

Grand Isle Select Board
Minutes of the Meeting for
Monday, February 21st, 2022 at 6:00 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: Janine Banks; Elise Whittemore; Josie Leavitt; Couper Shaw; Nathan Mauser; Shawn Mercy; Andy Paradee; Shawn Mercy; Emily Clark; Melissa Boutin; Joe Longo; Tonya Poutry; Laura Heberbund; Howard Demars; Colleen Bushway; John Lafayette; Greta Brunswick; Ellen Paradee; Shannon Bundy; Susan Lawrence; Peter Reigelman; Peter Southwick; Jennifer Morway; Michael Inners; Lesa Tourville

Board Members to Amend Agenda for Matters Not Listed:
Town Report and 2021 Audit – Jeff – New Business

II. GUEST OPEN COMMENT

Carol Egan – Turn to Joy Daycare: Jeff Parizo introduces Carol Egan, of Turn to Joy Daycare, who is interested in occupying the Annex space. Carol summarizes her background working for the school system, and how she decided to open a daycare in her retirement. Carol says that she has evaluated the space and has developed two offers for the town in relation to her leasing the Annex. Carol's first choice is to invest \$25,000 into upgrades to the interior of the Annex, and in exchange, she would not pay any rent for the first two years, then in years 3, 4, and 5 the rent would be slowly scaled up to \$1,000 per month. The town would be responsible for upkeep of the exterior of the property, including mowing, plowing and exterior repairs, and Carol would be responsible for interior upkeep and utilities payments. Carol says the plan is to serve 18-20 pre-school aged children and then 10-15 school aged children. Carol provided the Board with estimates as to the costs to upgrade the interior of the Annex building. Carol's second proposal was for the town to put in the \$25,000. The Board agrees to have a special meeting to take up Carol's proposals on Thursday 24th, 2022 at 6:00pm via Zoom.

III. REVIEW AND APPROVE MEETING MINUTES OF 02/07/2022

Ron Bushway moves to approve the minutes of 02/07. Adam White seconds. No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.

IV. HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT / BUILDINGS FACILITIES MANAGER UPDATE

Ron says that number one western star for maintenance, and Ron says that the repair was successful. Ron says that the new bucket loader has arrived, and he has signed the related paperwork. Ron says that between the high winds and freezing rain the highway department has been busy keeping the roads clear. Ron says that from March 1st to May 15th, the town's roads will be posted.

Road and Bridge Standards: Ron says that we typically sign the road and bridge standards in April for a few years. Ron says that VTRANS sends out all of the forms. Ron says that there are applications in process for paving grants, and the road and bridge standards are required to qualify for these grants. ***Adam White moves to approve the certification of compliance for town road and bridge standards and network inventory, as presented to the Board. Eric Godin seconds. No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.***

Ron says that he has worked on the lock on the front door of the library and says that he is going to schedule someone to replace that door. Jean Prouty asks Ron if he can look at the shutters at the historical society, as the wind has displaced them. Ron says that the pediatric AED pads have arrived and he will work with David Leake to get them installed. Ron says that he should have some generator quotes for the town office and the town garage at the next meeting. Jeff Parizo asks if the town has enough sand to last the winter. Ron says it will be close.

V. NEW BUSINESS

NW Fiberworx Appointment: Adam White says that there are two applicants to be the Grand Isle representative to Northwest Fiberworx: One from Peter Southwick, a 30 year resident of Grand Isle resident and a wealth of experience in network engineering. The Second letter is from Michael Inners, who has lived in Grand Isle for over 2 decades and has been involved in prior efforts to widen broadband access in Grand Isle County, and his experience as an attorney. Adam says that both candidates are extremely qualified. Adam says that he would like to reach out to Fiberworx to see if both candidates could be involved, given their qualifications, and bring the issue up at the special meeting on Thursday.

Rescind Jan 17th Vote for Road Commissioner and Buildings Facility Manager: Adam says that at the last meeting the Board had incorrectly re-appointed Ron Bushway, as he had been appointed to a 3-year term in 2020, and was not due for reappointment yet. There is discussion about when the term was changed from one year to three years. It is determined that it was voted on to change the Road Commissioner to appointment rather than elected, which puts the length of the term in the hands of the Select Board. Josie Leavitt points out that there had been a special meeting in 2018 where an executive session ended with the Board appointing Ron to a three year term. There is discussion about the process to change the term. ***Adam White moves to rescind the motion made at the January 17th meeting appointing Ron Bushway to a 3 year term for Road Commissioner and Buildings Facilities Manager, as he was not due for reappointment. AnnaMarie DeMars seconds. No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes with 4 ayes, with Ron Bushway abstaining.***

Town Reports: Jeff Parizo asks Town Clerk Melissa Boutin when the town reports were available. Melissa says that they were available on Saturday at the transfer station, the town office and the library. Melissa says it will be on the town website soon. Melissa states the town office was open and she was there. Joe Longo confirms that reports were available at the transfer station on Saturday as well. Mitchel Richardson says that it was not on the website and the legal requirement was not followed. Ron says that he

got some calls about people frustrated that town reports didn't seem to be available. Jeff asks Adam White to reach out to VLCT for clarification as to whether the legal requirements were met. Ron Bushway says that he has already reached out to the Secretary of State's office to clarify the issue. It is agreed to discuss the issue again at a future meeting.

