

Grand Isle Select Board
Grand Isle Town Office 9 Hyde Rd, Grand Isle VT
Minutes of the Meeting for Monday January 29, 2024

CALL TO ORDER: Jeff Parizo calls the meeting to order at 6pm.

Board Members Present: Jeff Parizo, Josie Leavitt, Jen Morway, Ellen Howrigan, Laura Heaberlin, Adison Rounds, Zak Kanouse

Board Members via Zoom:

Community Members Present: Colleen Bushway, Ron Bushway, Jean Prouty, Lucille Campbell, Glenda Leake, David Leake, Emily Clark, Melissa Boutin

Community Members via Zoom: Esther Blow, Sue Lawrence, Joe Longo, John Lafayette, Mike Donoghue, KC Fantoni

Add to Agenda: Jen Morway adds Selectboard Standard Operating Procedures to old business, Jeff Parizo tables Livestock Ordinance.

Public Comment: Emily Clark asks if they know the results of petitions and who may be running for various seats. Melissa Boutin says that there are two people running for the remainder of the 5-year term opening for the Cemetery Commission, Sue Lawrence for a 5-year term for Cemetery, Jake St. Pierre for a 5-year term for Cemetery, Trever Boutin for Constable, Melissa Boutin for Town Clerk and Town Treasurer, Deb Lang for the School director, Ron Bushway for Town Moderator, and 2-year Selectboard, Jen Morway for 3-year Selectboard, and Sue Willard for Library. Jen Morway asks Melissa Boutin if there are any positions that didn't have anyone run, Melissa Boutin says yes, the open position for CIUUSD Moderator.

Lucille Campbell asks if the town has any thoughts on the supposed influx of tourists for the eclipse in April. The selectboard discusses the issue, noting that the Islands do not have enough rooms to book for the kind of influx St. Alban's has reported to be expecting.

Jeff Parizo announces that there is a meeting for the Franklin and Grand Isle County Selectboards for training with VLCT and the Northwest Regional Plan, that because they will not be discussing Selectboard matters a warning is not needed in order for the Grand Isle Selectboard to attend.

Jeff Parizo notes that LCATV will be holding a Meet & Greet at North Hero Town Hall on Wednesday January 31st.

Review and Approve Minutes: *Josie Leavitt makes a motion to approve the January 8, 2024 minutes with corrections. Ellen Howrigan seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.*

Guests:

Emily Clark, Planning Commission- Motion to re-confirm Select Board support of

Village Center Designation application: Emily Clark requests that the Selectboard reconfirm their support of the Village Center Designation application. Emily Clark explains that it was confirmed more than six months ago and need that to be reconfirmed.

Jen Morway makes a motion to reconfirm the Selectboard's support of the Village Center Designation application. Ellen Howrigan seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.

Highway Department Update: Ron says that they are keeping their eyes on the culverts. Ron Bushway says he is investigating culvert options. Ron Bushway says that Sandy from Charlebois would be happy to attend a meeting to discuss insurance options for the new truck. Jeff Parizo says they will add him as a guest for the next selectboard meeting, that Ron Bushway will schedule that with Sandy. Jen Morway asks Ron Bushway about Vantine's culvert. Ron Bushway says they have to put it on hold, that they are waiting on a grant for the gravel work needed for that project. Jeff Parizo explains that they have certificate for highway mileage that the Selectboard needs to sign, that this takes place every year, that the current certificate expires February 10, 2024. Jeff Parizo explains that this is for the State of Vermont to certify how many miles of road that Grand Isle has, that it is for 37.715 miles and 1.14 for Lover's Lane (formerly noted as a Class 4) - the same as every year.

Jen Morway motions that the Selectboard sign the Highway Certificate of Mileage. Josie Leavitt seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.

Buildings Facilities Manager Update: Ron Bushway says Rowley will inspect the tank at the Town Office next week.

IT Update:

Provider Transition Update: Jen Morway explains that SNS will officially take over on February 1st.

Quote Request: Jen Morway (Jen) says there are two quotes from SNS that she would like the Selectboard to approve and sign. Jen explains that the first quote is for \$5,662.98 and includes everything needed to update the current network as well as 3 years' worth of licensing. Jen says they aren't ready to move forward with the second quote, that the second quote lists Microsoft GCC licensing that they won't be ready to move to until the end of February, that SNS wanted to make sure to give them the prices for that so they can plan for it. Jen explains there will be another quote coming through for the labor involved with moving the current licenses over to the new licensing, that they are still working on confirming what the town has for licenses currently. Jen says that the quote needs to be signed by February 1st which is when the licensing is due to be renewed. Jeff Parizo says that the soonest they will be able to sign it is at the next meeting, February 5th. Jen says that that may result in 4 days of no email. Jeff Parizo explains they cannot sign it if they do not know what the updated price is for the licensing. Ellen Howrigan asks if there is a ballpark amount for the total. Jen explains that there is, that they prices vary slightly. The Selectboard decides to motion with a limit to the amount approved to allow the licensing to be renewed. Ellen Howrigan asks if they are considering setting up multi-factor authentications for sign-ins. Jen explains that is part of this quote.

