

Grand Isle Select Board
Grand Isle Town Office 9 Hyde Rd, Grand Isle VT
Minutes of the Meeting for Monday April 1, 2024

CALL TO ORDER: Selectboard Chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the meeting to order at 6:01pm.

Board Members Present: Jeff Parizo, Ron Bushway, Jen Morway, Ellen Howrigan

Board Members via Zoom:

Community Members Present: Emily Clark, Melissa Boutin, Glenda Leake, David Leake, Colleen Bushway, Jean Prouty, Sue Lawrence, Sylvia Jensen, Dwight Bullis, Angie Low

Community Members via Zoom: Jim Muir, Esther Blow, Joe Longo, Mike Donoghue, Lucille Campbell, Lynda Morgan, Shannon Bundy

Add to Agenda:

Public Comment:

Review and Approve Minutes: *Jen Morway makes a motion to approve the March 18, 2024 minutes with corrections. Ellen Howrigan seconds. Selectboard Chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.*

Guests:

Sylvia Jensen, Assessment District: Sylvia Jensen (Sylvia) introduces herself as a board member of the Champlain Islands Unified Union School District (CIUUSD) representing the Isle of La Motte. Sylvia explains that she has been researching and presenting about Tax Assessment Districts. Sylvia give the selectboard members documents she brought with her. Sylvia goes over the state statute (32 V.S.A. s.5403) that allows for tax assessment districts. Sylvia goes over how many parcels each town in the CIUUSD has, asking Sue Lawrence how many Grand Isle has: Grand Isle ~1,300, North Hero- 1,200, Isle La Motte- 852. Sylvia says that the CLA has gone down in each town due to real estate sales being higher than the Grand List value. Sylvia notes that the CLA has not dropped as much in Grand Isle as other towns due to the number of parcels. Sylvia goes over the documents. Sylvia asks Sue Lawrence how they would improve the CLA, Sue Lawrence explains that a town-wide reappraisal would bring the value of the properties back up to 100%. Jen Morway (Jen) comments that she feels this should be a conversation Sylvia should have with all of the Grand Isle Listers, noting that Sue Lawrence is the only lister present for this discussion. Sylvia explains that if they create an assessment district it will reduce volatility and thus reduce tax increases. Sylvia notes that there are currently no tax assessment districts in Vermont, that if they move forward with this that they will be the first. Jen notes that Grand Isle and North Hero are more comparable than Isle La Motte. Sylvia notes that is due to the number of parcels. Sylvia explains that she is presenting this as a pilot program, and that a pilot program might include receiving state funding for a pilot program. Jeff Parizo asks if South Hero could join the potential assessment district, Sylvia says that the statute states it can only take place in a unified school district. Glenda Leake asks Sylvia who she is representing, herself or the school district. Sylvia explains that she has been working with CIUUSD with this for over a year. Sylvia says she is representing herself as a

CIUUSD board member from the Isle of La Motte with the blessing from CIUUSD. Sylvia notes that there would be a one-time cost increase to Grand Isle and that the cost increase would be lower for North Hero and Isle La Motte. Sylvia notes that an assessment district can happen without Grand Isle, but she feels this is a good opportunity for Grand Isle. Emily Clark (Emily) notes that if an assessment district were to be formed, Grand Isle taxes would go up to offset Isle La Motte's CLA being off. Emily says the increase would not be one-time due to a new weighted average. Jeff Parizo says that, reading the state statute presented, the Selectboard does not have the authority to make this decision, that it has to go to the voters. The Selectboard and Sue Lawrence discuss the difficulty finding an appraiser to do the town-wide reappraisal. Sue Lawrence explains that she spoke with appraisers and asked if it would be beneficial to team-up with North Hero and Isle La Motte for the reappraisal and that they said it would not be beneficial. Sue Lawrence explains that in order to begin the reappraisal process, they need to have the Grand List completed by June 4th of this year, that two weeks after there do the grievances and if there were more than one town involved, they would not be able to do so within that two-week span. Community members and Sylvia discuss new waterfront builds and sales. Sylvia says she will send the Selectboard more data and hopes to go to Senate Appropriations and ask for money to start this pilot program, that she would like to hear what Grand Isle would like to do before she does so. Sue Lawrence asks Sylvia what the CIUUSD thinks about this proposal. Sylvia says she has been speaking with that board for a year and that CIUUSD understands the benefits of it but that Michael Inners thinks that the fairest way to go about this is to have everyone reappraised at the same time, to have all towns have their CLAs at 100% before forming the district. Sylvia notes that they could form the district before reappraisals. The selectboard members and Sue Lawrence discuss the difficulty in finding an appraiser available to perform the town-wide reappraisal. Jen Morway and Ellen Howrigan says they would like to see more information/data. Sylvia says she will send more information, Jeff Parizo says they will find a time to talk about this in the future.

