

**GRAND ISLE SELECTBOARD MEETING
MINUTES of
Monday November 2, 2020 via Zoom**

I. CALL TO ORDER: Diane Cota, Chair calls the meeting to order at 6:00PM

Board Members Present: Diane Cota - Chair, Jeff Parizo - Vice Chair, AnnaMarie DeMars, Adam White and Rachael Griggs

Community Members Present: Sheriff Ray Allan, Bill Baron, Emily Clark , Ron Bushway and Melissa Boutin

Amend Agenda for Matters Not Listed: Adam - Thank You to Town Clerk with an update:

II. GUESTS: Bill Baron - EAB Task Force & Highway Dept. Training:

Bill Baron is involved with the Emerald Ash Borer Task Force. He said in 2019 they received a \$5,000 grant called Communities Caring for the Canopy Grant. They have about \$4,000 left from the grant due to COVID and volunteer's donations. One of our goals for our initial grant application was to train the local highway departments in the safe use of chain saws and how that relates to dealing with EAB invested trees in the road rights of way.

Bill said he has been in communication with a company in Middletown Springs VT called Northeast Woodlands Training about potentially setting up a training for our local highway crews from all five communities in the Champlain Islands. It looks like it would be a three-day training and would cost about \$4000. We would use money from the EAB grant funds. We have until the end of May, 2021 to use this grant money.

Bill said it would take about six hours a day and only ten people would participate. North Hero is interested in this training. Bill said it would hopefully be locally in Grand Isle or North Hero. They would be looking for public landowners to cut down trees and it is mostly hands-on.

Adam thanks Bill for getting this grant money for the Town and said he thinks our insurance company would think it would be a great certification as well. Ron asked where the course would take place.

Adam White motions for the Grand Isle Selectboard to have Bill Baron move forward with hosting a Game of Logging Chainsaw Safety Course here in the Islands with the Grand Isle roadcrew as participants with understanding we will have to front some money but will be reimbursed with the EAB grants. AnnaMarie DeMars seconds the motion. No further discussion. All vote in favor and the motion passes.

Bill thanks the Board and said if it's ok he will work with Ron and Brad Sheridan to provide more details. He will also talk with the other highway departments to make sure they will have 10 participants.

Sheriff Allen - FY 21/22 Budget & Cell Tower Update: Sheriff Allen began with the budget and said unfortunately, because of health insurance etc. they had to do an increase of \$1.50/hour. Currently Grand Isle is at 50 hours per week. He said all five towns have the

same hours. Adam said for years the Grand Isle Selectboard has been trying to increase hours in hopes someday we would have Sunday coverage. This would mean all five towns would have to agree. Sheriff Allen said with all the budget cuts the State of VT has been doing and because his department has been very pro-active with the Governors Highway Safety Program this year they have been awarded \$83,000. This goes across the County which offsets the cost dramatically. With this increase and planning ahead we are hoping to increase coverage.

Jeff said Grand Isle represents 28% of all law enforcement calls and asked what can be done to lower that number. Sheriff Allan said a majority of calls came from one person. Grand Isle had 93 suspicious activity or person complaints.

Adam said he would like the Town to see a slight increase in hours each year so in the near future other towns would agree. If in the future the hours were increased it wouldn't be such a quick hit to us. All Towns would have to agree. Sheriff Allen said South Hero brought up the same issue. Even if North Hero and Isle Lamotte didn't agree Grand Isle, South Hero and Alburgh would be the driving force and we would get more coverage in our towns.

Adam White motions for the Sheriff's Department to approve the FY 2022 budget and add 52 hours per week coverage which would be a year total of \$148,720. Jeff Parizo seconds the motion. No further discussion. All vote in favor and the motion passes.

Sheriff Allen is thanked for attending and he thanks the Board for their support. He said once COVID is over he would like to hold an open house. He also said thank you for the support for the cell tower.

Cell Tower: Base has been poured and the on Nov. 4 the tower should be completed and will be shipped at that point. The tower should be completed in a couple months.

Thank you to Town Clerk: Adam said he wanted to do a big thank you to Town Clerk Melissa Boutin and her staff. Melissa has worked very hard and tirelessly through her whole term but definitely the last few months and most recently securing grants. She sent an email this weekend letting us know they have successfully scanned 12,126 land record pages which accounts for 5 years and 1 week of recording. In addition to this massive undertaking she and her staff has also been doing the election work processing. As of Saturday, 60% (1,007) of our Town's returned ballots out of 1,655 voters.

