

Grand Isle Select Board

Minutes of the Meeting

August 2nd, 2021 at 6:00pm at Town Office and via Zoom

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

Community Members Present: Joe Longo; Kristina Botala; Esther Blow; David Banks; Emily Clark; Mary Parizo; Janine Banks; Lucille Campbell; Linda Effel; Randy Gover; Jean Prouty; Tonya Poutry; Mitchel Richardson; Shannon Bundy; Fran Lafromboise; Mark Cobb; Sue Moquin; Ron Bushway; Denise Abbott-Douglas; Rachael Griggs; Mike Donoghue; Elaine Chasse; Bill Stone; Susan Lawrence; Linda Thompson; Blanche Roberge; David Leake; Melissa Boutin

Select Board to Amend Agenda for Matters Not Listed:

ARPA Funding Update – Old Business – Jeff

II. GUESTS

Elaine Chasse – Annex Building: Elaine Chasse says she had emailed the Board regarding the final details of her leaving the Annex Building, indicating that the last water bill had come to the town office and that there were a few final details to work out. Jeff Parizo asks what is left. Elaine says she still owes some rent, because the security deposit was a lesser amount than the security deposit, saying she still owes \$135.48. Elaine says she doesn't know what the amount of the water bill was, but indicates that the debt/retirement had already been paid. Melissa Boutin says that Elaine's share of the utilities had increased steadily until she started paying 100% of the utilities in 2010. Elaine says she would need to check the records to see at which point she started paying 100% of the water bill. Elaine says the last piece was the fuel tank, which Ron Bushway says there is 60% of the tank, which is a 330-gallon tank. Ron says that the town didn't get a reading on the tank when Elaine started leasing, so we don't know how much fuel was in the tank at the beginning of Elaine's lease. Eric Godin says that Elaine paid for the fuel that is currently in the tank, and the town neglected to get the initial tank reading, and feels that the town should pay Elaine for the remainder of the fuel in the tank. Ron Bushway concurs with Eric's opinion. Jeff asks to get the amounts for the water bill and the remaining fuel figured out for the next meeting, and we'll finalize everything then. Jeff thanks Elaine for all the work she's done for the children of the town, and says there's a large hole to fill, with the Learning Adventure closing. Bill Stone suggests that rather than tabling the discussion until the next meeting, the Board could just ask the town Treasurer to take care of the financial details, as everyone seems to be in agreement as to what steps need to be taken. Adam White agrees, saying all that is needed is the most recent fuel bill from Elaine, and the water bill that the town has received, and factoring the owed rent. Elaine and Melissa agree to finalize

everything.

III. GUEST OPEN COMMENT

Jean Prouty says that in the minutes of July 19th, she feels that the full comments that Diane Cota made as she left the meeting should be included. Eric Godin says he will update the minutes to include those items.

IV. HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Sealed Bids for Furnace & Heater: Ron Bushway gives the two sealed bids to Board Chair Jeff Parizo to open. Jeff opens the first bid which is from John Bolak, who bids \$1,627.28 for the NuMac wood fuel combination stove. The second bid is from Carl Cobb, who bids \$1,000 for the NuMac wood fuel combination stove, and bids \$500 on the laser kerosun heater. Adam White asks if there was a minimum bid on either item. Ron says that there was no minimum, but he said that the Board could reject any and all offers. Jeff notes that Mr. Bolak bid \$627.28 more for the combination stove. ***Adam White moves to accept the bid from Carl Cobb's bid of \$500 for the laser kerosun heater. AnnaMarie Demars seconds. Jeff calls the vote, which passes with fore 'ayes'.*** Shannon Bundy says she heard that the bids had been opened prior to the meeting, saying that there was a rumor that Brad Sheridan had opened them accidentally. Ron Bushway and Jeff Parizo say they were sealed when they came to the town office and Jeff opened them in front of everyone. AnnaMarie Demars and Denise Abbott-Douglas concur that the bids were just opened. ***Adam White moves to accept the bid from John Bolak's for \$1,627.28 for the NuMac wood/fuel combination stove. Eric Godin seconds. Jeff calls the vote, which passes with four 'ayes'.***

Highway Employment Ad: Ron says that there have been no further responses to the ad. Adam White says he feels we need to put the ad in more publications to get a bigger variety. It is determined that the position is currently being advertised in the Islander, on Front Porch Forum (one time) and with VLCT. Adam says he feels we should reach out the Burlington Free Press and Seven days as alternative options. Jeff Parizo says there are signs everywhere looking for CDL drivers. Eric Godin says he will look into other publications, including websites to find more applicants. A deadline is set of August 13th, to be discussed at the meeting of the 16th.

