

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

Monday, October 16, 2023, 6:00 pm

Present at the meeting in the Town Hall:

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

Also: Morgan Wilbur, Kim Record, Mike Faulkner, Colby Record, Dottie Cannon, Mary Feder, Kathleen Pajcic, Adam Witkowski, Michelle Dufort, Keith Hermiz, Robbie Sprague, Don Dougall, Sam Battaglini, Liisa Kissel, and Mark Hansel

Present online: FactTV, Donna Alexander, Noralee Hall, and Charles Bonin

1. Call to order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. Adopt Agenda: It was moved by Seth Pajcic, seconded by John Gregory to adopt the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.
3. Approve Minutes of the October 2, 2023, meeting: It was moved by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, seconded by Seth Pajcic, to approve the minutes of the October 2, 2023, meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Budget Requests:

Library: Michelle Dufort said in the last fiscal year, they had requested \$7,500 and they have increased to \$8,500. She gave a brief overview as to why the increase in requests is necessary for the Grafton Public Library. The Library's Board of Trustees recognized that the building needed some work, such as painting, insulation, roof, porch, and fire escape door repairs, and painting on the southerly side of the building. Dufort mentioned a generous donation from Liz Bankowski which would be used to aid in restoring the building, however, they would need to apply for additional grants to help cover the expenses. Cathy Siano-Goodwin asked if the building had been inspected for fire safety. Dufort said the library is under the Town's VLCT PACIF policy, therefore, VLCT does inspections often.

Fire Department: Robbie Sprague presented a proposed budget that was level-funded for the past 2 years. He mentioned that as of January 1, 2023, the Fire and Rescue added Athens as a service area. With that addition, they have determined that 1/5 of the calls for Fire are for Athens, therefore, they have requested money from them as well. The fire department requested \$29,950.

Rescue: Keith Hermiz began by saying he had been appointed to be part of the Vermont Regional EMS Coordination Study. He gave a brief overview of what that is. For Grafton specifically, he said that the rescue squad does not lack the number of volunteer responders, however, their level of licensure could improve. Approximately 10% of their calls require ALS interventions and only 2 members are licensed to assist with that. He also said the license renewal is approved for every 3 years and they will be enforcing required background checks for

criminal and abuse/neglect. Hermiz said this is reassuring as a community member knowing that these individuals have gone through a background check prior to entering their homes. Hermiz also said their rescue vehicle is 15+ years old and they have a committee of individuals working through a plan for repair/replacement. He noted a few minor changes within their budget, such as hiring a bookkeeper. The rescue squad requested \$4,500 which was also level funded from previous years.

5. Highway Report: Mike Faulkner reported the highway crew was working on blowing leaves off the road, grading, ditch work and fixing up the shoulders on Route 35. He also said the paving on Route 35 between Otis Road and Ellsworth Road was complete.

6. Clerk/Treasurer: Kim Record said the second quarter taxes are due November 15th. She also said the professional auditors are putting together the final copy of the audit. She will coordinate a time for Fred Duplessis to meet with the Selectboard.

7. Wastewater Update: Seth Pajcic gave a brief update by saying the drinking water system is apparently not needed now in the village. The engineering company is going back to just working on the wastewater system. Cathy Siano-Goodwin asked about having filtration systems in each home that has PFAS. Pajcic said he is still communicating with the state to get this implemented.

8. Short-Term Rental Draft Ordinance: Seth Pajcic said he had drafted a short-term rental (STR) ordinance that was primarily based on the town of Chester's ordinance. It essentially lays out the minimum requirements for having an STR such as a general health checklist, smoke/carbon monoxide alarms, cleaning of the property, etc. He said he added a section about larger units overusing their septic, they would be required to have the systems pumped every 2 years rather than 4 years. There would be an application that would be filed with the Town Administrator along with a fee. Pajcic listed the fees the same as Chester's, for now, at \$150 for hosted properties and \$300 for un-hosted properties per year. Mary Feder said she operates a VRBO rental in the village and asked why the rate would be the same for a smaller property versus a large unit. Pajcic said the price structure was based on whether the property owner lived on-site or not. Kim Record asked what the money that would be generated be used for. Pollio said it would be for administrative costs. Rich Thompson asked how the ordinance would be enforced. Pajcic said it would be similar to the septic ordinance and there would be a fine for each day the registration is late. Discussion continued in regard to how the ordinance would be enforced. Cathy Siano-Goodwin said it's important for the property owners to at least register with the Town so that when there's a complaint, there is contact information. Mike Faulkner noted there have been issues in years past during the winter with people parking in the road; having contact information would help the highway crew as well. Pollio said with so many STRs, the town is losing the community. Pollio and Pajcic said they are looking for feedback in regard to the ordinance. Please direct any comments to Morgan Wilbur, the Town Administrator.

9. Committee Reports:

Personnel Committee: Seth Pajcic asked Mike Faulkner if the employee evaluation forms, he drafted were easier than the old ones. Faulkner said yes, they seem much better.

10. Other Business: There was no Other Business.

11. Public Comment: Joe Pollio said Pamela Robinson had written a letter to the Selectboard requesting a hidden driveway sign be placed near the entrance to her driveway. Within the letter, Robinson also mentioned reducing the speed limit on Townshend Road. Adam Witkowski, Robinson's neighbor, added that he and his family were also worried about speeding vehicles past their homes. Witkowski quoted a section from the National Transportation Safety Board saying, "According to the European Transport Safety Council, 5% of pedestrians struck by a vehicle at 20 mph are fatally injured. This likelihood increases to 45% at 30 mph, and 85% at 40 mph (ETSC 1995). The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety similarly found that the average risk of severe injury to a pedestrian increased from 10% at 16 mph, to 25% at 23 mph, 50% at 31 mph, 75% at 39 mph, and 90% at 46 mph (Tefft 2011)." Witkowski said these statistics show a even a slight change in speed can cause severe damage. Pollio said there needs to be increased surveillance from the police officers, which the Selectboard would be discussing further at the next budget meeting.

Don Dougall asked about a follow-up from Bob Donald regarding the town drainage pipe. Seth Pajcic said a letter was sent to him requesting a written notice of what the Windam Foundation Board of Trustees has agreed to. They expect something from him by the end of the month.

Charles Bonin said he appreciated Seth Pajcic and Joe Pollio for advocating for his property as well as the others surrounding the elementary school in regard to the contaminated wells. Pajcic said they would continue working with the State to get individual filtration systems in the homes that test positive for PFAS contamination.

12. Next regular meeting: Monday, November 20, 2023, at 6 p.m.

13. Executive Session 1 V.S.A. § 313 (3) "evaluation of employees": At 7:12 p.m., it was moved by Seth Pajcic, seconded by Cathy Siano-Goodwin to enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel, per 1 V.S.A. § 313 (3). Motion passed unanimously.

At 7:44 pm, it was moved by Seth Pajcic, seconded by Cathy Siano-Goodwin to exit Executive Session. Motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Seth Pajcic, seconded by Cathy Siano-Goodwin to raise Morgan Wilbur's wages as the Town Administrator to \$27.00 per hour, effective immediately. Motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Seth Pajcic, seconded by Cathy Siano-Goodwin to place the hiring of a fourth member of the highway crew under consideration and for Pajcic and Siano-Goodwin to communicate with Mike Faulkner about the specific duties of a fourth member. Motion passed unanimously.

14. Adjourn. It was moved by Rich Thompson, seconded by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Morgan Wilbur

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