

Grand Isle Select Board Meeting October 7, 2022 06:00 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER at 6:00pm

Board Members Present: Josie Leavitt, Jeff Parizo, Adam White, Couper Shaw and Eric Godin

Community Members Present: Rachael Griggs, Diane Cota, Linda Effel, Randy Gover, Collen Bushway, Dwight Bullis, Ellen Paradee, Kristin Botala, Jean Prouty, Sue Campbell, Sue Lawrence, Joe Longo, Bill Stone, Mary Parizo, David Mahoney, Bianca Adams, Wendy Wilton, John Lafeyette and Melissa Boutin.

Board Members to Amend Agenda for Matters Not Listed:

None

II. GUEST OPEN COMMENT: None

III. REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES: Sept 19, 2022

Jeff Parizo motions to approve the Sept. 19, 2022 minutes. Josie Leavitt seconds. No discussion. Passes unanimously.

IV. GUESTS

Wendy Wilton – NEMRIC

Jeff Parizo has been working with Wendy on two different modules.

One for leave/vacation and one for fixed assets. Leave can be set up very easily in the payroll module we're already using. Only 3-4 people who have leave accruals. Leave time can be set up to accrue leave time and note leave time taken. How much they've earned, how much they've taken and how much they have left. This info will go on pay stubs so folks know how much time they've taken, or left. Reports can easily be printed about accrued leave. Easy to set up. We have been utilizing the payroll feature of this module but not the leave function. Melissa is keeping a ledger of leave time currently. It's not just in the system. This module will allow us to be transparent and keep track of leave time. Highway department has lost its leave notebook. So this will allow us to keep track of leave time. Selectboard is good with this moving forward.

Fixed assets is a module that is best used for larger towns with more fixed assets. Great deal of data this works best. Wendy recommends that we get the information about fixed assets from the last audit and keep the schedule of fixed assets on an excel spreadsheet this way we could schedule the depreciation ourselves. We don't have the depth of equipment that would warrant the module. She can't recommend this for us because of the cost and the limited assets.

Jeff Parizo asks does NEMRIC offer cloud storage.

Wendy Wilton: We offer operating from the cloud. So all of your data would be accessed from the cloud rather than the server at the Town Office. Currently, we are not cloud based. We back up nightly to the Nemric server. Wendy will get us prices for the cloud operation. "If the building burned down and we had the cloud, we could get new computers and be up and running the next day" Wendy will get us the cost of conversion Tuesday. **Eric** pointed out that the only problem with the cloud is if our internet is down, we cannot access our data. Our data is stored in the Town Offices.

Bill Stone: Are upgrades included for free?

Wendy: Yes

V. NEW BUSINESS

Selectboard Scribe Position Advertisement

After last meeting Jessica Mesic submitted her resignation as scribe, effective immediately. New scribe position will be advertised immediately, will use the same ad as last time. Deadline is Nov. 7th for the applications. Eric will coordinate the ad with the Islander and Josie will repost on Front Porch Forum.

FY23 Q1 Numbers

November 7th Selectboard Meeting

We should get these number by the Nov. 7th Selectboard meeting.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

IT RFP Review/Decision

Couper Shaw led the RFP search for the IT. There were four submissions. Three were local and two came in to see the town offices.

Softsages from Pennsylvania was removed from the running because they're not local and their proposal didn't fit what we needed. Also, their offer was less than favorable.

VTC Tech came and visited.

Rural Solutions also came and did a full onsite audit. Can help with a new phone system.

S&S submitted an offer at the best price, but they didn't come in and see what we really needed.

They're located in South Hero. They offered \$1,300 a month without really seeing how bad our situation was in town.

VTC Tech can help with phones, installations, training. They can help us work with NEMRIC.

VTC Tech and Rural Solutions can upgrade our phone systems to Voice Over IP System.

A discussion ensued about the various costs for each proposal. Hard to compare each because they each offer slightly different things.