Ron says a tree that was obstructing Donaldson Rd was taken down, and that the road signs were cleaned up, as there had been a complaint of obstructed signs. Ron says that the first pass of roadside mowing is complete, but it's nearly time to do the second pass. Ron says the side dressing on East Shore North is progressing, but a screener will need to be rented, as the topsoil being used is full of clay and rocks. Ron says that Randy Gover finished the digging at the transfer station for the new dumpster, and concrete should be poured in the next few days. Ron says most of the items from the old garage have been put away, but there is still some cleaning and organizing to do. Ron says that one of the tractors has a bad bearing in the rear wheel, but has been told it's still usable. Ron goes on to say that DC Energy looked into the lighting at the new garage, and says that some of the light fixtures from the old garage will be repurposed for the new

building. Ron says that he is going to put the two garage doors from the old garage out to bid to see if there is any interest in the community in buying them. Jeff asks if they have openers on them. Ron answers that one of them does. Ron says that Randy and Mike brought one of the town trucks over to the school for the Camp Kota event, and answered questions posed by the children there. Ron says that lightbulbs were replaced and a fire extinguisher installed at the historical society. Ron also says the historical society was able to go into the old town garage to take pictures, as requested. Ron says that looking forward, there needs to be a discussion about emergency power at the Town Office and the new Garage. Ron says that in the past, there was one generator that would be used for the old fire station, the old garage, and the current town office. Ron says that the town should consider buying a new generator. Jeff asks Ron if he can get some bids. Ron asks if there would be any grant money available. Adam White says that the fire station was able to get grant money for a generator through the state, and suggests that Ron speak with Bill Baron about that grant. Jeff requests that Ron reach out for some quotes, to get an idea of what the costs might be. Joe Longo asks if the library should be included in the emergency power discussion. Jeff says he hadn't thought about it. Eric Godin points out that if something catastrophic happens, the library's books could be ruined. Ron says he will talk to the library trustees. Rachael Griggs asks if there are any updates on the tearing down of the old fire station. Ron says that they had initially said they were going to tear it down in October, but are now saying if they have rainy days where they aren't working on other projects, they will start the teardown, and are working with Fire Chief Todd Boutin on coordinating it. Bill Stone asks if they are going to take a while to tear it down would the town want to have a safety barrier around the site. Ron says he thinks the company is very responsible about it, but will contact them to see what their plans are for the safety of the site during teardown. Denise Abbott-Douglas says the highway crew did a good job with the mowing, and that the wild parsnip is growing so tall it's hard to see over it.

V. REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES FROM JULY 19TH AND 26TH MEETINGS

Board Scribe Eric Godin says he would like to push approving the minutes from the July 19th meeting until the next Board meeting so he can amend the minutes as requested by Jean Prouty. Eric goes on to say that the only correction to the minutes of the meeting of the 26th were that he incorrectly wrote the name John Lafayette on page 2, when it should have said John Lawrence ***AnnaMarie DeMars moves to accept the minutes of the July 26th meeting with noted corrections. Adam White seconds. No discussion. Vote passes with four 'ayes'.***