2021 Audit Report: Jeff Parizo asks if the 2021 audit report is available. Melissa Boutin says that the short form summary is out and in the town report. Melissa states that the long form report is still in the works, and that she will let the Board know when it is available. Jeff says he thought the Board would receive it ahead of the distribution of the town report.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

IT – Charles Hollan: Charles is not present at the meeting, so the issue is tabled for a future meeting. There is general discussion about what the IT responsibilities are and what tasks should be put on other people, and possible training for other people.

Mask Mandate: Adam White asks when is the time for the town office and town buildings to go from required to voluntary in regards to wearing masks. Jeff asks the opinions of the people who work in the Library and the Town Office, and is told by Susan Lawrence, Melissa Boutin and Colleen Bushway all agreed to remove the requirement and make masking voluntary. Josie Leavitt says that she thinks the mandate should stay in place until after town meeting. Jeff suggests that people having to wear a mask may discourage voting. ***Adam White moves to repeal it's August 30th 2021 decision to require masks in town owned buildings when interacting with the public, and to change it to 'masks are recommended or appreciated'. Ron Bushway seconds.*** Josie Leavitt asks if this couldn't wait until after a large concentration are going to be in the town office. ***No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote which passes 4-1, with Eric Godin voting nay.***

Fraud Questionnaire: Eric Godin explains that his issue with the fraud questionnaire was that all of that correspondence wasn't shared with the Board ahead of time, and that he understands that the questionnaire is standard practice for audits. Jeff goes over the questionnaire that he filled out, as did Ron Bushway.

3 Year Audit Questions: Jeff Parizo says that there are some more questions brought up by Bonnie Batchelder that he would like to address. Eric Godin says that he feels with one audit report saying things are good and the new auditor saying that there are problems with those reports, the next step should be to have the two auditors reconcile their reports with each other, rather than pose open ended questions in a Select Board meeting. There is discussion about how the questions from Bonnie Batchelder should be handled. AnnaMarie DeMars asks about the item of multiple paychecks to one person on the same day. Melissa explains that it does happen sometimes when vacation hours are paid out, or sometimes overtime hours are put into a separate check. AnnaMarie poses another question about budget reconciliations not matching. Melissa

says she needs specific examples from Ms. Batchelder. Jeff asks about certain CD's not showing up on the audit. Melissa explains that what is in question was a CD that the Select Board had decided to allow to expire, and the funds were transferred back into the town checking account. Melissa points out that CD schedule sent to Ms. Batchelder was incomplete, and only included the special fund CD's. Jeff asks about the start date of the \$350,000 CD. Melissa says that she provided the information at the last meeting, but the Board didn't take it. Melissa retrieves the paperwork from the file and gives it to the Board. Jeff says that the CD was never disclosed, which Melissa refutes, saying that it was included in all the town financial paperwork. Jeff questions the amount of money made on the CD. There is discussion about how the CD's are utilized. At this point Eric Godin objects to the questioning going on, saying that the questions that Jeff is asking would best be answered by having the two auditors speak to each other, rather than aggressively questioning the town treasurer. There is vigorous debate about how to proceed. Eric offers to reach out to the auditors to see about having them speak to each other to try and get answers as to why they are getting different findings at Mitchel Richardson's request. Susan Lawrence says that there has to be a basic understanding of municipal accounting to wrap ones head around some of the numbers. There is general discussion about how data should flow and how the town should proceed with the auditing process, as well as the town's general financial practices. Jean Prouty asks the Board if, with new members joining soon, would the Board vote to stop the audit? Jeff says that he will keep fighting for the audit. Bianca Adams asks if Board members Eric Godin and Adam White would vote to cancel the audit if a motion came before the Board. Eric and Adam both answer that they would not vote to terminate the audit without there being some kind of gross misconduct on the part of the auditor. Josie Leavitt says that there should be more training, to facilitate Board members being able to understand the financial numbers. Lesa Tourville suggests investing in the town clerk's office to help facilitate the distribution of information. Jeff Parizo apologizes to Melissa Boutin if she felt his tone was harsh.

VII. REVIEW AND SIGN WARRANTS

There is brief off-topic discussion about the Lister's position. It is determined that the Board can appoint someone to the Lister's board, and will take it up at the Thursday meeting.

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

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

AnnaMarie Demars moves to adjourn the meeting at 8:47pm. Adam White seconds. No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.

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