still in rough shape.

Please note that from the time Ashley got her dogs back to the date of the second attack was only 5 days.

Josie Leavitt asks Ashley Larrow to provide any testimony she wishes to provide. Ashley Larrow mentioned she wishes to hear testimony from both farmers that allege her dogs attacked their sheep. Leslie Wells mentioned back in October the two dogs owned by Ashley Larrow scared the sheep out of multiple fenced in areas, scarring the sheep to scatter. Leslie Wells was able to capture both dogs and put in a truck. One sheep was missing for several days and was able to be found but did have several bit marks on her legs and needed veterinary attention but was able to recover. In early December the two dogs returned to the property and Leslie Wells woke up around 3am finding all sheep out of their pens and one fence dragged a large distance by the sheep as they were escaping. Leslie Wells saw the two dogs next to a down sheep with blood on the dogs faces, Leslie Wells took the dogs and put in a truck. The sheep that was down was administered medical attention and a vet came to the scene within the hour and felt the sheep would need a leg amputated among other issues and the decision was made to euthanize the sheep. Leslie Wells was able to find the remaining sheep. Leslie Wells mentioned she had many sleepless nights knowing the sheep were back with the owner and cant understand how the dogs were returned to the owners when their had been many issues and how we as a community would allow the dogs to return to the owners and have the ability to cause more issues.

Josie Leavitt asks Ashley Larrow where she is calling from and where is her residence. Ashley Larrow mentioned she is at a hotel in Rutland for 30 days to start and has paperwork to show she has a residence in Rutland, Ashley Larrow mentions her dogs are allowed at the hotel. Ashley Larrow apologies for everything that has happened but noted she has never had any issues with her dogs chasing livestock but does refute the claim that Pebbles (black and white dog) had blood on its chin mentioning the dog has a red chin and mentioning this appears to be a coyote attack and not from her dogs. Josie Leavitt reiterates all the evidence and first had accounts of these two dogs having attacked sheep on multiple occasions. Ashley Larrow requests evidence as she does not believe they are her dogs. Kevin Low mentioned his family saw the attack happen and that his 4 sheep that were killed also were pregnant and two other sheep were injured. Kevin Low mentions he has video of parts of the dog attack for the attack that happened on Christmas Eve. Angie and Kevin Low mention their address is on Point Farm West and Leslie Wells mentioned her address is West Shore Road.

Josie Leavitt opens comments from the public. Stephen Schlate who is a neighbor of Leslie Wells addresses the board and mentioned his experience during the October attack where a sheep disappeared for a few days and wanted to corroborate what Leslie Wells spoke to. Angie Low mentioned it appears one of the dogs appeared pregnant. Ashley Larrow mentions she believes one of the dogs may be pregnant again and that dog did have puppies over the summer. Leslie Wells wanted to be on record as a tax payer, business owner and animal owner that she has had a tremendous loss as a small farm owner and cant imagine we may be having a discussion about the dogs going back to the owners and the owners would want to continue the dogs to not be cared of properly. Leslie Wells mentions she sits on the Governor's Commission for the Future of Vermont Agriculture which wants people to have micro dairies and come to Grand Isle to farm, but we as a town aren't sending much of a message if we aren't sending a message of support, Leslie Wells does not want the dogs back in Grand Isle. Ashley Larrow feels like the dogs should not be put down and can promise that the dogs will no longer be in Grand Isle County and can figure out a way to reimburse the losses the two farmers incurred, she has never seen them chase any animal. Scott Bennett who has had one of the dogs since it was 3 months old mentions the dog is the sweetest dog and scared of every and flabbergasted the dog is being accused of the attacked. Ashley Larrow mentions her and Scott Bennet had been homeless and trying to get things back in order and currently are in a place where they feel their lives can be on track which is out of the county and that her dogs are more than dogs to her.

Jeff Parizo mentions he could not believe the Selectboard pushing off the problem of these two dogs onto another county. Lucille Campbell who lives near Leslie Wells was appalled that the fine had been paid after the December attack and the dogs had been returned to the owners. Jeff Parizo mentions the last attack of sheep where 3 or 4 were killed was not for the hunger but more for a sport given the number killed. Ashley Larrow was not aware that people thought after the initial dog attack that the dogs would not be in the county. Jean Prouty mentioned the dogs had been on her property on RT 2 and wondering why we are having this discussion and that the dogs should have been put down after the first attack and now there are multiple sheep. Barbara Lynch mentions the dogs are good dogs, they have bought a kennel and they don't use it, leashes have been purchased but the owners do not use them, these dogs need to be given to people that can handle them better. Stephen Schlate mentioned the first October that occurred in October he has not seen any improvement with the dogs, however there have been further incidents and that sheep are pets do and part of a business. Douglas DiSabio mentioned there is a time when owners need to take responsibility of their dogs and believes with the history, documentation, and photos of the attacks with the owners attempting to deny the attacks believe this speaks volumes. Douglas DiSabito offers his condolences to the farmers that lost their sheep in these attacks.

Ashley Larrow asked Josie Leavitt if she received the email she just sent. Josie Leavitt noted she did but was not pleased as the letter is handwritten and not on letter head stating the hotel allows dogs or the timeframe that Ashley Larrow is at the hotel. Josie Leavitt notes that Ashley Larrow has had not control over her dogs and within 5 days of the dogs returning to her they escaped again. Josie Leavitt believes Ashley Larrow has shown no responsibility in dog ownership and believes the dogs deserve better owners that would provided better for them including food, shelter, and supervision. Barbara Lynch mentioned that Ashley Larrow and Scott Bennett do live in Grand Isle in a trailer behind the house Barbara Lynch is staying at. Jeff Parzio mentioned that it was noted one of the dogs is pregnant and over the summer when the same dog had puppies they escaped and were found at various residences. Ashley Larrow mentioned she plans to work with the Humane Society to get both dogs spayed/neutered and to help care for the puppies. Jeff Parizo says he is surprised no person has been hurt yet by the dogs and the towns people have been on edge with these dogs loose.

Eric Godin makes a motion that the town holds the dogs until the date of January 3, 2023 at which time they will be turned over to the Humane Society. Couper Shaw seconds the motion.

During discussion Ashley Larrow asks how she has \$5,000 when the dogs are not in her custody. Scott Bennett states the town is illegally stealing the dogs from them.

Josie Leavitt, Eric Godin and Couper Shaw vote Yea, Jeff Parizo votes Nay as he believes the owners should have no chance of getting the dogs back and should be destroyed and does not want anyone to come to him saying that those dogs attacked a child.

Josie Leavitt makes a motion to adjourn the hearing at 7:24pm, Couper Shaw seconds their motion. All in favor.

Selectboard Scribe:

Selectboard Chair:

DRAFT