Jim Muir, Bullis Farm: Jim Muir (Jim) begins by giving an overview of how anaerobic digesters are used in agriculture. Jim says there at 19,000 anaerobic digesters being used in agriculture in Europe and about 400 are currently being used in the United States. Jim explains that anaerobic digesters allow farmers to use the entire cow, that utilizing solid cow waste will help farmers to supplement income, noting that volatility in milk prices effect farmers income and this will help balance that. Jim explains that a 397,000-gallon tank would be placed behind the Bullis farm, that the manure from Dwight Bullis' 875 milking cows will be run into the digester where it will remain for about 26 days at 102 degrees. Jim explains that this causes the bacteria in the manure to produce more methane, all within the tank. The methane then feeds a combined heat and power generator which will send the power it produced to Vermont Electric Co-op who will purchase and use it. Jim explains the heat produced from that generator will be used to heat the housing for the workers and barn via help from Efficiency Vermont. Jim explains that they are essentially taking the cow manure, making additional methane from it in the tank and using it to produce heat and power. Jim notes that having the manure in the tank helps to reduce greenhouse gases. Jim says that this process would also reduce between 85-90% of the manure odor as well. Jim says that Bullis farm is considering drag lining and injecting of the liquid portion of the digestate thus reducing phosphate run-off into the lake. Jeff Parizo asks what they do with the solids after they are processed in the tank, Jim says they will use it for bedding.

Jeff Parizo makes a motion to sign the letter presented to the Selectboard. Jeff Parizo reads the letter of support:

Dear Dwight:

You asked for the Town of Grand Isle's determination on whether the construction of a manure digester at Savage View Farms would have an impact on municipal or educational services. We understand that you will file this letter with the Public Utilities Commission with respect to § 248 criteria related to municipal and educational services. We have reviewed the plans and determined that there will be no impact on educational or municipal services and will have no impact on the fire department and other municipal departments. Town roads can easily accommodate the Project's construction and the finished Project. No other municipal services will be affected.

The Town of Grand Isle supports the Project and has no objection to it.

A copy of the Selectboard minutes approving this letter is attached.

Ron Bushway seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes. Ellen Howrigan recuses herself. The selectboard signs and dates the letter.

Highway Department Update: Ron Bushway (Ron) says they have removed the roadside trees and have used most of the Ash tree removal money. Ron said the roads are posted, that they are letting some of the light loads through. Jen Morway asks what happens with the woods from the trees that have been removed, Ron says they offer the wood to the landowners first and any wood they do not want, the highway department will pick up.

2013 Western Star Truck Discussion: Ron explains that Brad Sheridan has wanted to sell the 2013 truck, that they had been offered \$60,000 for it at first and more recently were offered \$50,000 by the same company. Ron says he feels that they should keep in in case they are able to hire a third person, that the truck is in good shape and that they put work into it not too long ago. Ron says they could revisit this in a year or so, once they know if they will be hiring a third person. Ron says he also feels they should get another estimate from a different company. Jeff Parizo (Jeff) says that deciding to sell the truck would have to be a selectboard decision, that he feels they should do a sealed bid with a reserve. Jeff says he feels the reserve should be about \$65,000. Jeff says he feels they should not rush to sell the truck, that they should hold on to it for now. Ron notes that the truck has 90,000 miles on it. Jen Morway (Jen) recommends keeping the truck, noting that if they end up hiring a third highway employee and they only have two trucks, when one truck goes into service there will be two employees without a truck. The Selectboard decides to keep the truck now and table this conversation until April 2025.

Buildings Facilities Manager Update: Ron says that all the fire extinguishers have been inspected and serviced in all town buildings, that the Transfer Station repair has been completed. Jen Morway asks what the total cost for that repair. Ron says he does not have a total yet, but that it was less than what the insurance check was for. Ron says the town sign for the north end is done, that it's not installed yet. Jeff asks Ron to get a total for the Transfer Station Repair so they know how much they will be putting in

the Transfer Station Reserve Budget. Ron mentions that last Saturday, the internet dropped at the transfer station which made card transactions difficult. Ron Says that Josie Leavitt was able to help Ron with getting offline card transactions up and running. Ron says that Emily Clark will help him with figuring out why offline transactions did not occur automatically when the internet went down.

