

**Grand Isle Select Board**  
**Grand Isle Town Office 9 Hyde Rd, Grand Isle VT**  
**Minutes of the Emergency Meeting for Saturday February 3, 2024**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Jeff Parizo calls the meeting to order at 9am.

**Board Members Present:** Jeff Parizo, Ellen Howrigan, Jennifer Morway, Josie Leavitt

**Board Members via Zoom:**

**Community Members Present:** Ron Bushway, Jean Prouty, Emily Clark

**Community Members via Zoom:** Mike Donoghue, Esther Blow, Larry Cherrier, Lucille Campbell, Mary Parizo

**New Business:**

**Correction of Town Meeting Warning:** Ellen Howrigan (Ellen) explains that at the selectboard meeting held on Monday January 29<sup>th</sup>, the Selectboard went over the warning for the Annual Town Meeting and approved it to be signed. Ellen goes on to explain that she attended the Board of Civil Authority (BCA) meeting on Thursday February 1<sup>st</sup>, which was also attended by Selectboard member Josie Leavitt (Josie). Josie notes that she attended that meeting via Zoom and was not able to view the documents they reviewed at the BCA meeting. Ellen says that she reviewed the names on the ballots, other corrected typos that were found. Ellen says she did not have her Selectboard materials with her at the BCA meeting and so could not compare the warning with what they had signed off on at the January 29<sup>th</sup> Selectboard meeting. Ellen explains that once she left the BCA meeting, she went home and compared the warning the Selectboard approved with the warning that the BCA reviewed at their meeting and saw that there were differences. Ellen explains that #4 was different and #10 was missing from the warning. Ellen says that the document presented to the BCA on Thursday was not the same document that the Selectboard signed off on Monday. Ellen says that the official ballot document, on page 2, #4 is not what the Selectboard approved and that the dollar amount for #10 was incorrect, that it was for the Fire Department, that it was \$30,000 higher than what the Selectboard had allocated and approved. Ellen asks Melissa Boutin (Melissa) what happened. Melissa explains that she added language to #4 to include the statutes related to that item, that she was hoping that at least three Selectboard members were present at the BCA meeting in order to make that change. Melissa explains that the amount for the Fire Department showed up twice and she made that correction. Ellen says that if three members of the Selectboard attended the BCA meeting and agreed to make a change like that, it would violate Open Meeting Law, that the Selectboard cannot make Selectboard decisions outside a warned Selectboard meeting. Melissa says she believed that because the BCA meeting was warned, and that the Selectboard are also members of the BCA that the change would be able to be made, that she was not aware that it would violate Open Meeting Law for the Selectboard. Ellen explains that only the Selectboard is able to make those changes, that the BCA cannot make those kinds of changes. Ellen explains that she is disturbed that a signed legal document was changed after it was signed. Jen Morway (Jen) comments that in today's current climate surrounding elections, it is very important to handle elections with precision and care. Josie comments that she does not feel like these errors were nefarious, that it

appears to be an honest mistake, that the Selectboard should now work to fix this error. Jen comments that a mistake made is not what she is concerned about, that she is concerned that a legal document was presented with her signature that was different than the document she signed. Melissa reiterates that she added statutory language to #4 and fixed #10. Jen explains that those edits went against state statute. Jen says that the Selectboard has been working diligently to create policies and procedures and enforcing them, that the town has been doing a great job following those, that they need everyone to follow rules, policies, and procedures. Jen says that there needs to be checks and balances in place to ensure these types of mistakes stop occurring. Jeff notes that the warning for the Town Meeting is under the control of the Selectboard, not the BCA or anyone else. Jeff and Josie comment that the process for the Annual Town Meeting Warning needs to be documented and planned for better in the future. The Selectboard goes through the warning line by line. The selectboard comes across a statute in #4 that needs to be changed, VSA § 4792 needs to be changed to VSA § 4773. Jen asks if this change was advised by the town attorney, Jeff confirms. The Selectboard asks Melissa to delete the extra spaces, for the font to be the uniform, and to move "Attest" to accompany the signature line. Melissa makes the requested corrections, prints out the newly edited warning and gives it to the Selectboard. The Selectboard reviews the warning line by line.

***Jeff Parizo makes a motion to approve the official warning of the Annual Town Meeting of Grand Isle Vermont to be signed on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024. Josie Leavitt seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard Chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.***

The Selectboard signs the official warning. The Selectboard ask Angie Low to post the warning physically, submit it to the Islander, and post on the town website.

***Adjournment: Jeff Parizo makes a motion to adjourn at 10:02am. Josie Leavitt seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard Chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.***