VTC Tech then made a presentation about their silver package, gold and platinum plan. Different pricing for month to month or a three-year commitment. Gold plan allows for free set up of computers. Usually it's \$300 per computer. Our current computers, even while on the new end, are slow, and don't have enough memory. He recommends that we do the silver plan for three years, which will have \$300 per computer for set up. We'll need at least 7 computers. Most good new computers cost \$1,500. Most towns replace one or two computers a year, rather than all at once.

We've not spent the money on the computers in the past which is why we're looking at replacing all of them.

Coup: We should be comparing the VTC Tech gold plan to what Rural Solutions has to offer.

The Listers liked what Rural Solutions had to say when they came to visit. Rural Solutions cost per month: \$2,041.25 a month with a \$44,000 charge up front because they'd replace all the computers, rewire things, and set up new phone systems. They offer a 5 year warranty for refurbished computers \$800 for them or \$1,500 for new.

VTC Tech said buying blocks of tech (what Rural Solutions is proposing) can be counter intuitive, as the more they come in, the more it costs. Fixed fee agreement means they'll be more inclined to find a solution, this is the plan that VTC Tech will .

Costs:

Gold plan with business and back continuity \$2425 per month. He recommends moving to the NEMRIC cloud which will save us money. And moving us to One Drive which will save us the back up/server.

Couper: If we're using ARPA funds, is it easier to pay in a chunk or over three years. If we only have 2 years to spend the ARPA money, this could be a good way to go.

Jeff: We'll still need to budget after five years when the warranties run out.

Eric: Paying four times as much as we were seems like a lot, but we didn't get anything for the money before. And these prices are pretty standard for good IT support. He thinks the VTC Tech gold plan is the way to go.

Jeff: How much are we looking for infrastructure for all of this? How many computers do we have? How much for new computers?

Couper: If we use ARPA funds it'll save departments money. But they'll need to budget for it after we use the ARPA.

VTC Tech: Pre-pay contract for three years we get a 10% discounts. They offered to give a plan for replacing all the computers.

Adam: We should develop a schedule for replacement of phones and computers.

Coup: We need to buy better computers when we schedule them.

Adam: Do an initial buy of computers first.

Jeff: SB pays for 4 new computers a year. Let's keep it centralized to our budget.

Adam: This all should be in the general fund, not coming out of individual departments.

VTC Tech: We keep track of what needs to get replaced.

Joe Longo: What about all the laptops that are out there?

Adam: VTC Tech's proposal addresses these. We have 25 laptops out there. Do you do on going training for staff. They do phishing testing and training. \$4 per email account to do this. \$40 month for the base package.

Rachael Griggs: Have any references been checked?

Diane Cota: What does Couper think about both of these companies?

Couper Shaw: Discussed the differences between the companies.

Eric Godin: Let's check references before we decide anything.

Collen Bushway: The library will be in this, right? So the librarian can call as many times as she needs.

Jeff Parizo: We have no way of knowing who is calling or how often.

Jean Prouty: Have had a great experience with Dave Mahoney at VTC Tech ten years ago at her job.

Bill Stone: Hard to control a block plan to your liking. Surprised how fast you use up a block plan.

Adam: Block plan is a concern. Half hour minimum.

Jeff: Need to think about this a little more. Let's table this till the next meeting.

Coup: 'll call the references.

Adam: Push this to Oct. 17th Meeting and we can decide.

Josie: Do we have the ARPA money now?

Adam: Yes and we can use it.

Linda Effel: Are you going to have a motion to table the discussion?

Eric: It will just continue as old business on the next agenda.

Adam: We will make a decision between VCT Tech and Rural Solutions. Couper will call the references for both and then we'll make a decision.

Diane Cota: Will Coup share the references?

Coup: Yes

Jeff: What's the start date?

Coup: Nov. 1st. for one year with an option to renew according the RFP. We'll have to do three years for these.

Adam: Can you ask each for draft contract for the attorney to review.

Coup: yes.

ZAO Salary Adjustment Discussion

Discussion centered on when the salary increase for ZAO began. It set Jan. 1st because that's when Scott Brown's contract was renewed.

Eric: My recollection was that his pay increase should have started Jan. 1.

Jeff: Scott's been very professional and he's not held us over a barrel.

