

Grand Isle Select Board
Grand Isle Town Office 9 Hyde Rd, Grand Isle VT
Minutes of the Meeting for Monday August 5, 2024

(44:06) CALL TO ORDER: Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the meeting to order at 6pm.

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

Board Members via Zoom: Josie Leavitt

Community Members Present: Colleen Bushway, Melissa Boutin, Jean Prouty, Emily Clark

Community Members via Zoom: Lucille Campbell, Sue Lawrence, Esther Blow

Add to Agenda: Jeff Parizo moves Highway Structures Grant and Transfer Station Announcement under Road Project Timelines under Brad Sheridan/Guests. Jen adds "Labor Day Meeting" under New Business. Jeff combines the items Employee Policies & Procedures and Personnel Policy under Old Business.

Ron Bushway (Ron) reminds the Selectboard that next Tuesday is the primary election and that they, as BCA members, may be needed to count ballots. Jeff Parizo (Jeff) asks Melissa Boutin (Melissa) about the election. Melissa says that Michael has not called a board meeting to discuss the election, that she will use the same people as she has in the past. Jen Morway (Jen) asks Melissa if she will need the selectboards' help with counting ballots. Melissa says she does not think so, but she will let everyone know if she needs help within the week. Ellen Howrigan (Ellen) asks Melissa if she has coverage throughout the day on primary election day. Melissa says according to the information she currently has she does have coverage for the entire day. Ron notes that he is unavailable to help with ballots next Tuesday.

(48:18) Public Comment: Sue Lawrence (Sue) announces that Janice Arnold has passed away and asks if the Town might like to send a plant or flowers in her memory. Sue gives details of Janice Arnold's service. The Selectboard discusses the amount of money to put towards an arrangement. **Jeff Parizo makes a motion to spend up to \$150 for a floral/plant arrangement for Janice Arnold to come out of the Office Supply fund. Ron Bushway seconds.** Josie Leavitt asks if it would be a conflict of interest if Ellen Howrigan were to be the florist hired. Jeff Parizo notes that he didn't add a specific florist to the motion. Jen Morway explains that since Sue Lawrence was the one to propose the idea, she would be the one to choose the florist and that would avoid any conflicts of interest. **Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.**

Lucille Campbell comments that she had requested the highway department add orange flags on the stop sign at the end of Adams Landing and Moccasin Lane and is wondering what the status of that is. Lucille and the Selectboard discusses the safety issues with that stop sign, noting that people often do not stop for that stop sign and that vegetation growth makes seeing that sign and that intersection difficult. Ron Bushway says he will check with the department and give an update. The selectboard discusses issues that arise when people plant in the right-of-way. The selectboard decides to add text to the tax bills that remind land owners not to plant in the right-of-way and to announce that the transfer station will no longer be accepting cash. Ron Bushway notes that they could also send land owners who currently have

growth in a right-of-way a letter telling them it needs to be removed. Jen Morway proposes that they also hang flyers to further educate.

Review and Approve Minutes:

July 30, 2024: Jen Morway makes a motion to approve the minutes of the July 30th 2024 special meeting. Ron Bushway seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.

Guests

Brad Sheridan- Road Projects Timelines: The selectboard discusses Brad Sheridan's (Brad) absence, that he has been requested to attend the last two meetings and he has not attended. Ron says that Brad stated he is busy cleaning up after the storm. Jeff says that they need an update on the projects and grants. Ron says he has that information. Jen says that it becomes a conflict when information from Brad has to be communicated through Ron, that it is not fair Ron has to navigate these questions when Ron is on the selectboard. Jeff notes that if Ron were not on the selectboard it would still be an issue because Ron is not running the road crew, that Ron is a stipend road commissioner and Brad is the employee who is running the road crew. The selectboard agrees. Ron notes that Brad has difficulty speaking to a crowd. The selectboard discusses ways to communicate with Brad. Ron explains that they need to move forward with the road projects, that they need to rent an excavator to keep things moving forward. Jen asks that if Brad cannot make it to a meeting, why hasn't he replied to the emails from the selectboard with the information that was requested. Jen explains that part of the position of road foreman should be that they attend selectboard meetings when requested to give updates. Jeff asks Ron to update them with the information that was given. Ron speaks about the Pomykala grant for Bob Pomykala on East Shore North for excavating and changing three culverts, clean ditches on two segments at about 600 feet. Ron says it states the Pomykala project should take about 2 weeks. Ron moves on to the next project, the intersection on East Shore South & Route 2 which needs three culverts to be excavated and installed, to remove blacktop, dig out base, add fabric, and add base stone. Ron says it states that the East Shore North/Rt2 project will take about 2 weeks to complete. Ron moves on to the East Shore/Mill Pond project which needs to move the water line and is pending due to needing to dewater before beginning. Ron says it states the Mill Pond project will take about 1 week. Ron says the grant for Pomykala was executed and approved. Ron says they already received the grant for East Shore South/Route 2 and notes that he sent that grant information to the selectboard. Ron says the Mill Pond grant is pending and on the agenda to discuss under highway.