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Garage Bond- Discussion: Jeff Parizo says he wanted to check with the Board to see whether the town Treasurer should proceed with finding a bond, or if a Board member wanted to move forward with it. Adam White says he thinks the town treasurer should continue working on it, as she has the most experience, and have her provide a report to the Board at a future meeting. Melissa says she has checked with the Municipal Bond bank and Peoples United Bank. Adam asks Melissa if she could prepare a report for

options for the bond, noting that the bond anticipation note is due on September 1st. Melissa says the only option at this point is to request an extension from the Vermont Bond Bank, saying an application would need to be completed by mid – December. For Peoples United, an extension would need to be filed. Melissa agrees to reach out to Peoples United about the possibility of an extension, and provide a report to the Board. Joe Longo asks if the FY 2020 numbers need to be finalized to get an extension. Melissa says more than likely. Joe then asks what steps need to be taken to finalize the 2020 audit. Melissa says the Board just needs to approve the report, indicating that the Chair has had the audit since mid-June. Eric Godin asks for the report to be sent to the rest of the Board members, and says discussion of the audit will be added to the next agenda.

Town Treasurer Year End Numbers: Jeff Parizo lets the public know that the Board has received the year end report from the Town Treasurer. Adam White points out that it is a very thick document of line items, so it will take the Board some time to go through it before further discussion takes place. Adam asks if numbers from all the departments have been finalized. Melissa Boutin says she is in the process of meeting with the department heads. Adam says it will be interesting to see how COVID affected our income and costs. Bill Stone asks if the draft will be provided online. Jeff agrees. Melissa says that she feels that the summary should be what is posted online, as the long form shows locations and partial account numbers, and the town could be compromised as a result. Joe Longo says he thinks the previous quarter reports, which are currently on the website should be taken down immediately. Eric Godin says that he can remove them. Joe asks for a Board action on the issue. **Adam White moves to have the Q3 financial report, due to the sensitive information it contains, removed from the town website and replaced with the Q4 short versions of the financials. AnnaMarie Demars seconds. No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes with four 'ayes'.** Adam White thanks Treasurer Melissa Boutin for catching that and bringing it to the Board's attention.

Town Zoning Bylaw Discussion: Jeff Parizo says the Planning Commission had a public hearing on bylaw changes, and Jeff sent a summary to the Board. Jeff says that the changes were administrative in nature. Jeff goes on to say the Board has to have a public hearing as well. Jeff asks if the next meeting should be warned as a public hearing on the zoning bylaws, and there is general agreement. Melissa Boutin points out that a public hearing has to be warned 15 days in advance. Adam suggests using the first meeting in September which, it is pointed out, is Labor Day. Eric Godin says he doesn't think missing another meeting is a good idea, given how much business is before the town. There is further discussion, and it is agreed upon that the public hearing shall be on the fifth Monday, August 30th. Joe Longo asks if the DRB or the Zoning Administrator have been invited to the planning commission action prior to the changes being decided on. Adam says he isn't sure, and can't speak for the planning commission. Linda Effel says that during her time as ZAO, she was always asked to come to planning commission meetings to discuss bylaw changes. Emily Clark says that one of the two changes made were due to suggestions from the DRB, after they had trouble

understanding the laws, as written. Adam says that the planning commission was only making two changes.

Proposal for New Phone System: Jeff Parizo says the current telephone system in the town office is antiquated, and a new system would help integrate communications between all of the town entities. Melissa Boutin explains that callers would be presented with a directory to reach whichever town entity they were looking for, rather than the Town Office having to manually answer and have to provide alternate numbers. Eric Godin brings up that this phone system is internet based. It is determined that the initial cost of the system could be up to \$2000 for initial setup and then \$275 per month. Melissa says that despite the initial cost, the new phone system would move the town forward technologically, and could have a lower monthly dollar figure than the town's current system. Jeff asks Melissa if she could take the next step and collect information from the company to be discussed at the next meeting. Adam White asks Melissa to also look into what our current phone contracts are at different facilities within the town. Linda Thompson asks if the library would be included in this system. Jeff says he believes so.

COVID 19 Memorial Service: Jeff Parizo reads a letter informing the town clerks that there will be a COVID 19 Memorial Service will happen on Sunday, September 19th, at 3:00pm, on the State House Lawn. The letter asks the Select Board to publicly read the letter and put up a poster advertising it. Jeff says we will find the poster and display it.

