

MINUTES SELECTBOARD MEETING
Grafton Town Hall Upstairs In Person/Live
With accommodation for persons unable to attend in person via interactive Zoom

Monday, April 17, 2023, 6:00 pm

Present at the meeting in the Town Hall:

Selectboard: Chair Joe Pollio, Vice Chair Cathy Siano-Goodwin, John Gregory, and Seth Pajcic

Selectboard not present: Rich Thompson

Also: Morgan Wilbur, Don Dougall, Amber Stevens, Mike Faulkner, Bill Kearns, Eric Stevens, Dottie Cannon, Tiana Smith, Mike Burke, Patrick Cooperman, Liisa Kissel, Sam Battaglino, David Ward, and Greg Heaton

Present online: FactTV, Nancy Merrill, Wendy Martin, Hardy Merrill, and Charlie Bonin

1. Call to order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.
2. Adopt Agenda: Joe Pollio requested moving the Executive Session to item #11 after Public Comment.

It was moved by John Gregory, seconded by Seth Pajcic, to adopt the agenda as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Approve Minutes of the April 3, 2023 meeting: It was moved by Seth Pajcic, seconded by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, to approve the minutes of the April 3, 2023 meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

4. GMP Storm Restoration Discussion: Green Mountain Power (GMP) representatives Matt Burke, Tiana Smith, David Ward, and Greg Heaton. Burke gave a presentation and emphasized what GMP is doing actively to bridge the communication gap and extended outage issue, even with Vermont's increasingly severe winters. He talked about its communication with meteorologists and preparation for each storm, but how that is also challenging when storms change, and they need to act accordingly. For the March 14, 2023, storm, they had crews from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Maine, New York, Quebec, New Brunswick, Kentucky, and Pennsylvania all working to restore power as quickly as possible. Burke also mentioned goals for upgrading infrastructure with Storm Hardened construction to better withstand the changing climate and ultimately going underground with as many wires as possible to limit the number of trees causing downed wires ultimately causing power outages. Smith mentioned the resiliency zone in Grafton and the battery backups that they are currently installing in town. There are 52 homes within the resilience zone, and of those 32 expressed interest and to date, six homes have the new batteries installed. Liisa Kissel asked if that program was free of charge. Smith said if the home is within the zone, then yes. However, homes not within the resiliency zone can still participate but there is a lease fee of \$55 per month. Burke then talked about their critical care list and that GMP communicates with those individuals and does their best to give them updates frequently. Eric Stevens said the largest problem with multi-day events is the lack of

communication back to the towns. Ward said it's important and beneficial for the crew bosses to communicate with Emergency Management Committees and that is something they would work to improve. Joe Pollio then thanked Burke, Smith, Ward, and Heaton for their work and for taking the time to come to the meeting.

5. NRCS Discussion: Bill Kearns discussed the importance of repairing the stormwater damage caused to Patrick Cooperman's property on the Hinkley Brook Road side. He gave some history on the situation saying the town increased water flow exponentially after the 1996 storm event by directing the water that goes down Fire Pond Road. He said that certain procedures should have been followed at the time, including a public hearing about the redirection of storm water flow over private property (10 V.S.A. §1264). Cooperman stated he wanted to see the Town take responsibility and ownership for the damage caused by this water redirection. He also talked briefly about the need for storm water management because there are other culverts running over private property in other parts of the village. It was noted that if the Fire Pond Road/Hinkley Brook Road water flow does not get resolved soon, Cooperman is at risk of losing his house down the stream.

It was moved by Joe Pollio, seconded by Cathy Siano-Goodwin for the Town to be responsible for the match of \$7,150 for the USDA EWP 5039 grant and to hire an engineer to mitigate the upper portion of the stream to avoid problems in the future. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Highway Report: Mike Faulkner reported that the grader is back together. Bazin Brothers will pick up their grader by the end of the week. In the following week, they'd like to repair a section of Anderson Road. Faulkner, David Rogers, and Colby Record met with Jeff Nugent from Windham Regional Commission on Thursday, April 13th to go over grants in aid work and tablet. Faulkner had also been working on putting together a bid for paving Route 35 between Otis Road and Ellsworth Road.

Excess weight permits: Dead River Company, AmeriGas, and TMG Enterprises

It was moved by Seth Pajcic, seconded by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, to approve these weight permits and to authorize the Town Administrator to sign and issue. Motion passed unanimously.

7. Clerk/Treasurer:

ARPA Funds: Morgan Wilbur said the Town had received \$201,784.39 in ARPA funds initially and then was awarded an additional \$888.37 because some towns declined to accept funds. The Town ended with receiving a total of \$202,672.76 but a motion was needed to accept the additional funds.

It was moved by Seth Pajcic, seconded by John Gregory, to accept and allocate the additional \$888.37 of ARPA funds to the town hall ADA project. Motion passed unanimously.

8. Committee Reports:

Personnel Committee: There was no discussion.

9. Other Business: There was no discussion.

10. Public Comment: There was no public comment.

11. Executive Session: At 7:28 pm, it was moved by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, seconded by John Gregory to enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel, per 1 V.S.A. § 313, and invited Mike Faulkner to the discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

At 7:52 pm, it was moved by Seth Pajcic, seconded by John Gregory to exit Executive Session. Motion passed unanimously.

No further action was taken.

12. Next regular meeting: Monday, May 1, 2023, at 6 pm.

13. Adjourn. It was moved by John Gregory, seconded by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, to adjourn the meeting at 7:53 pm. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Morgan Wilbur