

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

Monday, August 7, 2023, Immediately following BCA Meeting at 5:15 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, Kim Record, Mike Faulkner, Colby Record, Sam Battaglino, Robbie Sprague, Sam Battaglino, Wendy Martin, Dottie Cannon, and Christine Tattersall

Present online: FactTV, Charles Bonin, Hardy Merrill, Nancy Merrill, and Liisa Kissel

1. Call to order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:46 pm.
2. Adopt Agenda: It was moved by John Gregory, seconded by Cathy Siano-Goodwin to adopt the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.
3. Approve Minutes of the July 17, 2023, public hearing: It was moved by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, seconded by John Gregory, to approve the minutes of the July 17, 2023, public hearing. Motion passed unanimously.
4. Approve Minutes of the July 17, 2023, meeting: It was moved by Seth Pajcic, seconded by John Gregory, to approve the minutes of the July 17, 2023, meeting. Motion passed unanimously.
5. Approve Minutes of the July 24, 2023, emergency meeting: It was moved by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, seconded by John Gregory, to approve the minutes of the July 24, 2023, emergency meeting. Motion passed unanimously.
6. Amend Purchasing Policy: John Gregory stated the amount of \$150,000 in the current Procurement Policy for federal funding needs to be changed to \$250,000 to remain consistent with FEMA and State policies. Kim Record clarified that this does not affect other purchases such as trucks or equipment. Gregory said the change was only to affect projects where the Town received federal funding for, such as flooding or large disasters.

It was moved by Seth Pajcic, seconded by John Gregory to amend the Purchasing Policy from \$150,000 to \$250,000 for federal funds in accordance with FEMA recommendation. Motion passed unanimously.
7. Kidder Hill Bridge Reappraisal: Kim Record said she researched if the Town could simply raise the amount that the bridge is appraised at. Susan Benoit from PACIF told Record that anything over \$500,000 would need an appraisal. If the Town wanted to list the bridge at \$500,000, the premium per year would be approximately \$1,228. The bridge is currently

appraised at \$142,827 and the town pays a premium of approximately \$350. After some discussion, it was decided to take insurance completely off the Kidder Hill Bridge.

It was moved by Seth Pajcic, seconded by Cathy Siano-Goodwin to no longer insure the Kidder Hill Bridge and to remove it from the policy. Motion passed unanimously.

8. Approve additional rates for the 7/9-10 Rain Event: John Gregory said a larger excavator is needed to place riprap at various areas throughout town, so a rate needed to be set. Mike Faulkner said the rate from the contractor with the equipment charges \$275 per hour.

It was moved by John Gregory, seconded by Seth Pajcic, to approve a rate of \$275 per hour for a Hitachi 300 Excavator. Motion passed unanimously.

9. Highway Report: Mike Faulkner reported they are mostly focused on flood-related issues. He said there are blocks on Eastman Road that will need to be discussed at a later date. Various paving around town is needed to repair flood damages; Morgan Wilbur contacted 3 contractors in accordance with the procurement policy. The bids would be opened at the following meeting. Faulkner contacted a company to order the culvert needed on Middletown Road at Richard Desrochers's property. Cathy Siano-Goodwin asked if the town could remove trees and debris from the river. Faulkner and Joe Pollio explained that the State does not allow that, since it is better for the Fish and Wildlife habitats.

10. Clerk/Treasurer: Kim Record said tax bills were mailed out and the first payment is due on August 21st. The Professional Auditors have been working in the office and hope to be done the following day. Record mentioned the fire escape project and the concrete section in front of the Town Hall. Morgan Wilbur said she contacted Carroll Welding to get a quote for the fire escape and she was waiting on a response from Record Concrete regarding the front walkway. Cathy Siano-Goodwin asked about the donation from the Saxtons River Tai Chi Group. Record said they intended the donation to be used for flood relief but were not specific. Wilbur said she sent a thank you letter to them that day.

11. Committee Reports:

Personnel Committee: There was no discussion.

12. Other Business: John Gregory said there will be a Pre-Construction meeting for the Walker Bridge on Monday, August 21st at 10:00 am on Microsoft Teams. Morgan Wilbur would send the meeting link to the board members.

