**MINUTES SELECTBOARD MEETING**

**Grafton Town Hall Upstairs In Person/Live**

**With accommodation for persons unable to attend in person via interactive Microsoft Teams**

**Monday, September 20, 2021, 6 pm**

Present at the meeting in the Town Hall:

Selectboard: Joe Pollio (Chair), Sue Allen-Picone, John Gregory, Cathy Siano-Goodwin, and Suzanne Welch.

Also: Gabriel Sistare (BDCC/SeVDS), Dottie Cannon, Hardy Merrill (Lister and Chair of Capital Budget Committee), Kim Record (Clerk/Treasurer), Danny Taylor (Highway Foreman), and Bill Kearns (Town Administrator).

Present online: Charles Bonin, Nancy Merrill and Fact8TV.

1. Call to order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 6 pm.  
2. Adopt Agenda: It was moved by Suzanne Welch, second by John Gregory, to adopt the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Approve minutes of the September 7, 2021. Suzanne Welch offered correction: next meeting should read “Monday, September 20, 2021.” Motion by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, second John Gregory to approve the minutes of September 7, 2021, as corrected. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation/SeVEDS visit – Gabriel Sistare

The Chair called on Gabriel Sistare, representative from BDCC/SeVDS to address the meeting. Gabriel Sistare described the roles of BDCC and SeVDS in promoting Business Prosperity and Community Projects in the Region in pursuit of Economic Development in the Region. He described the various projects addressed by SeVDS and BDCC including:

* In particular, BDCC promotes economic development and SeVDS is the research entity finding and bringing in outside money to support long term development strategies in the Region.
* During this COVID crisis they have assisted entities on a one-on-one basis to apply for and receive paycheck protection in the amount of $2.3 Million regionally, with more than $204,000 in Grafton.
* Pipeline to jobs program in the schools and beyond.
* Overall efforts to bring people into to the region for long term employment and thus revitalize the Region.
* Work with Vermont Rural Development Corp. to promote the rural economy through programs and grants.
* Gabriel will send the Selectboard data on assistance provided to Grafton businesses and the Town in recent times. Specifics on technical assistance provided to local firms regarding Payroll Protection Plan and – other than Grafton community church which has responded – other town infrastructure consulting accomplished.

The Chair and the Board thanked Gabriel for his presentation.

5. Highway Report

* + Culvert on Wright Orchard Road. Danny Taylor talked about the need to replace the culvert on Wright Orchard Road as well as the one on Middletown Rd. at Dick Desrochers. There ensued a long discussion concerning the funding for this work and the availability of the highway crew to do this work, while there still remains a lot of work to finish reconstruction, replacement and repair of roads and culverts from damage done in the July storms. Danny Taylor stated he had permits from Scott Jensen to replace both of these culverts, and if those permits extended to next building season he would put the work off till next year, otherwise he wanted to do them while he had the permit to do so. The discussion led to when Danny Taylor believed the damage repair work would be completed. Danny estimated the completion of that work to be about three weeks out. He has two contractors working this week to finish up several of the roads. Much of the work would be done by the end of this week. Danny Taylor added, with regard to the two culverts, that he might not be able to secure the necessary 4-foot culvers in time to do this season, as the suppliers said delivery would be 7 to 8 weeks out. The Selectboard concluded that if the permits were not extended to next year, the work could be done this year. Motion by Suzanne Welch, second Cathy Siano-Goodwin to replace the culverts as described on Wright Orchard and Middletown Roads this season, provided that if the permits would be extended till next year, the replacement should occur next year. Motion passed 4-0 with John Gregory abstaining.
  + Guardrails work on Rte. 35 was inquired into, with Danny Replaying that the contractor has stated the work would be done in October, early n the month.
  + A 60’ culvert in the ROW of Rte. 121 will be replaced by the Town before Bazin returns to the site. Bazin Bros is to mill the remaining pavement next week and then pave the entire section from the Bridge near Dug Rd to past the Cambridgeport Bridge.
  + Paving Bid for Townshend Rd. – Open bids. The Clerk of the Selectboard opened the one bid that the Town had received. When asked by the Selectboard the Town Administrator reported that there were several refusals to bid (refusing were: Allstate, Freshcoat, Northeast, and Obrien - because not time this season) That bid was from Sunapee Paving. The bid met the requirements of the RFP, had the Insurance documentation, and was for $19,500. Discussion included the fact that the Town would prepare the base after P&L removed the asphalt at a cost of approximately $2000, which would be their cost for the excavator to load the asphalt into P&L trucks for hauling away. Motion by Cathy, second Sue Allen to accept the Sunapee bid in the amount of $19,500. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Clerk/Treasurer