RFP Audit for Town Yearly Financial Audit: Jeff says that an audit needs to be done for FY21. Jeff asks if we should put an RFP for auditing, or if we should have Ron Smith do the audit again. Adam White says that he acknowledges that we should always put out an RFP every 3 to 5 five years, Smith has already begun collecting information for the annual audit. Melissa Boutin says Smith has collected some data, and has asked for more, but she has held off, pending the Select Board making a decision. Eric Godin says that he agrees with Adam, as deadlines are approaching to start the auditing process. Jeff says that the Board will need to take up discussion to put out an RFP for the next year's audit in January 2022. Joe Longo brings up the earlier item that the Board needs to approve finalized numbers before moving forward. Adam says that the decision is to continue with RHR Smith for the FY21, which ended on June 30th, and for fiscal year 22 an RFP will be put out for services. ***Adam White moves to continue using RHR Smith for auditing services for fiscal year 2021 with the decision that for fiscal year 22, the town will put out an RFP in January 2022. Eric Godin seconds. No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes with 4 'ayes'.***

Town Website – Password: Eric says that he will be speaking with town IT officer Charles Hollan, indicating that a few people have logins to edit the town website, and wanted to make sure nobody had access that didn't require it for official duties. Jeff Parizo says the issue came up because when Diane Cota had resigned, her name was taken off of the website the next day, and nobody on the Board had any idea who had authorized the action. Eric references the town IT officer telling the Board several meetings before that there had been malicious attacks on the town's website, and limiting access to the administrative functions of the site is part of keeping the website secure.

(UPDATE: The case of the mystery name removal SOLVED! Per a conversation with town clerk Melissa Boutin, it turns out Diane Cota called IT officer Charles the night she resigned and asked him to remove her name.)

Memorial Bench at Library: No trustees from the library are present, so this issue is tabled for a future meeting.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

Cell Tower – Information: Jeff Parizo says the town received an update on the cell tower, regarding the complaints received. The update says that AT&T has been drive testing in Grand Isle and have a number of proposed fixes. The letter states that AT&T has seen a large uptick in network traffic in recent weeks, indicating that the changes were allowing more users access. Jeff Parizo asks if people were informed that they were going to have to switch to 5g phones to see benefit from the tower. Eric Godin says that he doesn't remember a conversation during a Board meeting about it, but an AT&T sales rep had indicated that was the case for everyone using older phones once the 5g network is in place. Adam White says that the Sheriffs Department is getting all new phones due to this. There is further discussion about the incoming 5g network and cell phone issues not relating to the tower in Grand Isle. Adam points out that this issue is between AT&T and the sheriff's department, and the Board doesn't have any purview over it's operation. Jeff says this issue came about because the lawyer for AT&T had contacted Jeff due to some complaints they had been received about service. Joe Longo says he agrees with Adam, that residents shouldn't complain to the Board about the issue, as it is between the sheriff and AT&T, and asks if the town could use water towers to boost resident's signal. Eric Godin says that any decisions like that would have to be made by AT&T. Mark Cobb suggests that the reason complaints are going to the Select Board is because the Board stepped in with AT&T before they could begin permitting on his property. Emily Clark says that all the questions should be directed to AT&T.

RFP Audit 3 Year – Resend with new Deadline: Jeff says that Adam had pointed out that one of the two positive responses from the audit RFP had come in after deadline. Adam agrees and points out that one response came in on July 2nd, which was within the deadline, and a second had come in on July 13th, which was 11 days after the deadline, and that there is only 1 eligible response. Jeff asks if we could send out the audit with a new deadline. Bill Stone asks if this is due to a timing issue. Eric Godin says that he believes it was because the deadline was right around a holiday, and the one respondent who did reply late had been on vacation. Jeff points out that the board had decided not to meet on July 5th, and he thought it would be okay to accept the response late. Eric says that procedurally, the rules need to be followed. AnnaMarie DeMars says that she thinks we should try again. ***AnnaMarie Demars moves to send the RFP for the 3 year audit out again, with a deadline of August 16th. Eric Godin seconds.*** Adam White asks where the RFP will be advertised. Jeff says it will be sent to the original firms that the first RFP had been sent to, as well as through VLCT. Adam asks if there was anything in the original RFP that allowed us to send a second one out, pointing out that the RFP was sent to individual firms. Jeff says that it was sent to six firms that do municipal auditing. Adam asks if we are within our rights to send another RFP out, given