Gregory said Bill Kearns has been hired by the Town of Londonderry to assist them with flood relief. Gregory and Joe Pollio stated they don't object to him doing that work, as long as he doesn't use Town of Grafton equipment to perform the work.

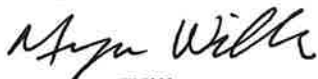
13. Public Comment: Wendy Martin stated it is very inconvenient for the Selectboard meetings to begin at a time based on another meeting that happens previously. She said it is challenging for people who want to attend the meetings to have to arrive at inconsistent times.

Morgan Wilbur read a letter from Camille and Adam Witkowski who reside at 1528 Townshend Road (letter attached on page 4). Joe Pollio stated the board would be looking to increase the sheriff's contract in the fall when they discuss the budget. Seth Pajcic said we could request the sheriff increase his presence on Townshend Road and try to visit various areas throughout town. In regard to flooding, Cathy Siano-Goodwin asked if the homeowners could build a berm to redirect the water away from their property. Mike Faulkner said that is discouraged from the State of Vermont since they would prefer to see the water spread out in flat areas. Pajcic said the local governments don't have the funds or capacity to handle these individual properties. Martin said people want to be heard and acknowledged. Wilbur would send the Witkowskis information about potential funding opportunities and respond to their letter.

14. Next regular meeting: Monday, August 21, 2023, at 6 pm.

15. Adjourn. It was moved by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, seconded by John Gregory, to adjourn the meeting at 6:27 pm. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Morgan Wilbur

Grafton Administrator

From: Camille Witkowski <camillemaggi@icloud.com>
Sent: Monday, August 7, 2023 10:42 AM
To: Grafton Administrator
Cc: adam Witkowski
Subject: Re: Flood Damage

Hi Morgan,

So sorry for the 11th hour reply! We have been visiting family in Canada with spotty reception. I really appreciate your response though, as it has been a bit of a stressful time. I will attach the message I would like read below.

Thanks again,
Camille

Hello all,

Adam and I moved into our house on Townshend at the very end of 2019, and in the short time since we have made it our home. We have poured blood, sweat and tears into a complete renovation, brought home our two babies to that house, and felt immense joy as this town became our community. We had begun to picture our family in Grafton at all stages of life, but recently that picture feels more uncertain.

Our two concerns presently are the cars that go speeding by our home with 0 enforcement, and the lack of mitigation for increasing extreme weather events. Our property is a narrow strip between the road and the river, and as such we feel the constant stress of speeding cars and now the ever looming threat of flooding from the river. This most recent flood came within 4 or 5 feet from the house at the closest point, and ripped through the fenced in patio area Adam had just completed as a safe play area for our children. Watching the emergency meeting video back a few weeks ago, we felt validated in our concerns, and then discouraged as we realized there doesn't seem to be a clear plan to address these issues.

We hear a lot being said about how this town needs young families, but if that is the case we need to do more to make this town a safe place for its littlest residents to live and play. I would like to add our voices to those calling for lowered speed limits, increased police enforcement and/or electronic speed signs. Our stretch of road is right before the increase to 50 miles/hour and as a result it is not uncommon to hear cars revving their engines before they even reach our house. Then there are those who completely ignore the limits altogether. Add to this the knowledge that there have been instances of impaired driving on our street, and it becomes extremely concerning.

In regards to the flooding, we aren't sure where to even begin. We had to evacuate our house for a week amid continued flood warnings as we simply can't take any risks when it comes to our children's safety. We came home to our property covered in silt and debris. We've been too discouraged to even begin the cleanup. We have contacted all appropriate agencies, and it seems they will not step in unless our house itself is affected. 2 years ago the water came close. This summer it came closer. We feel like it is only a matter of time and we do not feel safe. I know we can't all build berms, but it feels like there isn't a plan in place to address the increasing frequency of flooding as our climate continues to change. Not everyone in town will have a property impacted, but there needs to be solidarity as we move forward.

We wish we could have been there in person to participate in this discussion tonight, however we look forward to being a part of the solution in the future.

Thanks,
Adam and Cam