

**SELECTBOARD INFORMATIONAL MEETING MINUTES
TOWN of GRAND ISLE, VERMONT
February 27, 2021**

The 2021 Informational Meeting via Zoom was called to order at 2:00 PM by Diane Cota, SB Chair on Saturday, February 27, 2021.

Selectboard members present; Diane Cota-Chair, Jeff Parizo-Vice Chair, AnnaMarie DeMars, Adam White and Rachael Griggs

Diane Cota welcomed those joining for this meeting. She said as this meeting is different from our regular Town Meeting. There will not be a roll call of attendees, no moderator is needed and there will be no voting or debating. She explained how people will be heard.

Official Warning

The legal voters of the Town of Grand Isle are hereby warned to meet at the Grand Isle Town Office located at 9 Hyde Road on Tuesday, March 2 2021. Polls open between the hours of 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM to vote by AUSTRALIAN BALLOT on the following articles:

1. To transact any other business proper to come before this meeting and to discuss any questions which shall arise concerning the issues to be voted upon by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, March 2, 2021.
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Diane Cota explained how the meeting will be conducted according to VLCT. She then introduced Michael Morgan our Legislator who gave a brief update on some of the bills he feels are very important. Doug DiSabito asked Michael to speak a little about Bill H-225. Michael said he hasn't seen anything on it yet. Diane thanked Michael for joining this meeting.

Diane asked the candidates running for positions in Grand Isle to introduce themselves, state their name and the position they are running for.

Moderator:

Ronnie Bushway, one year

Selectboard:

Rachael Griggs, two-year term for Selectboard
Jeff Parizo, two-year term Selectboard
Ronnie Bushway, three-year term Selectboard
Eric Godin, three-year term Selectboard

Town Clerk and Treasurer:

Melissa Boutin running for the three-year term for Town Clerk and three-year term for Treasurer
Linda Effel, absent from the meeting

Unified Union School Board:

Nathan Robinson, absent from the meeting
Melissa Boutin one year term for both the Clerk and Treasurer
1. To elect all Town Officers as required by law. No questions.

2. To elect all Unified Union School district Officers as required by law. No questions.
3. Will the legal voters of the Town vote to have the full details of the delinquent tax list printed in the Town Report? No questions.
4. Will the legal voters of the Town vote to pay to the Treasurer, Real Property Taxes in three installments with due dates of October 31, 2021, January 31, 2022 and April 30, 2022, with an interest charge of 1% per month added if each installment is not paid by the due date; after April 30, 2022, any unpaid taxes would be charged an 8% collection fee plus the interest fees? No questions.

5. Will the legal voters of the Town approve the sum of \$961,675 as proposed by the Selectboard to meet the expenses of the Town General budget?

Jeff Parizo explained the photos of the now new town garage which is now completed with the exception of a few small items which will be done soon. The other photo is the cell tower at the County Sheriff's Department. Any proceeds from the cell tower will benefit the Sheriff's department. Diane has spoken with Sheriff Allen who said he hopes it will be up and running in two weeks. Jeff also said the salt shed is completed.

6. Will the legal voters of the Town approve the sum of \$18,000 to meet the expenses of the Cemetery Commission budget?

Terry Curren asked what happens to prior years money if all isn't spent, like the Cemetery Highway, and Recreation. They didn't seem to use all the money that was allocated to them this last year.

Sue Lawrance spoke to this. She explained that the amounts of money that is not spent goes into a general fund. Some of these funds have been earmarked for projects.

Adam White speaks to the rest of it. This year when the Selectboard went over budgets we did let department heads know we had concerns and to know what funds they still had year to year that weren't being spent. Other departments such as the Recreation had roughly \$18,000 left over from prior years unspent funds and have multiple projects coming up this year for it. The Highway Department amount left over is nearly \$307,000. The town plans to use roughly \$200,000 to pay down the new garage project. They were told if they do have plans coming up to come to the Selectboard with a one year increase and make sure these funds will be used for it. If they don't use the full line item, next year they shouldn't be asking for the same amount or to make sure they have plans for it. Also, if they have a plan for it to be able to explain it. The selectboard worked to make sure these funds come down to a reasonable level.

7. Will the legal voters of the Town approve the sum of \$20,200 for the Grand Isle Rescue, Inc. budget?

Ray Mitchel, President of Grand Isle Rescue reported. He said they are doing well financially and they had a very successful letter drive this year and last year. From an equipment standpoint they are in very good condition. He spoke of projects they have done. They have received a complete sanitizing system (for the ambulances) and with COVID it will be used for a long time. Right now they have four members who respond to calls and they are getting tired. There are a few people coming along and hope to have them licensed in the coming months. He said it looks like they are edging toward paying responders if we are to continue the service we are performing now.

8. Will the legal voters of the Town approve the sum of \$8,000 to defray expenses of Grand Isle Rescue, Inc. and Grand Isle Fire Department, Inc. dispatching services? No questions.