Josie Leavitt makes a motion for the Selectboard Chair to sign the quote from SNS for up to \$600 to provide up to two months of Microsoft Licensing for nine users at \$24 a month per user. Jen Morway seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.

Jen Morway makes a motion to have the Selectboard Chair sign the SNS quote #SNS27922 dated November 16th in the amount of \$5,662.98. Ellen Howrigan seconds. Jeff Parizo asks if they have the money for this quote. Jen Morway explains that they do, that the IT budget had \$25,000, that they only have spent \$1,337.50 so far. Jen Morway says that for SNS monthly charges from February 1st to June 30th will total \$7,500. Jen Morway says there is \$4,228.25 in the “Computer” Budget that needs to get moved into the “IT” Budget, that Melissa Boutin is working on that. Jen Morway says that after spending the \$5,662.98 for the quote they are discussing, the total spent will be \$19,748.73. Jen Morway says that leaves \$5,251.27. Jen Morway explains additional Microsoft licensing, new email accounts, and Lister computers will be future expenditures within this year for the town. ***No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.***

Jen says she will email the selectboard all of those totals.

Jen explains that they would like to transfer the town’s domain back to GoDaddy and that they would like to set-up the GoDaddy monthly payments on the credit card so it can auto-renew. Jen explains that it is for \$22.99 a year. Jen explains that this would be for two domains- the .org and the .gov.

Jeff Parizo makes a motion to approve GoDaddy to use their credit card for up to \$50 a year for the two domain names. Josie Leavitt seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.

New Business:

Annual Town Meeting Warning: Jeff Parizo makes a motion to approve the Information Meeting for Saturday March 2nd at 10am at the school Jen Morway seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.

Jeff Parizo (Jeff) asks Melissa Boutin (Melissa) about line item 10 which reads *Shall the legal voters of the Town approve the annual sum of \$75,000 for the Grand Isle Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. Capital Equipment Reserve which is an increase of \$45,000?* Melissa confirms that she corrected that, that it read \$25,000 and she corrected it to \$45,000. Melissa points out that she also had to correct an amount in item 5, that it incorrectly said \$1,188,401 and she corrected it to \$1,188,101. Jeff asks about item 11, that he had \$575,780, Melissa says that is the correct amount and she corrected that. Ellen Howrigan asks Melissa to go over the budget spreadsheet to review the amounts that bring us to that total. Melissa directs everyone to page 4 of the budget spreadsheet, they go over those amounts. Jen Morway (Jen) explains that she spoke with Melissa about moving some of the funds in “Computers” into the “IT” budget and to further breakdown, into line items, what the charges within the “Computer” category are. Jen says she would like to reduce the amount in “Computers” from \$10,000 to \$5,000 and move that to “IT” to cover the IT costs for the year. Jen explains that the charge for Internet was rounded up to \$3,400, the NEMRC subscription was rounded up to \$8,000, Internet-based dues such as Zoom and GoDaddy will total about \$1,200- all totaling \$12,600. Jen explains that the “Computer” budget could now go towards actual computer hardware, rather than the fees and subscriptions related to

computers. Jeff says they will have to add \$7,600. Ellen Howrigan says the new total would come to \$1,188,701.

Jen Morway makes a motion to take the \$10,000 from Computers and reduce it to \$5,000, and then add Internet which is \$3,400, NEMRC Subscriptions which as \$8,000, and Internet-based dues and subscriptions such as Zoom and GoDaddy \$1,200, totaling \$12,600. Josie Leavitt seconds. No further Discussion. Selectboard Chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.

Josie Leavitt makes a motion to approve the Annual Town Meeting Warning. Jen Morway seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard Chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.

FY 2023 Audit: Josie Leavitt says that the auditor is attending the February 19th meeting to walk everyone through the 2023 audit. The selectboard discusses the management letter and put Audit Letter on the agenda for the February 5th meeting.

ARPA Reporting: ***Jen Morway makes a motion to approve Jeff Parizo to fill out the final ARPA reporting. Ellen Howrigan seconds.*** Emily Clark notes that he may need to get the exact amount from Melissa Boutin. ***No further discussion. Selectboard Chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.***

Jen Morway says that she would like to give the ability to fill out and file reports to the Selectboard chair without needing to ask for an approval motion each time. Jen Morway explains that they would not want grants to be affected due to needing a motion and needing to call a selectboard meeting each time to do so. Jen Morway says this could be part of the Selectboard Standard Operating Procedure.