Adam motions for the salary increase for Scott Brown the ZAO to have taken effect Jan. 1, 2022 rather than July 1st 2022 and Melissa will work to pay him back pay. **Eric** seconds. Motion carries unanimously

Turn to Joy – Evacuation Plan Attorney Response

Jeff: Carol from Turn to Joy has signed this. Our attorney drafted this, her attorney signed off on it.

Jeff makes a motion we approve our license agreement that our attorney wrote up with Turn to Joy and have our Selectboard Chair sign it on behalf of the Selectboard.

Couper seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

Personnel Policy Discussion:

Adam: Still need some things worked out. Juneteenth isn't listed as a holiday. We also need to tighten up the leave policy. After 6 months you accrue one week of vacation. Now the highway department leave time, if you use sick time or leave time it doesn't count as overtime if you use it during your 40 hour week. Adam wants the Selectboard to think about the policy. He'll send the policy around for Selectboard to review.

Jeff: Highway overtime Nov-March. Anything over 8 hours in a day counts as overtime. If they plowed for 12 hours a day, they get 4 hours of overtime.

Rachael: Wouldn't that go against the state.

Jeff: We took that policy from the state.

Coup: Including vacation time as possible overtime is not a good policy.

Adam: Will send the policy with his suggestions, and think about ways to be fair about our hourly employees. Selectboard will review the policy and be ready to discuss at the next meeting.

Internal Controls:

Adam: We'll be using NEMRIC for vacation/leave so that covers one of the 18 points that Batchelder. We should be cross referencing our controls with Batchelder's 18 points

Jeff: There's an accordion file with all the invoices in it. Adam should review. Warrants get approved and Adam signs off on the invoices. So that's two sets of eyes and one more thing we're doing from the Batchelder list.

Adam: Josie and I will continue to work on the internal controls.

Josie: There is a lot of them. We've done a good job so far.

Adam: It's what we make a priority and asking every department do you need more training? And then get them the training

Batchelder update:

Jeff read a statement as a response to Selectboard from our 9/19/22 meeting. Audit is still in a draft format. Batchelder's advice is to not reproduce the 2019, 2020 audit because the errors have been addressed by RHR Smith. She still needs the following information: Provide invoice from school and memo showing what you (Melissa) got paid. Were these items listed on your W2. Bonnie is still waiting for the information to complete the audit. Bonnie said Melissa is paid on behalf of the school. "The school pays their own payroll, typically". The Selectboard will work to separate the school invoices from the town.

Jeff continued, "I would ask the Selectboard to direct Melissas to give Batchelder the requested information for 2018,2019 and 2020 so we can put this audit to bed." She needs to the finish the audit Jeff's three questions:

- provide detail for back up memo
- Reasoning for school wages not in payroll reports
- were these items included in your W2

She needs this information to finish the management letter."

The question we've not answered is do we want her to produce an audit for 2019 and 2020 when she feels that the audit will be the same as RHR Smith's for a savings of \$7,600.

Linda Effel: But Batcheleder was talking about the 2018 audit.

Josie Leavitt: I'm confused about why Batchelder said on 8/4/22 she had everything she needed for the audit and now she's saying she needs these things from 2019-2020 that are dialed in only to Melissa.

Adam: Bonnie asked 2 questions and **Jeff**, you only want one question answered. The first question was about Melissa's vacation in 2020

Jeff: Bonnie was content with our answers. We discussed it and our policy added another week. We have proof of the extra week approved in 2017 policy. The next question is that Bonnie is looking for more back up about the school payments to Melissa. Have we had any contact with the school.

Adam: Not that I'm aware.

Melissa: Pay types are listed as they are each and every year. Can provide receipts from NEMRIC that the school has paid for each invoice they've received. It would list your stipend.

Adam: Melissa, is this payroll pay type something Batchelder would have received when she came in July?

Melissa: She did, she left the office with it.

Jeff: Can you provide that invoice information from the school to the town.

Melissa: It's not an invoice generated by NEMRIC it's a memo that includes many things, like postage.

Jeff: Can you send it again and give it to Adam?

Adam: We'll have to see with Melissa's computer crashing if we can get the memo. They should have a copy of it.