that we had received a response. Eric says that he feels the town is within its rights to send out RFP's at will, as long as they aren't working anti-competitively. Adam asks if the deadline should be extended to August 30th. Bill Stone agrees, saying that there is a very small window for responses. Jeff suggests adding it to the August 30th special meeting. ***AnnaMarie DeMars rescinds her earlier motion, and moves to put out the RFP for a three-year audit with the deadline of August 30th, with responses coming to the town offices at 3:30pm. Eric Godin seconds.*** Linda Effel says that if the Select Board is going to delay moving forward with the audit, she is requesting permission to use the transfer station as a petition signing site. Jeff says he doesn't feel Linda needs to ask permission to do so. Linda clarifies that the Select Board has no problem with her using the transfer station to get petition signatures. The board concurs, with Eric saying that Linda is well within her rights to do so. Rachael Griggs states the following: "The request that was sent out and signed by 150 people states that 'The Grand Isle Select Board has not received a quarterly financial report from the Grand Isle town Treasurer in at least two years, as required by state law. (24 VSA section 1571). The Grand Isle Select Board has not approved the investment or re-investment of any monies received by the Grand Isle town Treasurer on behalf of the town in at least two years, as required by state law (24 VSA section 1571). Therefore, we hereby request that the Grand Isle Select Board make and approve a motion to immediately contract with a public accountant licensed in the state of Vermont and perform a forensic audit of all funds of the town of Grand Isle for at least the past three years.' As far back as when Cheryl Titus-Vantine was town Clerk/Treasurer for 12 years, she did not give quarterly reports, nor did any Select Board member from that time, until now, ask for them. At this same time, Cheryl deposited town money into CD's to earn interest and the Select Board members did not give permission. They did not ever bring it up. Melissa Boutin also put town money into CD's, in the name of the town of Grand Isle, and in the same banking institution the town has its checking account. The Select Board never requested, even though the CD's were brought up to their attention during budget meetings. Neither Melissa, nor all the different Select Board members for the last 18 years seemed to know about the state statute that permission was needed from the members of the Select Board. There is no missing money in question, so I believe that this request for a forensic audit is uncalled for. I believe that many who signed the request for the forensic audit had no idea what this was really about. The expense to the taxpayers, which could be somewhere between \$60,000 and \$80,000 to the town needs to be agreed on by the voters before this goes any further. I think this should be thrown out. Why should Melissa be pinpointed for this, when Cheryl did it, unbeknownst to everyone, and she got away with it. She didn't do anything illegal either. AnnaMarie says that there should have been an audit done when a new town clerk was elected. Rachael says: "It does state in the town report, that the auditing firm did an extra audit to review all that." AnnaMarie says that when she was on the board with Mark Cobb, she was pretty sure they requested quarterly reports. Rachael responds, saying: "No, I went through and read and re-read the minutes from 2012 through last year, and there is nothing in there that requests anything. Not in the minutes, as it was stated." Eric says that he doesn't want the debate to devolve into arguing, saying that he does not dispute any of the