Appointed Town Treasurer Discussion: Jeff Parizo (Jeff) explains that he would like to add a question on the ballot, if the town should move to appoint the Town Treasurer. Jeff reads the question: *Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to appoint a town treasurer as provided in 17 V.S.A. §2651f?*

Ellen Howrigan makes a motion to approve. Josie Leavitt (Josie) asks Jeff to explain his reasoning. Jeff says that the town is getting busier, that the town should be able to have the most qualified candidate. Jeff explains that as an elected position, the candidate needs to be a Grand Isle resident and that they do not need to have any experience in order to petition for the role. Jeff goes on to explain that as the town gets busier, the Town Clerk position has more on their plate and that separating the two roles might be beneficial to both roles. Josie comments that they would then need to figure out how to pay for two positions, that they have not budgeted for things like health benefits if they were to create two separate positions. Jeff says they could discuss that in February meetings. Josie says that, if that question passed, they would have a short window of 45 days to find and hire the best candidate, Jeff confirms that is correct. Josie is concerned about budgeting for two positions. Jeff says that they have enough money in the budget now, that they will be able to figure that out. Jen Morway (Jen) asks what the probationary period for health insurance for new employees is, Jeff says right now it is 6 months but if the new personnel policy is approved, it will be 90 days. Emily Clark comments that in the past, the clerk position and treasurer position were combined in order to offer full-time work to a person but now the clerk position is more of a full-time position in itself. Jeff notes that there have been several articles written on the Vermont towns that have moved to appointed town treasurers since the state legislature allowed the ability to do so, that moving to an appointed position allows the selectboards a little more control over what can be expected from that position, that other towns have seen the need to do so for

similar reasons. Josie says she likes the concept of an appointed town treasurer because they would be able to require that the person in that position being fully qualified, that as an elected position anyone who gets enough signatures can become treasurer regardless of having the skills needed, that the town has been lucky so far in that regard but looking to the future they would be able to ensure that position is filled by someone with the qualifications needed. Ellen Howrigan notes that as an elected position, there is no recourse that can be taken if that the person elected into that position fails to do the job sufficiently. The select board discusses other towns that have run into problems with elected town treasurers. The select board discusses how they would manage an appointed position, that any management decision would have to be a quorum of the select board. Josie says that they would have to make sure that the appointed position does not get pulled in 5 different directions from each board member, that they would need to come up with a process. Jeff says they could detail that process in their Rules & Procedures. Josie notes that another benefit to moving to appointed would be dropping the risk of losing a great employee because they lost an election. Lucille Campbell asks what happens if they cannot hire someone within the 45 days. Jeff says that NEMRC could fill in while they search for a good candidate, that they have done that for other towns. Emily Clark says that the selectboard could reach out to other towns that have moved to an appointed town treasurer and see what the process was like for them. Ron Bushway (Ron) comments that there might be some confusion if this is put on the ballot for town meeting day if people are, in one section, voting for a town treasurer and then in questions voting whether they will instead appoint the town treasurer. Ron says that those who vote for the town treasurer will feel as though it was the will of the voters to elect that person. Josie says that is where voter education would be important. Emily Clark says that the way the question is worded could be clarified in order to better educate the voters on what they are voting for. Glenda Leake comments that this is confusing and is worried that the voters will be confused as well, that the information meeting is for voter education but that it is not well attended. Jeff reads an explanation of appointed vs elected town treasurer that could be put under the ballot question to further explain:

This article is being put before the voters proactively. It is not the result of any current or past issues. A few years ago, state law was changed to allow voters to make this change.

According to the Vermont league of Cities and Towns, 30 or so towns in 2022 and 20 or so towns asked last year for the voters to make this change.

Election

This position is currently elected to a term of 3-years. To be considered for the position, all that is required is Grand Isle residency and the collection of 19 signatures in order to be placed on the ballot. This opportunity generally occurs every three years when the preceding term expires.

As elected positions, in the event of wrongdoing, malfeasance, neglect of duty etcetera, there is no mechanism to remove the individual from their position. Vermont Statutes do not contain a recall provision. As a result, an elected individual would need to resign, or the voters would need to wait until the end of their 3-year term to elect a replacement. Since the positions serve at the will of the voters, the voters do not need a reason to not re-elect someone.

Appointment

Appointment would mean that the individual is hired for the position by the Selectboard. For the upcoming vacancy, if the position is approved by the voters, then the position would be advertised, and the most qualified individual would be appointed.

Appointment of this position by the Selectboard provides a finer level of oversight than election does as the Selectboard would have the authority to remove an individual from this position. That authority is not without limit though. Specifically, any removal would need to be for "just cause." In other words, the Selectboard would need a reason that justifies removal. As an appointed position, there is no specific term of employment, and the individual can serve in the position until they resign or are removed or "cause".