Highway Structures Grant Update: Ron says he spoke to John Wilkenson, that the archeological study is complete and they are waiting for a historical, previously called environmental, study to be completed. Ron says that he asked why it was taking so long, asking if they made an error, that John Wilkenson stated they did not make any errors and that it's taking so long due to the state being overwhelmed from the flooding issues they are dealing with. Ron says they only have that one study to complete and was told it will be completed soon. Ron says that they need to rent an excavator to move forward. Jeff says that it's difficult to know when they should rent the excavator without knowing how long everything will take. Jen explains that due to the amount needed, they need to get three bids for renting the excavator and Brad needs to attend a meeting. Ron says they received three bids for excavators. Jen explains that the next step needs to be Brad attending a selectboard meeting to discuss the bids and

rental. Ron says that things keep getting put on hold because of this and that they need to move forward. Jen notes that this is the largest budget for the town and the highway department does not attend meetings to discuss or answer questions. Ron states that he is at the meetings. Jen explains that the last time they rented the excavator it sat unused for 3 months after being used for only 50 hours and that Ron was not the person to do that and is not fair that he has to navigate questions about that. Ron says he was the one to sign the rental contract for the excavator last time, that he is the person responsible. Jeff explains that he signed that contract in good faith that they would use the excavator efficiently and that they did not and that it was not Ron's fault that that took place. Josie notes that Ron is being put in a difficult situation since Brad refuses to meet and discuss with the selectboard. Josie explains that the reason these projects are put on hold is because Brad has chosen not to attend a meeting to discuss the projects with the selectboard twice. Ron voices concern over waiting until the next meeting to discuss this, that it will be pushing it back further. The selectboard discusses the possibility of holding another special meeting. Ron notes that with the new flooding that has occurred, excavator rentals might be more difficult. Ellen Howrigan (Ellen) says that she doesn't feel that they should not let Brad's absence push these projects back further. Jen says that they should have been able to complete these projects the first time they rented the excavator, that she does not feel comfortable in allowing the highway department to spend more money for the same issue without a plan. Josie agrees. Jeff notes the highway department spent \$16,500 for these projects and that money was wasted. Josie says that there needs to be consequences for that and that they cannot let it slide. Jeff agrees. Josie notes that Brad technically works for the selectboard, that the selectboard kindly asked him to attend two meetings to discuss and he refused. Josie says that it's the responsibility of the selectboard to make sure they are being financially sound. Emily Clark suggests that the selectboard provide a template for the projects to Brad to provide him an alternative way to communicate to the selectboard about these projects. Jen says they did provide him with a way to break down the projects in their email. Ron notes that Brad Sheridan and Steve More did attend a selectboard meeting in the past. Jen says that they attended when they requested the town purchase an excavator and that Brad has refused to attend a meeting since the selectboard decided not to purchase an excavator. Josie notes that when Brad attended, he left the meeting abruptly. Jeff says the plan Brad gave Ron to present does not include proposed dates, that in contacting excavator rentals they should be able to propose dates based on rental availability. Ron says that the project that can happen no matter the weather conditions is East Shore. Jeff explains that the projects include affecting traffic, that the school buses will need to be contacted with dates of road closures and emergencies services will be notified. Jeff says that with those things in mind, having a solid plan with a timeline is important. Jeff says that they need project timelines and dates that excavator rentals are available. The selectboard discusses the possibility of holding a special meeting where Brad would attend. Ron asks for clarity, that the selectboard is looking for a timeline and note a full scope of work to be completed. Jeff says the selectboard is looking for: 1- dates of when excavators are available to rent from three different companies, 2- how much each of those three rentals would be, 3- based on when the excavator rentals are available the selectboard would like the dates each of the three projects would start, 4- the order of which the three projects will be executed, 5- a list of the materials needed and whether they have obtained or need to obtain any of those materials. The selectboard has difficulty finding a date and time for a special meeting. Ron says they could wait until the August 19th meeting. Ellen says she will email Brad and request that he attend the August 19th meeting to discuss the projects.