Adam: So, Tuesday Melissa is going to send payroll report, again for 2018,2019, 2020. I will call Melissa to see if she can find a back up memo, if not we'll work with the school for memo to see if they can show the payment to Melissa for the school. Last outstanding question, what do we want to do with Bonnie's aug. 4th question about doing the 2019 or 2020 audit reports.

Jeff: I think that's a no brainer. The financial reports have been corrected. RHR Smith corrected everything. We've got a new auditor and they can start from the 2021 audit.

Adam: I need a motion on the question of the remaining years.

Coup: I think we should make her do all three years. We paid for it. She has all the information. We already wasted the money and we might as well make her do the work.

Adam: She reviewed those two years and doesn't object to what RHR Smith and believes they're accurate audits.

Eric: At this point I don't want to pay her \$7,600 for what is going to be a duplicate of RHR Smith.

Coup: I don't think we should see this as a good thing. We got scammed. We shouldn't see this as a win.

Joe Longo: This was never put into the Islander, was there any money missing?

Jeff: Bonnie said no.

Adam: This will need to be reflected in our town report for town meeting day. The Selectboard will need to have its own letter reflecting this outcome of the audit. Money was not embezzled, money was not misplaced and let them know what the actual findings are.

Coup: And it still isn't in the Islander.

Jeff: We can't control what the Islander writes.

Eric: Let's move forward please.

Joe Longo: the fact that she wants to see a W2 means it's a witch hunt.

Adam: When this is done it'll be on the Town's page and our Facebook page. This document will be readily available for everyone to read. Here are the action items:

Tuesday Melissa is going to send payroll report, again for 2018,2019, 2020. **Adam** will work with Melissa to get a copy of the Memo for the school from the school's business office.

Jeff: She should send her W2 to Batchelder.

Adam: She should be able to breakdown which department has paid her x amount, and that will be reflected on the W2. For the final question, should we have Batchelder do 2019-2020 for \$7,600? Or just accept the numbers for those two years were analyzed and agreed on.

Bill Stone: Can you get a simple letter from Batchelder stating that numbers are good for 2019 and 2020.

Adam: Makes a motion, at the suggestion of Batchelder and Associates we do not have them reproduce the 2019 2020 audit reports with a savings of \$7,600. It is noted that Batchelder agrees with the numbers that RHR Smith got for those two years.

Josie seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

Highway Department:

Ron Bushway couldn't be at the meeting. Adam shared the report. The John Deere mower from 1992 has broken. We can get \$20,000 for trade in and get a new one for \$74,000 with the trade in.

Adam: With that we can ask Ron for an update on the Oct. 17th meeting.

Adam: Will talk with Brad on Tuesday about it.

John Lafayette: when you bought the Kubota I thought it was to replace the John Deere. Why are we replacing the John Deere when it's already been replaced.

Town Garage blue prints cannot be shared. Town of Charlotte reached out about using the plans for the replacement of their garage.

Joe Longo: Will there be a record of what was decided in the executive session?

Adam: Yes.

Adam: I makes a motion at 8:19pm to go into Executive Session for the purposes of discussing the Lake Champlain Transportation appeal to review attorney correspondence regarding a potential change of decision from the DRB.

Eric seconds, motion carries unanimously.

Josie makes a motion to come out of Executive Session at 8:26pm. **Jeff** makes a motion that we go with the opinion of our town attorney, David Rugh with his input of the LCT issue and from his letter dated. Oct. 6th.

Eric: We have two motions on the table. We have to address Josie's first. I'll second the motion to come out of executive session. Passes unanimously.

Jeff has a motion on the table. I would also like to second that.

Adam: Technically, Jeff made the motion in executive session, so technically he has to do it again.

Jeff: makes a motion that we take the opinions and suggestions of our attorney David Rugh as he put forth to us in his Oct. 6th letter with regards to the Lake Champlain Transportation issue.

Eric seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

Jeff makes a motion **Adam** signs the warrants as SB chair. Josie seconds. Passes unanimously

Jeff makes a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:28pm. Coup seconds. Passes unanimously