Josie says she feels that explanation is punitive and could be rewritten to showcase the positive aspects of moving to appointed, that is should be more clear. The selectboard discusses what they would need to do in order to have this put on this election's ballot. Josie says this is a lot of work that they would have to do at this meeting, that it would be rushed if they did that, that they should take the time to research different aspects of this potential change to make sure they get it right. Josie asks if they could put this on the November ballot. The selectboard discusses this idea.

Ellen Howrigan rescinds her motion.

The selectboard tables this item to discuss potentially doing this for the November election at a future meeting. Josie says that each selectboard member should contact towns that have a vote to move to an appointed town treasurer so they can start researching what each town has experienced. Jeff asks Angie Low to put this item on the first agenda in April.

Appropriations & Other Ballot Items: Jeff Parizo (Jeff) says that Island Arts has submitted their petition. Jeff notes that the VNA and Parent Child Center did not submit petitions this year. Josie Leavitt says that the Food Shelf attempted but was unable to gather enough signatures.

DocuSign Discussion: Angie Low (Angie) says after going through signing the policies earlier in the month, she looked into pricing for DocuSign to see if that might be an option the selectboard would like to consider. Jeff Parizo (Jeff) asks if that is a subscription, Angie says yes. Jeff asks if municipalities can use that, Josie says she is not sure but will find out. Jen Morway asks how much it costs, Angie says that the Personal Plan is \$10 a month and the Standard Plan is \$25 a month, that she thinks they would only need the personal plan.

Model Investment Policy: The selectboard looks over the model investment policy and agree that it looks good. Jeff Parizo asks Angie Low to modify it to say Grand Isle.

Jeff Parizo makes a motion to approve the investment policy from VLCT. Jen Morway seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.

Old Business:

Town General Budget: (Discussed under Annual Town Meeting Warning)

Transfer Station Insurance Discussion: Jeff Parizo says that they received a check from VLCT for \$11,557.66 for the accident that occurred at the transfer station. Josie Leavitt asks Ron Bushway if that will be enough to fix the damage, Ron Bushway says yes.

Generator Grant: Jen Morway says that the grant application for the generator has been completed and it is ready to be submitted. Emily Clark asks how much is it for, Jen Morway says it is for \$35,000. Jen Morway explains that it needs to be signed by Jeff Parizo and Melissa Boutin.

Josie Leavitt makes a motion for the Chair and Town Treasurer to sign the grant application for the town garage generator. Jeff Parizo seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard Chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously. Jen Morway says the last thing she will need is the certificate of insurance with Vermont Homeland Security named, Jeff Parizo says she can reach out to PACIF and get that certificate of insurance.

Boot Policy Discussion: Jeff Parizo explains that he drafted a Grand Isle Safety Toed Footwear Policy aka Boot Policy. Jeff Parizo reads the policy:

Purpose: The purpose of this safety boot policy is to establish and maintain high standards of safety in the workplace for Grand Isle Highway and Transfer Station personnel.

Reason: Consistent with VOSHA and best practices, employees who have exposure to foot crush hazards-such as in municipal highway operations and transfer station operations must wear safety toe footwear.

Requirement: Grand Isle Town Highway and Transfer Station personnel shall purchase and wear while working for the Town of Grand Isle a high-top work boot with safety toe is required it must meet ASTM-F2413-11. Footwear that meets this requirement will be labeled as such. This protects the foot from crush hazards and reduces the potential for ankle sprains.

Reimbursement: Full time highway & transfer station employees will receive a boot allowance of up to \$200/fiscal year as long as the boots meet the requirements set forth in this policy. Part time highway & transfer station employees will receive a boot allowance of up to \$200/fiscal 2 years as long as the boots meet the requirements set forth in this policy. Employees shall provide a copy of the receipt with boot requirement documentation to their supervisor for reimbursement.

Josie Leavitt makes a motion to approve the boot policy with the correction of one pair of boots per fiscal year. Jen Morway seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard Chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.

Credit Card Policy Appendix: ***Josie Leavitt makes a motion to approve the change to the credit card policy appendix. Jeff Parizo seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard Chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.***

Selectboard Standard Operating Procedures: Jen Morway says that she would like Angie Low to put together Standard Operating Procedures for the Selectboard and have it ready for the first meeting in March.

Administrative Check-In:

Jeff- ARPA report, Contact VNA/Parent Child Center, Send Ron approved Boot Policy

Josie- Get list of towns that have voted about appointing treasurers, Ask Town Attorney about Docusign for the Selectboard

Jen- Contact PACIF for certificate of insurance.

Ellen- Get names to contact from Josie and contact towns re: appointed town treasurer

Review and Sign Warrants: Josie Leavitt makes a motion for the selectboard chair to review and sign the warrants. Jen Morway seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard Chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.

Adjournment: Ellen Howrigan makes a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:28pm. Jen Morway seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard Chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.