9. Will the legal voters of the Town approve the sum of \$67,2156 for the Grand Isle Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. budget?

Todd Boutin, Chief of the GIVFD responded. He said they are trying to try to keep somewhat level funded and did go up about 3%. Due to COVID they lost the coin drop and funds are a little tight.

Deborah Lang questioned why there are three different line items for the Fire Department; dispatch, budget and reserve and why did one of them double.

Chief Boutin stated that 1 item is for the fire department general budget, the second is for 911 dispatch services that Grand Isle/North Hero Resuce and Grand Isle Fire Department both use and the third is a request to increase the annual apparatus fund.

Adam White said in 2018 they were able to purchase a new truck for approximately \$400,000, which is on the lower end of the cost of a new fire truck. At the current rate with a \$15,000 reserve fund it would be nearly 27 years to purchase a new truck. The Fire Department works hard to ensure to maintain and take very good care of their trucks. Luckily they were awarded a grant through FEMA who paid nearly \$253,000 of the purchase of the the truck and appartus reserve funds helped pay the remianing balances. Adam stated that the fire truck purchased in 2018 replaced a fire engine from 1972. The department has a second fire engine which is nearly 30 years old and most other appartatus are coming up on 20 years old as well and will be needing replacement sooner than later.

10. Will the legal voters of the Town approve the annual sum of \$30,000 for the Grand Isle Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. Capital Equipment Reserve which is an increase of \$15,000 f/n/a Capital Pumper Reserve?

Deborah Lang asked if they expect to see that reserve fund remain at an elevated level after this year or was this a one year amount?

Chief Boutin said as of right now it will remain at that amount. He said he has one more year as Chief and after talking with the officers it will remain at that amount.

11. Will the legal voters of the Town approve the sum of \$417,180 for the Highway Department budget?

Ron Bushway, Road Commissioner reported the budget is up roughly 3.5% over last year. Most of it is due to the wages increase approved by the Selectobard. Also added extra for repairs and maintenance and for fuel for the new garage as it's isn't known at this point what this expense will be. Ron said basically, we are level funding.

12. Will the legal voters of the Town approve the sum of \$50,000 for Road Materials?

Ron Bushway reported this is something that's been on the ballot several years now. Hopefully it will be used for this and not for flood repairs. The cost to repave one mile of road is about \$100,000

13. Will the legal voters of the Town approve the sum of \$65,659 to meet the expenses of the Library Commissions budget?

Colleen Bushway, treasurer of the Grand Isle Free Library said we try to level fund our actual spending budget every year. The increases are in the salaries and FICA and other retirement. We do not have a librarian right now that is drawing health (insurance) so we are taking \$10,000 of health that was not spent in the last year and half of this year and putting it toward this coming budget so that the actural line expense is going to be \$10,000 cheaper then we need to operate.

14. Will the legal voters of the Town approve the sum of \$16,120 to meet the expenses of the Recreation Committee budget? No questions.

15. Will the legal voters of the Town of Grand Isle approve the sum of \$10,000 to be raised by taxes to begin removing the invasive Emerald Ash Borer trees in the Town rights-of-way as needed?

Deborah Lang asked if there has been an assessment in terms of how many trees?

Ron Bushway reported he was appointed by the Selectboard to join the task force Bill Baron leads. He said there has been an assessment but doesn't know the amount of trees so far.

16. Will the Legal voters of the Town Approve the sum of \$10,000 to be raised by taxes for the Grand Isle Lakeshore Restoration Association, Inc.?

David Capin said when he looked through the Town Report he didn't see that this organization had submitted any report from last year. He said he knows the money was intended for weed harvesting mostly in the Gut and would like to know whether they got started on that last year and spent the money we allocated efficiently. Can anyone report to that?

Diane said we haven't seen anyone at this meeting to answer the question but is a question the selectboard can look into.

17. Will the legal voters of the Town approve the sum of \$1,950 to be raised by taxes for Island Arts? No question.

18. Will the legal voters of the Town approve the sum of \$6,520 to be raised by taxes for the UVM Home Health & Hospice (f/k/a VNA)? No question.

Diane closed by stating how residents can vote.

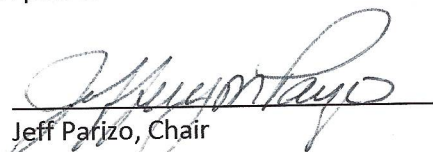
Roth Perry questioned if there is any requirement for these associations to report on how these funds are used?

Diane said we will bring this up at a Selectboard meeting and get back to Mr. Perry.

AnnaMarie DeMars adjourned the meeting at 2:55PM. Rachael Griggs seconds the motion. No further discussion. All vote in favor and the motion passes


Rachael Griggs, Selectboard Scribe

Date: March 8, 2021


Jeff Parizo, Chair

Date: 3/12/21

++ Please note this meeting can be viewed on LCATV and the minutes are posted on the Grand Isle Selectboard website.

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