**MINUTES SELECTBOARD MEETING**

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

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

**Monday, January 3, 2022, After Capital Budget Hearing/Meeting**

Present at the meeting in the Town Hall:

Selectboard: Joe Pollio, John Gregory, Cathy Siano-Goodwin, Suzanne Welch, and Rich Thompson.

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

On-line: Wendy Martin, Charles Bonin, Nancy Merrill, Fact8 TV.

1. Call to order at 5:55 PM
2. Adopt Agenda: The chair asked that the approval of the Certificate of Highway mileage and signing the same be added under Highway Committee; and under committee reports the signing of the amended Personnel Policy be added to Personnel Committee. Date on Agenda was corrected by Suzanne Welch to 2022. Motion by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, second John Gregory to adopt agenda as suggested by the Chair with the date correction. Motion passed unanimously.
3. Minutes of Selectboard meetings December 20, 2021: Cathy Siano-Goodwin had some minor amendments. Motion by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, second Richard Thompson to accept the minutes as amended. Motion passed unanimously.
4. Clerk/Treasurer
   * Selectboard Take action on the Recommendation of the Capital Budget Committee. After a short discussion, it was moved by Suzanne, Welch, second Cathy Siano-Goodwin to accept the recommendations of the Capital Budget Committee for a $200,000 capital budget for FY 2022-2023 consisting of $147,392 to the Highway Equipment Fund, $36,608 to the Highway road and Structures Program and $16,000 to the Firetruck fund. Motion passed unanimously.
   * Finalize the Grafton fiscal year 2022-2023 Town Budget. Kim Record stated that she wanted to complete the budget as it is. The Chair, Joe Pollio, stated he had changed his mind and was not now in favor of the 120 days of comp time provided for in the new Personnel Policy and was not now in agreement with the rounding up of wages for two employees. He then made a motion to revisit the new Personnel Policy to amend the comp time annual accrual back to 80 hours from 120 hours and to continue all the employees’ COLA increase in wages but to rescind the rounding up for two of the employees. Cathy Siano-Goodwin seconded the motion. Joe Pollio stated at the time of the vote he did not focus on the 120 hours but rather he focused on the disallowance of replenishment. He stated it was unclear to him, but he did vote in favor at the time, but now was not in favor of it. He stated he objected to its effect on the budget. There ensued a lengthy discussion including:
     + Suzanne Welch stated the 120 hours of comp time will not affect the budget. A reduction to 80 hours would mean paid overtime would increase but there would be less time off. The rounding up does affect the budget, but the amount annually is minor.
     + Joe Pollio wants less time off for the highway crew so that more work is done.
     + Suzanne Welch stated the subject of the motion is a major change and should have been brought to the Personnel Committee first. She then objected to the motion.
     + Kim Record stated that the rounding up is a difference of about $2500 annually. Kim also said that this budget doesn’t really have anything to with the 120 and the 80.
     + Richard Thompson stated he learned a lot at the executive session that followed the vote on the Policy and finishing the budget and what he learned would have affected his vote on both matters. And added the Selectboard had discussed this at the executive session and the SB needs to resolve the issues.
     + Suzanne said that the compromise to 120 was a way to rein in comp time and that the essence of the problem with comp time is its broad definition, that is, vacation, sick, comp, and holiday time off are all used as regular time work when determining what is overtime. The Selectboard could change that provision.
     + Joe Pollio the difficulty of getting a budget passed if the motion was not dealt with now. Kim Record replied that she would not recommend a change in the budget over the minimum amount affected up or down by the rounding up or taking it away. The budget should remain the same either way.
     + Suzanne Welch stated that in the motion that passed on December 20, 2021 to adopt the Personnel Policy, the SB would revisit the comp time issues in one year and asked that the Selectboard give it the year then revisit.
     + Rich reiterated the need to resolve issues in executive session before continuing the discussion. There appeared to be some agreement on that and that another session to resolve that would be appropriate before more discussion of the issues raised by the motion.

Joe Pollio stated the issues he raised were not discussed enough by the Selectboard and discussion should have followed the executive session. And based on Richard last comment he withdrew his motion. Cathy Siano-Goodwin withdrew her second, and the motion was withdrawn.

The Selectboard gave its blessing for the Clerk to proceed with the 2022-2023 budget and discussion of it. Kim Record referred to the Revenue Sheet as she pointed to the first line: last years $878,000 property tax total versus this budget with $907,000, and increase of $21,000, which translates to a one to two cent rise in individual property taxes. In response to a question from Suzanne Welch Kim stated everyone is taxed based on the value of the asset and their income is not a factor, though the town will work with persons having difficulty, but the tax as set has to be paid. There is a break for 100% disabled veterans.