IT Update:

New Business:

Authorization for GEARS system for new MAO - Municipal Planning Grant: Emily Clark explains that the selectboard needs to approve the signing of the amendment document, that it will update the contact information for the grant, that the contact is currently someone that is no longer on the selectboard. Angie Low reads the Amended Resolution for Municipal Planning Grant document:

AMENDED RESOLUTION FOR MUNICIPAL PLANNING GRANT

WHEREAS, the Municipality of Grand Isle has applied for funding as provided for in the FY_23_ Budget Act and has received an award of funds under said provisions; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Housing and Community Development has offered a Grant Agreement to this Municipality for said funding; and

WHEREAS, the Municipality has undergone a change in Municipal staff which necessitates updating the Department of Housing and Community Development to allow new Municipal staff access to the grant files, Now, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

1. That the Legislative Body of this Municipality has entered into and agreed to the requirements and obligations of this grant program including a commitment to match funds.

2a. That Jeff Parizo, Chair- Selectboard who is either the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), as defined by 10 VSA §683(8), or is a Select Board Member, the Town Manager, the City Manager, or the Town Administrator, is hereby

designated to serve as the Municipal/Authorizing Official (M/AO) for the Grants Management On-Line System, Intelligrants, and to execute the Grant Agreement and other such Documents as may be necessary to secure these funds.

2b. (Alternate Authorizing Official for redundancy)

That Ellen Howrigan, Vice Chair- Selectboard who is either the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), as defined by 10 VSA §683(8), or a Select Board Member, is the Town Manager, the City Manager, or the Town Administrator, is hereby designated to serve as the Municipal/ Authorizing Official (M/AO) for the Grants Management On-Line System, Intelligrants, and to execute the Grant Agreement and other such Documents as may be necessary to secure these funds.

2c. That Emily Clark, Planning Commission Chair is hereby designated as the Grant Administrator, the person with the overall Administrative responsibility for the Municipal Planning Grant program activities related to the application, and any subsequent Grant Agreement provisions. Passed this 1st day of April, 2024.

Jen Morway so moves. Jen Morway says that they will put Jeff Parizo, selectboard chair, as the first contact and Ellen Howrigan, selectboard vice-chair as the alternate contact. Emily Clark says she would be the Grant Administrator contact. **Ellen Howrigan seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.** Emily Clark says that Jeff Parizo will have to contact Jennifer Lavoie in order for her to walk him through the steps to login online.

NWCUD Representative: Jeff says that last year the representative was Peter Southwick with Mike Inners as the alternate. Jeff says he thinks that Peter Southwick should remain as the representative and Mike Inners as alternate.

Jeff Parizo makes a motion to keep Peter Southwick as primary and Michael Inners as the alternate representative. Jen Morway says the individuals might want to swap primary and alternate titles. **Jen Morway seconds.** Ellen Howrigan says she will contact Peter Southwick regarding this appointment. Jeff Parizo says that they will sign this tonight and if anything changes, they can let the selectboard know. **No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo calls the vote which passes unanimously.**

Fire Station Community Space Use: Jeff Parizo says that the Fire Department would like to get new parking signs to replace the faded painted spots. Jeff Parizo reads an email from Adam White in which the Fire Department requests permission to put up 5 metal poles for 5 parking spaces to put up signs marked Fire Fighter Parking Only.

Jeff Parizo makes a motion to approve Adam White's request for the Fire Department. Ellen Howrigan seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo calls the vote which passes unanimously.

Jeff says he will contact Adam White and let him know it has been approved.

Website Management RFP: Jen Morway (Jen) explains that the website is currently managed by MacDragon and the contract is up in June or July. Jen explains that they will have to put out an RFP for this. Jen asks if she can work with Angie Low on creating this RFP given she has the most knowledge about will be needed for managing the town website. Jeff Parizo asks what it takes to manage the website, that he feels Angie Low is doing a good job with it now. Angie Low explains that the management would be for the backend of the website such as security updates. Angie Low explains that she handles the content on the website whereas a website company would be handling the backend of it. The selectboard agrees that Jen Morway and Angie Low should work together to create an RFP for the management of the town website.

Old Business:

NEMRC Online Update: Jeff Parizo notes that NEMRC online was reported as being slow and wonders if this could be due to the age of the Listers computers. Sue Lawrence explains that in working with Adam from NEMRC in trying to troubleshoot an issue and he noted that her computer's processing speed was very slow. The selectboard discusses adding another NEMRC license to the approved order of NEMRC licenses, the extra being for the cemetery.