Melissa said thanks are not necessary, it's part of the whole job but it certainly has been a lot of work, more than normal. Just trying to do these three grants that we had to do by a certain deadline in September, waiting to see if we got awarded and then actually doing them.

Highway Department Update:

- Ron Bushway said most of the sand has been hauled. They have a little more salt to come in and putting the sand shoots on.
- Andrew updated his CDL license so he can drive standard. This will be a big help with plowing.
- Hopefully the cement will be poured next week for the salt shed.

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Diane said last week we had a special meeting at the new garage and decided we did not want have the heated apron. She asked if Brad Sheridan, Road Foreman has been informed and Jeff said Brad knows. Diane asked if he is ok with it and Jeff said he is.

Buildings Facilities Manager Update: Ron said the Town Office, Library and Annex furnaces have been serviced. Also, the Annex building will need the lead testing soon.

III. **REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES: October 19 & October 22, 2020**

Jeff Parizo motions to approve the October 19, 2020 Selectboard meeting minutes with a change. Adam White seconds the motion. Ron asked to add stormwater grant money statement correction to the October 19, 2020 minutes. No further discussion. All vote in favor and the motion passes.

Discussed was a comment from Ron that he said he misspoke under the highway update, #3 stormwater ditching stating he had not gotten the grant of \$6,710 money yet. Diane has signed the application and Ron said we should still get the money. This will be noted on the October 19, 2020 minutes.

Jeff Parizo motions to approve the October 22, 2020 minutes . Adam White seconds the motion. No further discussion. All vote in favor and the motion passes.

IV. **NEW BUSINESS:**

- **Emily Clark, appointment recommendation from the Planning Commission to serve the remainder of the two-year term:**

Melissa Boutin said this two-year term started January 1, 2020 and ends December 31, 2021.

Adam White motions to accept the Planning Commission's recommendation to appoint Emily Clark to the remainder of the two-year term which expires December 31, 2021. AnnaMarie DeMars seconds the motion. All vote in favor and the motion passes.

- **Permit for Laying Pipes – Franz & Anne Rosenberger:**

Diane Cota motioned to accept the permit submitted by Franz & Anne Rosenberger to lay pipes by Island Excavating at 139 East Shore North Road. Jeff Parizo seconds the motions. Brief discussion followed. No further discussion. All vote in favor and the motion passes.

V. **OLD BUSINESS:**

- **New Highway Garage: Motion to approve change orders #5, 6, 7 & 9 and motion to deny new change order proposals #2, 3, & 4:**

Jeff Parizo motions we approve change #5 for \$10,432.09, change order #6 for \$3,142.26, change order #7 for \$6,355.94 and change order #9 for \$600.00 even. AnnaMarie DeMars seconds the motion. Discussion; Adam wanted to mention, for the record, these 4 change orders are from July, 2020. We can still approve them but it's after the fact. No further discussion. All vote in favor and the motion passes.

Diane said we are going to deny change order proposals #2, #3 and #4 which is the heating of the aprons in front of the garage doors. The reason we are denying them is we don't feel

it's necessary to have it. It's a really expensive venture and we need to save this money. All the money we save is tax payers dollars and we want to make sure the tax payers are getting what they expect.

Adam White motions to deny changes orders #2, #3 and #4. Rachael Griggs seconds the motion. No further discussion. All vote in favor and the motion passes.

Rachael asked that the contractors Millbrook and Gage H&P are notified so they don't order supplies. Jeff said they are already notified.

- **Discuss Old Fire Station Building:**

1. Adam wanted to discuss the heat in the old garage. He said the furnace should be red-tagged as there is a hole in the fire box. Ron said the fan motor wasn't working and doesn't know why it was heated. Rachael said she called Rowley Fuel to see if any fuel was delivered this year and was told the last delivery was in the spring of 2018. She said there should be fuel in the tank and asked Rowley's if the fuel could be transferred safely and they said it could. Ron was asked to check to be sure the furnace is shut off and Ron is to check to see how much fuel is in the tank.
2. Adam asked if any personal property is stored in the building. Ron said Brads personal car is there. Adam also said there is a motorcycle stored at the transfer station and asked who owns it. No one knows to whom it belongs. Adam said his concern is we have a lot of employees who do extra work so now we are going to become a storage unit. Diane asked Ron to have Brad sign a waiver that the Town won't be responsible if anything happens to his car.
3. Ron was asked if he has given the Fire Chief, Todd Boutin a key to the old station as the Board had voted in July to let him have a key. He said he only has a copy and it doesn't work very well and he will check with Brad. He asked how many keys were out there. Adam said to have Ron get a new padlock to replace the old one and have a key made for Todd.