information that has been presented, and that he feels the issue is a shortcoming of the Board itself not fulfilling its oversight duty. Eric goes on to say that the current actions being taken are to rectify that situation and make sure everything stays transparent. Eric says that the audit is in response to concerns from residents, and he doesn't think talking in circles about who did what in the past is going to move the issue forward at all. Rachael says that there had been a petition put to the town in the past, and the Board had dismissed it. Eric acknowledges that is true, and says that he doesn't think outright ignoring constituents while on a town board is the way to go. Randy Gover agrees with Eric, but says he thinks the Board would push forward with the audit at this meeting. Bill Stone asks if the one conforming bid from the current town auditor, RHR Smith, which is confirmed. Bill points out that if we moved forward tonight, we would have to pick RHR Smith. Shannon Bundy says she thinks a petition is a great start to get input from the residents, and says that included in the petition should be the reason why it's being requested, and the parameters of said audit, including expense. Shannon says that the petition should then go to a vote, so the whole community has a voice in the matter. Jeff confirms that if a petition came in, there would be a special election and a town-wide vote. Rachael asks if the financial cost would have to be included in the article. Eric confirms that it would. Rachael says she would be fine with that. Joe Longo asks if the RFP sent out will be the same as the previous RFP. Jeff agrees, and says the only changes will be the deadlines and that all responses will be sent to the town office. Lucille Campbell says that there need to be financial figures involved in a vote, and she doesn't feel that the current auditor should be used. There is further discussion about the deadline for the previous RFP, with Randy Gover saying he thinks the RFP should only be put out for a week. ***Jeff summarizes the motion and calls the vote. The vote passes, with Jeff, AnnaMarie and Eric voting 'aye, and Adam White voting 'Nay'.*** Jean Prouty asks if someone is going to go to the post office in the afternoon to double check the mail in the afternoon for any last-minute responses.

Open House – Town Garage: Ron Bushway says the open house can happen on Sunday, August 22nd, from 1pm to 3pm. AnnaMarie asks if it can be advertised that kids could check out the town trucks. Ron says he is going to advertise on Front Porch Forum and in the Islander. Eric says if Ron sends what he's posting to him, he would post it on the town website. AnnaMarie suggests having food at the event.

New Select Board Member Oath/ August 10th: Jeff Parizo asks if when a new Board member is selected at the August 10th meeting, should the oath be administered that night. Adam White says anytime before the next meeting should be fine, and brings up that the appointed member is in office until the next election or special election, so it's possible the appointed person would only be in office a few weeks. Bill Stone asks if there is a formal resignation letter from Diane Cota, which Jeff confirms. Rachael asks if a petition would be needed to run in the special election. It is confirmed that to run in the special election, candidates would have to put in a petition, similar to the process for all regular elections. Joe Longo asks what the cost to the taxpayers would be for a special election to be held. Eric says he feels that would be a good question for the town clerk. Adam says that an election would cost 1 -2 thousand dollars.

Speed Limits: AnnaMarie says that the road survey hasn't begun due to equipment

issues the Sheriff is having. AnnaMarie indicates that once the equipment is repaired, the road survey will begin.

Town Documents and RFP's to be Delivered to Town Office: Eric Godin says that this issue was raised due to the concerns some residents had voiced during the last meeting.

Eric moves that going forward, all documents pertaining to town or Select Board business be delivered to the Town Office. AnnaMarie Demars seconds. No discussion.

Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously. Joe Longo says he feels all town mail for all departments should come to the town office. Jeff Parizo suggests drafting a policy. Emily Clark says that she feels this should apply to emails as well. Jeff says that he feels the way the motion is worded, this would cover email responses to RFP's and bids as well. Linda Thompson expresses concern about town documents being used on personal computers, and asks if work done on a person computer could be subpoenaed, which Eric confirms. Adam White points out that every Board member has a dedicated email account for town business. Eric says that the current accounts are through gmail, but the town IT officer has set up emails within the town's domain. Eric goes on to say that he doesn't delete any of his emails on his town email account and files all of them.

ARPA funding update: Jeff Parizo says that the US treasury would be issuing new guidelines that would show that Vermont counties are not units of government, and will address concerns that had prevented money from flowing to the state and on to the municipalities. Jeff says that he has not been able to find any of that guidance online, and the Board is still in the dark as to the actual guidelines, but says that this should mean more money comes to individual towns. Jeff says that hopefully between the Secretary of the Treasury and Senator Leahy, the towns will get more monies.

VIII. REVIEW AND SIGN WARRANTS

Adam White moves to have Jeff Parizo sign the warrants. Eric Godin seconds. No discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes with four 'ayes'.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

AnnaMarie DeMars moves to adjourn the meeting at 7:55pm. Adam White seconds. No discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes with four 'ayes'

Select Board Scribe: _____
Eric Godin

Select Board Chair: _____
Jeff Parizo