(1.39.14) Review and Sign Warrants: Jeff asks Melissa about the payroll for the selectboard, asking why they received one check for April, May & June now instead of three separate checks issued in each of those three months. Melissa says that the selectboard used to get paid once or twice within a fiscal year and now that the selectboard changed it to monthly with the new personnel policy that she had to provide separate checks. Jen says that the stipend change came with the changes to the Internal Controls Policy in January. Jeff says that they had started getting monthly checks and then it stopped. Melissa says that they stopped because they ran out of budget money, that it was her understanding after discussion, that she was to go over budget to get caught up for the fiscal year so that they could be on track for the next fiscal year. Jeff asks how they could be out of budget money when the selectboard stipends are budgeted for. Melissa explains that it is because the term runs from March to March- two different fiscal years. Jeff asks if this will be a one-time thing, Melissa says yes. Jeff asks Melissa about an email he sent her regarding VMERS, that there was no documentation with it for the \$2,529.11. Melissa hands the documentation to Jeff and explains the percentage. Jeff asks about the dental coverage for Northeast Dental for \$52.47, that Melissa had her name circled. Melissa explains that the selectboard reduced the plan while they were working on the new personnel policy so that payment was paused, that now that the new personnel policy is signed that needs to be paid.

Jen Morway motions that the Chair sign the warrants. Josie Leavitt seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.

(1.44.15) Highway Department Update: Ron says that last week Brad was on vacation, and Steve More is doing roadside mowing. Ron says they had to take some time to service the John Deere. Ron says they took care of the grounds at the log cabin and schoolhouse. Ron says that Don Hughes has been notifying patrons at the transfer station about cash not being an option for payment after October 1st. Ron says that John Lafayette is due to start August 19th.

(1.46.23) Buildings Facilities Manager Update: Ron says the lights got fixed at the Fire Station. Ron says that Adam White says there might be an issue with the freezer at the Fire station and will let him know. Ron says Melissa is ordering a changing table for the Fire Station. Ron says that they fixed a sink at the Annex building. Ron says that there is a wasp nest at the pickleball court that Pest Pro will be taking care of.

Transfer Station Announcement:

(1.49.46) IT Update: Jeff asks about an invoice, Jen says that is what they will get from now on and will be monthly.

New Business:

(1:50:32) August 19th Meeting- Angie: Jen says that Angie Low will be away for the August 19th meeting and that the draft minutes will be delayed until her return.

(1.52.30) Town Clerk Manual Discussion: Ellen asks Melissa about the Town Clerk Manual, that there was a list, and asks to go over the list. Ellen asks about cash reconciliation; Melissa says she has to check if that one is complete. Jen says that #3 & #7 on the list were the ones that Melissa said she'd have

ready for the selectboard to look over at this meeting, Melissa says she has those ready. Jen says that #4 & #5 are ones that Melissa said she would have done before the audit, Melissa confirms. Melissa says that #1, #2, & #6 are complete. Melissa says that processing tax payment & billing and processing & recording all revenues are what she will work on next. Ellen asks about financial reporting procedures to the board, Melissa says she still needs to do that one as well. Ellen asks Melissa what else should be added to this manual, Melissa says she will need time to look it over and think about it.

(1.56.12) Selectboard Admin job Description: Jeff says he got feedback from Jen on the job description Jeff sent out. The selectboard says they will look over Jen's suggestions and revisit this discussion at the September 16th meeting. Jeff asks Jen to send the rest of the selectboard the suggestions she sent to him.

(1.59.14) Transfer Station Announcement: Ron says that Don Hughes has been talking to patrons at the transfer station about the removal of cash as a payment option and that it does not seem to be upsetting anyone. Josie is asking if there will be no way for people to pay with cash at the transfer station. Jen explains they were going to gauge how people felt about this and that if it causing hardship that they would develop an alternative method for cash payments such as a voucher system. Josie explains that introducing a voucher system would complicate the process for marginalized people who do not have a bank account. Ellen explains that they are doing this because of the auditor's recommendations. Josie asks if the auditor tells all businesses not to accept cash. Jen explains that the auditor stated that transfer stations specifically are high risk when accepting cash payments and was adamant about ending cash payments at transfer stations. Jen says that they are actively trying to create a system where people can pay cash without having the cash transaction happen physically at the transfer station. Ron notes it is also a security issue for the person working at the transfer station to have cash on hand and he feels that is the number one concern for cash on hand at the transfer station. Esther Blow comments that she feels that it should come out of taxes. Colleen Bushway comments that people could get a money order at the post office with cash and use it at the transfer station. Jen explains that Angie Low put this on the agenda to ask a question about printing this in *The Islander*. Angie explains that the first printing would be free, but if the selectboard would like to print it every week until the sun-setting date, that it would be \$32 to print it each week.