- **Review only, Cemetery FY 21/22 Budget:**

Rachael said she had spoken to Lucille Campbell who would like to get questions from the Selectboard before their November 10th meeting.

The Board discussed the Cemetery budget mainly saying the budget shows a large amount of money not being utilized. Instead of asking the taxpayers for money they never use we are asking them to use some of their reserve fund which is about \$195,000.00. AnnaMarie asked if they got some land from Mr. Powell before Dwight Bullis bought the property. Ron said a road has been extended and the land is fenced off. Jeff said there is a significant amount of land in the back and believes because of cremations there is enough land to last 50-100 years.

Jeff questioned Wade Lawrence being a Town employee and that this was not brought to the Selectboard for approval. He questioned the Cemetery hiring a Town employee and we aren't sure they can do this. He thought he was going to be a 1099 contractor and should supply insurance. AnnaMarie said they didn't advertise the position as well. Jeff said there are questions to ask VLCT and will contact them for answers. The Selectboard has set a policy to advertise for bids.

11-02-2020

Diane said we hope people realize this is a rough year and to ask tax payers to raise their taxes for things like this, it's just not right.

Adam said it isn't just a rough year it's wasteful spending. You look at years past it's not a onetime thing.

Jeff said looking at 2020 actual at the bottom of the budget they pocketed \$24,754.79 in 2020.

AnnaMarie went to the Cemetery meeting last year. She was asked to contact Sue Lawrence for an invitation to attend their meeting on November 10th.

Melissa said one thing that is important for them to review and understand is every year they sell lots and corner stones and they get money from the Russel Fund and other funds. Not so much about their investments as far as their gains and losses, because the point of investing your funds is that over a period of time you are going to come out with a gain. They need to budget, like we all do, revenues that they anticipate getting. They need to look at the whole picture and not just ask the Town for an unrealistic appropriation. They can operate on \$20,000 based on their reserve fund for years without even going to the Town to ask for any money. Melissa said she isn't sure the Board of Commissioners know the whole process. She has offered her services every time they have a meeting and they never ask for her help.

Diane said AnnaMarie should mention to them to meet with Melissa for help. Jeff said a Selectboard member should attend this meeting if they reach out to Melissa.

Melissa suggested that they really need to look at their fund balance that is available and look at the prior year's actuals, not the budgets but actuals. To really look at what is needed and what really should go toward future budgets

- **Review only, Recreation Department FY 21/22 Budgets:**

Diane said it looks like they are level funding this year.

Adam said we want fiscal responsibility. He listed under expenditures all the funds left over and said we need to have the Rec. Committee explain why they are even level funding when they have a reserved fund balance of \$18,878.01.

Jeff asked why the Town is paying for the surveillance cameras when they have funds in their balance. Melissa said some of this was included in a grant and the Town will receive some from the grant money. Projects they want to do, like the swimming project should come out of their reserve fund.

Diane will contact Amy Thompson and if she can't talk with her Diane will ask Rachael to contact Amy.

VI. REVIEW AND SIGN WARRANTS: AnnaMarie motions that we allow Diane Cota, chair to sign the warrants. Adam White seconds the motion. No further discussion. All vote in favor and the motion passes.

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION: New Highway Department Contract Discussion:
Rachael Griggs makes a motion to go into executive session to discuss contracts pending citing 1 V.S.A. state statute 313(a)(2) that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage. Adam White seconds the motion. No further discussion. All vote in favor and the motion passes.

Jeff Parizo makes a motion to come out of executive session at 7:44PM with no decision. Adam White seconds the motion. No further discussion. All vote in favor and the motion passes.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT: Adam White motions to adjourn at 7:44PM. AnnaMarie DeMars seconds the motion. No further discussion. All in favor and the motion passes.

Respectfully submitted,

Rachael Griggs
Rachael Griggs, Selectboard Clerk

Date: November 16, 2020

Diane Cota
Diane Cota, Selectboard Chair

Date: Nov 14, 2020