

Grand Isle Select Board
Grand Isle Town Office 9 Hyde Rd, Grand Isle VT
Minutes of the Meeting for Monday December 16, 2024

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

Board Members Present: Josie Leavitt, Ron Bushway, Jeff Parizo, Ellen Howrigan

Board Members via Zoom: Jen Morway

Community Members Present: Colleen Bushway, Dwight Bullis, Steve More, Desiree More, Brad Sheridan, John Lafayette, Bianca Lafayette, Emily Clark, Melissa Boutin

Community Members via Zoom: Lucille Campbell, Sue Lawrence, Kathy Croteau, Court Perry, Lynda Morgan-Gardiner, Mike Donoghue

Public Comment: Kathy Croteau, representing Island Arts, requests the Selectboard include their appropriation of \$1,950 as a line item in the general budget, rather than a separate vote. The Selectboard agreed to add this to the January 6th agenda to discuss further.

Review and Approve Minutes: *Ron Bushway makes a motion to approve the December 2nd meeting minutes. Josie Leavitt seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.*

Guests

Roth Perry, Recreation Committee- Donaldson Trees & 2025 Member Recommendations: Roth Perry (Roth) discusses the Recreation Committee's plans to renew committee members and presented names for approval: Roth Perry, Lindsay Lundquist, Emily White, Jean Short, Diana Arfine, Erin LaDuke, Hannah Lanesdale.

Ellen Howrigan moves to approve renewing those members. Ron Bushway seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.

Roth also discusses the need to remove about 50 trees in the park due to Ash Tree Borer damage, with an estimated cost of around \$15,000. Roth explains that there are 11 trees that need to be removed right away for the grant and about 40 more that are showing damage and will also need to be removed. Jeff Parizo says the options to fund that removal is that they can try getting more quotes, possibly use the town's general fund budget or put it on the ballot as a one-time shot. Jen Morway suggests exploring grant possibilities, but Roth noted that the grant application deadline was at the end of the month. Roth Perry agrees to meet with Brad Sheridan to discuss the tree removal options.

Jeff Parizo makes a motion that the Town of Grand Isle removes the 11 trees so that the Pickleball Association can get the grant they need to plant trees. Ron Bushway seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.

Review and Sign Warrants: *Ron Bushway moves that the Chair sign the warrants with corrections. Josie Leavitt seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.*

Highway Department Update: Ron Bushway reports on plowing, sanding, and pothole drilling activities, as well as their collaboration with the Fire Department. The Highway Department received the Good Citizenship Award from Adam White for their work with the Fire Department. Ron says they will be digging test pits for the new library with the Highway Department's mini excavator.

Buildings Facilities Manager Update: Ron Bushway discusses the ordering of LED lights for the fire station, which will be covered by a grant. The Selectboard also discussed the need for more help at the transfer station and the need to update the transfer station's website. Ron says that Brookfield notified him that they received the signed contract for the generator work, which is being paid with the grant.

IT Update

SNS 12/20 Site Visit Reminder: Jen Morway explains that SNS will be visiting the Town Office on Friday December 20 to provide assistance to anyone that needs it.

New Business

Planning Committee- Re/appoint Members, Regional Priorities List: Emily Clark (Emily) explains that they would like to reappoint Wendy Rosica for a two-year term on the Planning Commission.

Jeff Parizo makes a motion to appoint Wendy Rosica to the Planning Commission for a two-year term. Ellen Howrigan seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.

Emily discusses the regional priorities list, explaining that they submitted a general project description.

Fire Department Community Room: Jeff Parizo reads the community room use request form.

Jeff Parizo makes a motion to approve the user agreement for use of the community room at the Fire Station. Ron Bushway seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes. Josie Leavitt abstains due to the request being hers.

Town of Grand Isle 2024 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan: Jeff Parizo discusses the LHMP, explains that it is complete and needs a motion for the Chair to sign and accept it.

Ellen Howrigan moves that the Chair sign the completed Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. Josie Leavitt seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.

Vermont State Ethics Commission: *Jeff Parizo makes a motion to appoint Angela Low to the Vermont State Ethics Commission. Ellen Howrigan seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.*

Tax Sale Proceedings: Melissa Boutin gives an overview of tax sales, identifying 10 properties for potential sale.

Jeff Parizo makes a motion to approve the Town Treasurer to move forward with the tax sales of ten properties using Stitzel Page & Fletcher. Josie Leavitt seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.