Kim Record stated she had sent the member the December – second quarter – Quarterly review of the budget and asked if there were issues to be discussed. There were none.

1. Highway Report: Danny Taylor asked a question about COVID exposure and the policy to be followed. Bill Kearns noted the facts of the contact and stated he would get back to Danny after the meeting.
   * FEMA meetings – status of Recovery. Danny’s opinion on the Town status in reporting damage sites was that the Town had reported all damage sites to FEMA. He said there was a very small amount of debris which was small enough to ignore. He agreed the town could sign off on the list of sites. Bill Kearns will do so as Town Administrator.
   * Excess Weight Permit PJF Trucking & Logging. Bill Kearns presented the application for excess weight permit from PJF Trucking and Logging LLC, including the fee and COI. It was approved by the Selectboard on motion by John Gregory, second Cathy Siano-Goodwin, including authorization for the Town Administrator to issue the permit. Motion passed unanimously.
   * Other:

* The crew is working to smooth rutted roads throughout the Town and
* Going through the PACIF inspection list and addressing all shortfalls.
* Danny Taylor noted that the sander had to be repaired and the fix was expensive.
* There continues to be a problem with the VTel manhole cover at the driveway to its facility on Townshend Rd. Last year this loose manhole cover was brought to VTel’s attention and Judy E. Paton promised it would be secured. It was not. On one occasion the cover came loose as a Town plow went over the hole. The 300+ pound cover careened down the road several hundred feet. Luckily, the cover struck no one, no auto, no house and no one was following the truck and thus no one drove into the manhole. The Town informed VTel again. VTel, Judy Paton, promised to secure it. As of last summer, it had not and so the Grafton TA asked VTel again. VTel promised to secure it. As of this meeting nothing has been done to secure the cover. Danny Taylor said now that we are fully aware, it is a liability to the Town. If VTel does not fix the cover immediately we will weld it in place. Though there was no motion the Selectboard agreed unanimously. Bill Kearns will inform VTel that either they secure it immediately or we will secure it.

1. Committee Reports:
   * Cemetery committee: Joe Pollio reported that there continues to be correspondence back and forth with Bruce Jones an abutter, but no decisions has been made by him concerning the possibility of the Town obtaining a few of the abutting acres from him and his wife. This continues. As for the Ruschell property on Four Chimneys Rd., that property is problematic due to its location and the ROW passing so close to the house on the abutting property.
   * Highway committee: The Highway Mileage Certificate was presented to the Selectboard by Bill Kearns, who noted there was no change in mileage or classification of highways from last year, when the LT off Otis Rd was added. Motion by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, second Reich Thompson to approve the Vtrans Highway Mileage Certificate and execute it by all the Selectboard members. Motion passed unanimously. The Certificate was executed by each member.
   * Parks committee: At the time of this meeting there was no news on logging commencing.
   * Buildings committee: Bill Kearns reported:

* Heat pumps: The installer has one of three in and will install upstairs in two weeks or so. Does not know when the other two will be in.
* Elevator: Progressing. The Architect is drawing the plans for the construction and working on the bidding docs for the RFPs to be sent out. Local contractors will be included for the bidding of the structure.
  + Water Wastewater committee. Dealing with Erin Moore of Tighe & Bond and Lynette Claudon of the state. There was to be contract finalization last week, but nothing yet. Bill Kearns will follow up. Suzanne Welch is concerned that the contract with Tighe and Bond is not accounting for/acknowledging the scoping work done by the Committee. Joe Pollio will discuss the scoping with the State and T&B. Also discussed was the need for a Resident Contract Representative and who that would be. A person was suggested, but that person has declined the position.
  + Before the Personnel Committee item, the Clerk/Treasurer stated Fred Duplessis of Sullivan powers, our CPA auditor will review the draft audit report with the Selectboard during the meeting on Tuesday January 18m 2022. The Selectboard has been provided a copy.
  + Personnel committee: Employee Job Descriptions – discussion/decision. There was a long discussion / presentation of the Town Administrator’s job description, focusing on cooperation with Clerk/Treasurer on various items and the some with town Highway Foreman. Also discussed was the job description of the highway crew. The personnel committee will take those edits and finalize the descriptions and being them back to the Selectboard on January 18th.

1. Other Business: It was stated that the iPad for highway was still at the WRC because the State is changing its format of the info needed and the person at the WRC did not want to load what he had planned to, and then have to edit it all.
2. Public Comment: none
3. Executive Session. 1 VSA 313: not held.
4. Next Regular Meeting – Monday January 17, 2021 @ 6:00 PM.
5. Adjourn: Motion to adjourn by Rich Thompson, second John Gregory unanimously passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:31 PM.

Respectfully presented,

William G. Kearns

