

Grand Isle Select Board
Minutes of the Meeting for

Monday, February 7th, 2022 at 6:00pm at Grand Isle Town Office and via Zoom

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

Community Members Present: Esther Blow; Roland Dubuque; Linda Effel; Randy Gover; David Leake; Glenda Leake; Barbara Patno; Denise Abbott-Douglas; Bill Stone; Jonathan Debono; Mary Parizo; Mitchel Richardson; Rachael Griggs; Kristina Botala; Andy Paradee; Mike Donoghue; Emily Clark; Ron Smith; Peter Kilburn; Joe Longo; Lucille Campbell; James Taglia; Couper Shaw; Scott Russell; Mathan Mauser; John Lafayette; Jean Prouty; Bianca Adams; Ellen Paradee

Board Members to Amend Agenda for Matters Not Listed:

Ron moves the generator quotes to a future meeting, as he has not received info. Jeff adds the January 17th minutes to the list to be approved.

II. GUEST OPEN COMMENT

Jeff Parizo says that there has been some social media posts complaining about the length of Select Board meetings, and responds that the Board only meets twice a month and that the meetings will take as long as they take to deal with town business.

Denise Abbott-Douglas shares that she recently lost a family member to COVID and that family member had declined to get vaccinated. Denise thanked everyone in the town who were taking precautions like getting the vaccine and wearing masks to help prevent COVID deaths.

III. REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES OF 1/17, 1/22, 1/27, AND 1/31 MEETINGS

Jeff Parizo moves to approve the January 17th minutes. Ron Bushway seconds. No discussion. Jeff calls the vote which passes unanimously.

Jeff Parizo moves to approve the January 22nd minutes. Adam White seconds. No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes with 4 ayes, with AnnaMarie DeMars recusing herself, as she was not at that meeting.

Jeff Parizo moves to approve the 1/27 meeting minutes. Adam White seconds. No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.

Jeff moves to approve the 1/31 meeting minutes. Adam White seconds. No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote which passes with 4 ayes, with Ron Bushway abstaining as he was late to that meeting.

IV. HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT / BUILDINGS FACILITIES MANAGER UPDATE

Ron Bushway says that there has been a lot of plowing done in the last couple weeks. Ron goes on to say that there have been ditching issues in a couple spots around town,

but the town excavator was used to clear them out. Ron says the issue is that water is freezing before it's getting to the ditches and spreading across the road. Jeff asks if the issue over at Pomykalas was due to a leaking water line. Ron says that the water was tested and it is not chlorinated, so is not from a town water line. Ron says they are going to be making the ditches deeper and hopefully that will solve the issue. Ron says that the town's sand pile for the winter has been depleted by about 2/3, and they will be cutting back on use to conserve what is left. David Leake thanks the highway department for their hard work in trying to keep the roads open so Grand Isle Rescue could respond to calls. Ron says that the highway department has to submit the certificate of milage, and that it needs to be signed by the board and submitted. **Ron Bushway moves to have the Select Board sign the milage certificate for year ending February 10th, 2022. AnnaMarie DeMars seconds. No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.** Ron says that last week there was an issue with one of the boilers at the new garage, but that issue has been fixed. Ron says that despite the sub-zero temperatures, there have been no issues with keeping the town buildings heated. Ron asks Jeff if he had received the contact information for Carol Egan, who is interested in opening a daycare at the Annex building. Jeff says that he will contact Ms. Egan about attending the next meeting. Adam White asks if checking the portable defibrillators falls under the purview of the Buildings/Facilities manager. Ron says that he has been checking them. David Leake says that the pediatric pads in the defibrillators are expired and need to be replaced. David explains that the adult pads do not expire, but the pediatric ones do. Ron agrees to order more pediatric pads for the defibrillators in town buildings. Jonathan Debono says that he thinks it's important that the town put a childcare center in the Annex, due to the needs of the community. Jeff says that the priority is to have a daycare/preschool into the Annex.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Lister's Discussion and Update: Susan Lawrence says that a form PVR-4155 needs to be filled out by February if the Listers do not have any appeals or suits pending for anything on the grand list. Susan says that there are no appeals this year and asks the Board to sign the form and give it to the town clerk to be filed with the grand list. **Jeff Parizo moves to approve the certificate for no appeal or suit pending. Form number PVR-4155. Eric Godin seconds. No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote which passes unanimously.** Susan says that the Lister's office would like the Board to appoint Diane Cota to the listers office to fill the vacant post, noting that she was the only applicant to the lister's posting. Adam asks when the vacant term ends. Susan answers that the term will end in March of 2023. Ron says that he had thought that when the Board appoints someone to an elected position, that position would appear on the ballot of the next election. Eric Godin agrees. Adam White says that he had a conversation with JP Isabelle, an attorney with the Vermont Secretary of State's Election Division, who said that someone is appointed until the next time that position would be on the ballot, unless the voters or the Select Board have it put on an earlier ballot. Adam says that if Diane was appointed, she would serve in that position until town meeting day in 2023, unless the Board or the voters put forth a petition to have it on an earlier ballot. Jeff