Jeff Parizo makes a motion to take money from the transfer station budget to pay for the advertisement in *The Islander* to advertise no cash as of October 1st. Jen Morway seconds. The selectboard decides they will add text to the tax bills for the easement reminder and the transfer station announcement. ***No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.***

(2.18.06) Labor Day Meeting: The selectboard discusses whether they will meet September 2nd or not.

Jeff Parizo makes a motion that the selectboard will not meet on September 2, 2024. Ron Bushway seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.

Jen Morway makes a motion that the selectboard will meet September 16th, as scheduled, and September 30th as a special meeting and the selectboard chair will sign the warrants on September 6th, 2024. Ellen Howrigan seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.

Old Business:

(2.23.16) **Swim Area Discussion:** The selectboard discusses the information Zander Yensan sent them regarding the swim area. Jeff says that he thinks they need new signs. Jeff asks Ron who made the stone stairs at the beach, Ron says the town did. Jen proposes they discuss this again in September or October of this year to ensure that the work or supplies needed is included in a budget.

(2.27.50) **Employee Policy & Procedure:** The selectboard discusses the revisions the lawyer made. Jen explains that the selectboard needs to approve the revisions and that they will need to send it out with an explanation.

Jeff Parizo makes a motion to approve the final version on August 5, 2024, with the corrections. Ellen Howrigan seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.

Jeff asks Angie Low to post the final version on the town website and that she file the final version so that it is easy to access for future hires.

(2.31.05) **Justice of the Peace Article:** The selectboard discusses the correspondence regarding the Justice of the Peace (JOP) article. The selectboard discusses adding the question of whether voters would like to add 3 more Justice of the Peace to the ballot. The selectboard discusses putting the question on the November ballot and if approved, nominate 3 JOPs and vote on the nominees at the March election. Jeff asks whether they should add the question to the Secretary of State's ballot or put it on a separate paper ballot. Melissa explains that the Secretary of State may not be willing to add a question to their ballot, that they would allow for nominated JOPs to be added to their ballot but adding a question is different. Sue Lawrence explains that JOP positions need to be voted on in March due to their term begins/ends in February. Jen says that they need to have to decide on the language for the ballot question. Jen asks Melissa if this questioned would need to be warned the way it is for the March election. Melissa says she does not believe so but that she will look into it. Jeff says he will contact David Rugh regarding the language for the ballot question and whether it needs to be warned.

(2.44.44) **Financials:** Ellen says she needs some time to look over what they were sent today. Melissa says that they should be able to set the new tax rate by the next meeting. Jen asks about the highway fund, that they were over budget by \$49,584. Melissa explains that the highway utilized \$100,000 for the new dump truck out of their capital equipment fund. Jeff says that they had a few things that went over- rented equipment, health insurance by about \$4,000, culverts is over by about \$15,000, storm water permits are over about \$300, garage demolition- Jeff asks why are there funds in garage demolition in FY24, Melissa explains that there was an invoice from East Engineering that came in in FY24. Jeff asks Melissa to give the selectboard a copy of that invoice. Jeff says that for previous year funds they used \$139,377 for the new truck. Jeff says that they saved in road materials where they only used \$38,000 out of the \$60,000 they budgeted for. Melissa says that the selectboard will need to decide on what to do with the CD. Melissa recommends the 9-month CD at North Country. The selectboard discusses the details of the CD with Melissa.

Jeff Parizo makes a motion to transfer the transfer station CD from M&T Bank to the North Country 9-month CD. Jen Morway seconds. Jeff Parizo asks Melissa Boutin to provide the selectboard with the paperwork for that transfer. **No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.**

(2.57.29) Administrative Check-In:

Jeff: Contact David Rugh for the language on the JOP ballot and whether it needs to be warned.

Ellen: Contact Brad Sheridan to invite him to the August 19th meeting. Call the elementary school re: opioid settlement money.

Josie: Find out who nominates JOPs.

Jen: Send selectboard suggestions for the Selectboard admin job description. Send out revised Personnel Policy.

Ron: Check with the highway department on the status of putting orange flags on the stop sign at the Adams Landing/Moccasin Rd intersection.

(2.58.52) Adjournment: Ron Busway makes a motion to adjourn at 8:15. Jen Morway seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.