Old Business

Town Health Plan: The Selectboard discusses the potential increase in health insurance costs for the town, particularly affecting the highway department. Ron Bushway suggests choosing the MVP platinum plan to ensure employee satisfaction and retention. Jen Morway (Jen) countered that the town's budget could not sustain the platinum plan and suggests sticking with the gold plan. Lynda Morgan-Gardiner expressed surprise at the lack of employee contributions to health insurance, suggesting a potential future solution. Josie Leavitt proposes a compromise, offering the MVP Platinum plan for the highway department and the MVP Gold plan for other employees. Ellen Horigan (Ellen) goes over numbers: MVP Gold is ~\$38,000, MVP Platinum is ~\$45,000, citing the difference between the two as ~\$7,336; adding in the \$5,600 out-of-pocket maximum, the difference between the MVP Gold Plan and the MVP Platinum Plan totals ~\$9,463. Ellen explains the math. Jen suggests that the town's budget could cover the MVP Gold plan, with some extra funds available. Ron Bushway notes that the Highway Department is always looking for ways to help the town and uses the earlier discussion about the Highway Department removing the trees for the Rec Committee and doing the test pits for the new Library to help save the town money. The Selectboard agrees to continue discussing the matter in Executive Session, with a focus on finding a solution that balances employee satisfaction and budget constraints. Ellen notes that she will ask Angie Low to put health plan review on the Selectboard calendar for August.

FY26 General Budget: The Selectboard and Melissa Boutin review the proposed FY26 General Budget, highlighting a \$52,500 state pilot program payment and a \$40,000 health insurance budget. Key adjustments to the expenses included setting current tax interest at \$6,500, current use was adjusted to \$52,500, State owned Land to \$11,828, reimbursement services at \$31,173, and reappraisal costs at \$11,433. Highway revenues were set at \$0, and solar credits at \$10,500. Total for expenses is \$176,434. They move to Revenues. Delinquent tax interest was set at \$8,000, pound \$17,500, and local fines at \$2,500. They discuss what to put down for Annex revenue, landing on putting down what they are supposed to receive which is \$9,000. Interest and dividends is set at \$7,500. Town report prep is set at \$500. Custodial service is set at \$6,500, IT is set at \$28,000. The health officer's budget was adjusted to \$16,012, and lawn care was set at \$12,000. The Selectboard's budget was set at \$96,038, noting that they have to adjust that figure. Selectboard administrator was set to \$26,780. Delinquent tax is set to \$18,500. It's noted that they must figure out FICA. Jeff notes that they will revisit this at the first January meeting so there is time to fix figures. It's noted that they are waiting to hear what the county tax rate will be. The Selectboard agrees to further discussion at the next meeting.

Town Clerk/General Fund Budget: The Selectboard revisits the Town Clerk budget to discuss the change made to the assistant town clerk/treasurer position. Ellen proposes the idea of having that position at 29 hours a week and consider making it full time with benefits the following year. The Selectboard reviews the past assistants and their average times.

Ellen Howrigan makes a motion to rescind the motion for two full time employees with benefits and change it to one full-time position and one up-to 29 hours a week.

Highway Budget: Tabled to January 6th.

Remote Check Update: Melissa says that the equipment has arrived, and they are now waiting on the implementation team to come and set it up.

Executive Session:

Jeff Parizo moves that the Selectboard find that premature public general knowledge of its discussion of contract and labor relations agreements with employees would place the employees at a substantial disadvantage because disclosure of discussion would reveal personal and/or confidential information in the employees' files or records.

Jeff Parizo moves that the Selectboard enter executive session to consider contracts and labor relation agreements with employees pursuant of 1 VSA Section 313 (a)(1)a & 313 (a)(1)f. Josie Leavitt seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.

Jeff Parizo makes a motion to exit executive session at 9:29pm. Josie Leavitt seconds.

Josie Leavitt makes a motion to rescind the motion made on December 2nd authorizing the MVP Gold Plan. Ron Bushway seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes. Jen Morway opposes.

Josie Leavitt makes a motion to approve the MVP Platinum Plan at a cost of \$15,157 per employee. Ron Bushway seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes. Jen Morway opposes.

Ellen Howrigan makes a motion to rescind the Town Clerk's 2026 budget of \$170,241. Jeff Parizo seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes. Josie Leavitt opposes.

Ellen Howrigan makes a motion to allocate \$80,000 for the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk positions, \$37,000 for the Town Treasurer, the Assistant Town Treasurer/bookkeeper/accountant, and to allocate \$15,157 for health insurance, totaling \$155,242. Jeff Parizo seconds. Mike Donoghue asks them to repeat the figures with detail. Jeff Parizo says \$80,000 will go to the Town Clerk & the assistant town clerk. \$37,000 will go to the town treasurer, the assistant treasurer and/or bookkeeper and/or accountant. \$15,157 will go to health insurance. Jeff explains the total of those are \$155,242. **No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes. Josie Leavitt opposes.**

Adjournment: Josie Leavitt makes a motion to adjourn. Ron Bushway seconds. No further discussion. Selectboard chair, Jeff Parizo, calls the vote which passes unanimously.