cites the Vermont Select Board Members handbook saying that per the policy written there, an appointment would only be good until the next town meeting. Adam says that VLCT says that this is not the case, as it is beyond the deadline for signatures to get on the ballot, it would have to wait until the following town meeting. Jeff goes on to say that the handbook says that the Select Board has to post the position for 2 weeks. Susan Lawrence says that the listers had already posted the position. Jeff says that the Select Board has to post the position rather than the listers. Eric Godin asks if this is per statute or just guidance of the handbook. Jeff cites 24 VSA 961. Adam agrees that it is a statute issue. Jeff says that applications need to be in by the 21st at 3pm. Eric Godin asks Susan to send him a copy of the listers posting. Susan says that home inspections will be starting soon, as well as a lot of training for listers. Adam White says that he sent a letter to the listers requesting they attend the March 21st meeting to have a discussion about the plans for town wide re-appraisal.

Town Meeting Prep Discussion: Adam White says that he confirmed that the town can use the school for town meeting. Eric Godin asks if there were any additional sanitation requests from the school. Adam said there were not. Adam says that the school board is meeting Monday the 28th at 6:00pm, while Town Meeting will be held on Saturday, February 26th at 6:30pm. Adam says that the meeting will be in person and via Zoom. Adam says that Planning should be in attendance to speak about the ARPA funding.

Bond Letter Discussion (Special Meeting Needed): Town Treasurer Melissa Boutin says that the Vermont Municipal Bond Bank has said that the payment schedule needs to be signed by Friday. Melissa says that there are other documents that are being prepared, so the documents aren't ready for signatures for this meeting, and a special meeting will be needed for the 14th, 15th, or 16th, just for the Board to sign the documents. It's agreed to have a Zoom meeting on Monday February 14th to approve the documents and then have the Board members stop by the town office to physically sign the documents. Jeff says that the document to sign tonight is the payment schedule for the bond for the new town Garage. Jeff says that the loan amount is \$1.1 million, and that the documents need to be signed and returned by February 11th, 2022. Jeff says that the loan is for a term of 20 years, with an annual payment of \$52,381 on the principal. Melissa says that the total cost in interest over the 20 years is around \$47,000. Jeff says that there is fish hatchery money that is coming into the highway budget that will be put towards the bond payment. ***Jeff Parizo moves to approve the 2022 series one load commitment memo for the Vermont Bond Bank for the new town garage. AnnaMarie DeMars seconds.*** Denise Abbott-Douglas asks if the interest rate is fixed. Adam says that it is. ***No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.***

VI. OLD BUSINESS

IT – Charles Hollan: Charles is not present, so the item is tabled until the February 21st meeting.

Fiberworx Update: Adam White says that on February 5th he posted on Front Porch

Forum asking for a volunteer to serve on the Fiberworx board. Adam says that the deadline for letters of interest was February 21st at 3:00pm.