* 2022-2023 SB Set Its Budget Workshop Dates. After much discussion it was decided the first two budget meetings would be held on November 4 and November 9. Prior to those meetings:
  + Personnel Committee would complete all employee reviews and salary adjustment if any.
  + All department and entities must present their budgets in writing ahead of that first meeting.
  + The capital Budget committee would have to be appointed and that should occur at the Selectboard meeting on October 4, 2021.
* Abatement Request. The Clerk had received a request for Abatement of penalty incurred by George and Janice Berube for failure to file Declaration of Homestead timely. In the course of reviewing the Request and facts behind it, it was discovered that for several reasons the Request did not comply with the law. The clerk discussed the shortcomings with the Berubes, and they informed the Clerk in writing that the Request for Abatement was withdrawn.

7. Committee Reports:

* 1. Cemetery committee. Joe Pollio and John Gregory have a meeting planned with the owner of abutting property at the end of this month beginning of October when the oner is up for a few weeks. They will visit the site with him and hopefully come to some arrangement.
  2. Highway committee - nothing
  3. Parks committee. The new sign is in place and looking very good, Sue Allen said. Additionally, she reported that the volunteers had done a lot of work and the park was looking very fine.
  4. Personnel committee – In anticipation of a change in the Personnel Policy later this year, add to the Town Holidays in the Personnel Policy Columbus Day/Indigenous People’s Day, second Monday in October. The committee reported that more work needed to be done on the Personnel policy and would be completed by October 18th Board meeting. In the meantime, if the Selectboard wanted to add Columbus Day/Indigenous People’s Day on the second Monday of October as a holiday in the personnel policy and wanted to make it effective this year, the Selectboard should adopt that holiday at its meeting tonight. Motion by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, second Suzanne Welch to add Columbus Day/Indigenous People’s Day on the second Monday of October as a Town holiday in the personnel policy effective now. Motion passed unanimously.
  5. Buildings committees. Architect Bids for Elevator Project – Open bids. The Town Administrator stated that the RFP was published in the Vermont Shopper, on-line at VLCT, on our web site, and was sent by email to 12 architectural firms. Only one architect attended the site visit, and that firm is the sole bid received. Sue Allen opened the bid, which contained 6 copies of the bid presentation, which was passed to each of the Selectboard and to the Town Administrator. The Selectboard reviewed the package. The Town administrator asked to consult with Jeff Martell, AIA, who had helped with the RFP, let him look over the bid and give his opinion. It was agreed that the SB would make a decision on this bid at its Oct 4th meeting. In addition, Bill will arrange a meeting with the building committee and the architect before that Oct 4th meeting. Funding for this project would come from ARPA money.
  6. Water Wastewater committee. Joe Pollio stated that a meeting was being arranged among the Wastewater Committee members, Tighe and Bond and the state for early October.

9. Other Business: There was none

10. Public Comment: Hardy Merrill opined out loud to the Selectboard: “You are doing a good job.” Thank you was the reply.

11. Date of Next Meeting: Monday October 4, 2021, at 6 pm at the Town Hall and on Microsoft Teams.

12. Adjournment: It was moved by Suzanne Welch, second John Gregory to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

William G. Kearns