Jeff Parizo makes a motion to add another NEMRC user license for the Cemetery. Jen Morway seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo calls the vote which passes unanimously.

Jen Morway says that they were discussing if the selectboard wanted a user license. Jeff Parizo says they would like a view-only NEMRC User License.

Jeff Parizo makes a motion to approve a view-only NEMRC user for the selectboard. Jeff Parizo asks if they each need a user or if they can all share one, Jen Morway says they can share. **Jeff Parizo makes a motion to approve the online NEMRC view for the selectboard. Jen Morway seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo calls the vote which passes unanimously.**

Livestock Ordinance: Ellen Howrigan (Ellen) explains that she sent out a draft of an edited Livestock Ordinance. Ellen says that she did not address the penalty and waiver fees, that they should discuss what they think those should be. Jen Morway (Jen) says that she would like to see the penalty and waiver fees fall in line with the dog ordinance. The selectboard discusses the penalties, penalties when running-at-large, and waiver fees. Jen notes that she likes that Ellen has removed everything to do with impoundment, that the animal control officer should not have to impound livestock. Ellen notes that town is not equipped to impound livestock. The selectboard decides on Civil Penalty Fees as First Offense- \$50, Second- \$100, Third-\$150, Fourth- \$250, Fifth and subsequent- \$500, Waiver Fees as First Offense- \$50, Second- \$120, Third- \$200, Fourth- \$275, Fifth and Subsequent \$350. The selectboard discusses when the clock for offenses will reset. The selectboard discusses having the livestock owners appear before the selectboard before penalties/fees are determined. The selectboard discusses wording and other details.

Jeff Parizo makes a motion to approve this Livestock Ordinance with corrections. Jen Morway seconds. Jeff Parizo says that they will sign this at the April 15th meeting and get it on the website within a couple of days. **No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo calls the vote which passes unanimously.**

Rules & Procedures Document: Tabled until April 15th

Annex Lease: Jeff Parizo explains that the Annex Lease has been reviewed by the attorneys and asks the selectboard if they are ok with it, the selectboard members say they are. Jeff Parizo says they are ready to sign the amended lease.

Ellen Howrigan so moves. Ron Bushway seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo calls the vote which passes unanimously.

Appointed vs. Elected Town Treasurer: Tabled until May 6th

Credit Card Auto Payments: Jeff Parizo says they wanted to get the monthly charges such as Comcast on an automatic payment on the credit card. Jen Morway asks if Melissa Boutin can put together a list of the recurring payments. Jeff Parizo notes that electric, Comcast, the cell phones could all be part of that list. Jeff Parizo asks Melissa Boutin to bring that list to the next meeting.

ARPA Funds: Jeff Parizo says he will update the selectboard on the ARPA reporting, that they just opened the window for that reporting, that he should be able to have it completed this week.

General Journal Entry: Jen Morway says that Melissa Boutin has those, that they are done and everything looked good. Ellen Howrigan asks Melissa Boutin if she could reformat the columns showing the budgets, clarifying that she would like to see a column for Budget for 2023, the actual for the whole year of 2023, actual for the corresponding period 8, the budget for 2024 and the corresponding period for 2024. Melissa Boutin says she will contact NEMRC to figure that one out. Jen Morway says they would still need a balance sheet as well for reporting requirements. Melissa Boutin notes that it difficult to get this reporting to the selectboard in time for the first meeting of the month when the end

of a month ends on a Friday or over that weekend and that she may need a little time to get that to them, the selectboard agrees.

Financials:

Financial Draft:

Administrative Check-In:

Jeff Parizo: Contact Adam White re: approve for FD signs. Sign NWCUD document.

Jen Morway: Contacting Ellen a spreadsheet with SNS approvals. Emailing SNS re: computer status. Working with Angie on Website management RFP.

Ellen Howrigan: Contact Peter Southwick re: NWCUD. Look into the credit card auto payment. Look into who reappraised the town of Fairfield to see if they are available. Finish editing the Livestock Ordinances with the approved changes.

Ron Bushway: Get the total for the Transfer Station repair. Notify Brad with what was decided on the 2013 truck.

Review and Sign Warrants: *Ron Bushway makes a motion to review and sign the warranties. Ellen Howrigan seconds. Jeff Parizo notes that the bill from Landry for the town sign will be approved at the next meeting. **No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo calls the vote which passes unanimously.***

Adjournment: *Ellen Howrigan makes a motion to adjourn at 8:13pm. Jen Morway seconds. **No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo calls the vote which passes unanimously.***