3 Year Audit Update: Jeff Parizo says that he has received some correspondence from Bonnie Batchelder, the auditor that was chosen to perform the 3-year audit. Jeff says that there were several concerns raised by the auditor that he wanted to address to make sure things kept moving forward. Jeff says that Ms. Batchelder is waiting on a great deal of information from the town clerk, and that they have reviewed the previous years town audits and have found some disparities. Jeff says that Ms. Batchelder had some concerns regarding the fraud questionnaire that were returned. Ms. Batchelder says that funds are not properly segregated in the general fund, and that the audits don't indicate that; CD schedules supplied do not support the investment report and the audit. Audit report inaccurate capital outlays compared to notes; Transfers to separate funds do not agree with budget voted in. Does not see the \$350,630.85 CD shown in the schedules; fund balance in general fund varies from audit in 2017 and 2018 don't agree with the audit; Special reserve funds were showing a due to/from that was not shown in the audit; Questions about multiple paychecks for the same person on the same date. Bonnie Batchelder goes on to say she is waiting for more information. Jeff says that these are preliminary findings, and he wants to make sure that the auditor gets the info that she is requesting. Melissa says that some of the documents requested have already been sent, and she has email chains to back this up. Melissa says that she had some questions and concerns regarding some of the information that she had requested. Melissa says that the issues with the due to/from was addressed with NIMRC in October. Melissa goes on to say that she had invited Ron Smith from RHR Smith to the meeting to answer any questions about the previous town audits. Melissa says that she had not heard from Bonnie Batchelder until Jeff had contacted her. Melissa says she set up a phone call with Ms. Batchelder for January 28th, and there was no phone call. Melissa says she tried to set up another phone call and Ms. Batchelder was not in the office. Melissa says that she has no problem supplying the information to Ms. Batchelder, but has some concerns. Melissa says that there is no secure website provided to submit documents, and she doesn't feel comfortable sending town account numbers via standard emails. Melissa goes on to say that she has several questions regarding what is supposed to be done with some of the documents that had been sent over. Melissa brings up the \$350k CD, saying that the Board agreed not to renew that CD, and the money was deposited back into the town's checking account, and that is why it doesn't show on the CD report sent. Melissa says that in regards to the issue of the pooled funds in the general fund, this had been addressed with Wendy Wilton from NMRIC, and that the account was set up in an acceptable fashion. Melissa says that the town office is very busy right now with the end of quarter numbers, the town reports getting done, and taxes being collected. Melissa says that she is happy to comply with the requests, but there has to be communication between the two of them. Adam brings up that Bonnie Batchelder is now questioning the previous town auditor's work. Josie Leavitt asks in the chat who filled out the fraud questionnaire. Jeff answers that himself and Ron Bushway filled them out and returned them. Melissa said she received

one, but said that the documents weren't clear as to what they wanted her to do. Melissa says that there were a lot of errors in the documents, indicating the town working with organizations that we don't do business in. Adam suggests that Ms. Batchelder is using a template and not updating it before sending it to us. Jeff says that he just wants to facilitate communication between the town treasurer and the auditor. Ron Smith, from RHR Smith auditors says that he has no idea what Ms. Batchelder is looking for and that he takes exception to her making assertions about his firms auditing practices without supplying any supporting documentation or reaching out to his firm for clarification at all. Ron Smith says that he is absolutely sure that the auditing report is spot on, and he would like to be involved in the discussion to address the concerns. Adam White cites the emails regarding the audits, saying Jeff contacted Ms. Batchelder on January 7th via email, requesting an update on the audit. Ms. Batchelder responded on January 23rd, which Jeff forwarded to the Board on February 1st. Adam says that one of her questions was about the fraud questionnaire, and that he was not aware of until February 1st. Adam asks AnnaMarie DeMars and Eric Godin if they were made aware of the fraud questionnaire prior to February 1st. Both say they were not aware of them. Adam asks why two members of the Select Board are filling out questionnaires on behalf of the entire Board. Jeff replies that the questionnaires were directed at certain town positions and he didn't feel they required a vote. Jeff says that he filled one out as the Chair of the Select Board, and Ron filled one since he had worked with the large finance companies. Jeff says that other Board members are still welcome to fill out the questionnaire, as the audit is ongoing. Eric Godin expresses frustration that several board members didn't even know about the existence of the fraud questionnaires until after they had already been submitted by Jeff and Ron. Josie Leavitt agrees with Eric, asking what else isn't going to be shared. Eric goes on to say that he would like any correspondence with the auditor to be CC'd to everyone on the Board. Melissa says that the FY2021 audit is ready to be signed off on in the next few days. Adam White says that if Melissa is okay with the summary being signed off on, he is okay with it as well. Adam asks if there were any major red flags found in the FY2021 audit. Melissa says there are none. Melissa says that starting in April, she can supply the financial reports monthly at the second meeting of every month, and the quarterly report every 3 months.

Town Warning Discussion: Jeff Parizo asks what is incorrect on the town warning. Melissa says there are just a few words 'Public Information Hearing' need to be inserted into the beginning of the warning. Jeff says that the Board has to ratify the corrected warning 30 days after the vote.

VII. REVIEW AND APPROVE WARRANTS

Adam White moves to have the Select Board Chair sign the warrants. Ron Bushway seconds. No discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

AnnaMarie Demars moves to adjourn the meeting at 7:08pm. Adam White seconds. No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.

Select Board Scribe: _____
Eric Godin

Select Board Chair: _____
Jeff Parizo

DRAFT