

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

Monday, November 6, 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, Dottie Cannon, Lynne Gugenheim, Mike Faulkner, Colby Record, Charlie Hooker, Carol Lind, David Ward, Justin Mason, Adam Witkowski, Raymond Robinson, and Pamela Robinson

Present online: FactTV, Cheryl Kaufman, Vanessa Kellogg, Donna Alexander, Hardy Merrill, Camille Witkowski, Charles Bonin, and Sheriff Mark Anderson

1. Call to order: The Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. Adopt Agenda: It was moved by John Gregory, seconded by Joe Pollio to adopt the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.
3. Approve Minutes of the October 16, 2023, meeting: It was moved by Seth Pajcic, seconded by John Gregory, to approve the minutes of the October 16, 2023, meeting. Motion passed unanimously.
4. Approve Minutes of the October 30, 2023, budget meeting: It was moved by Seth Pajcic, seconded by John Gregory, to approve the minutes of the October 30, 2023, budget meeting. Motion passed unanimously.
5. Green Mountain Power Presentation: David Ward and Justin Mason gave a brief explanation of their plans for the power lines on Stagecoach Road. The installation of a new distribution power line is to be buried within the town road right-of-way. The buried portion will begin at the intersection of Hall Ranch Road and Stagecoach Road. It shall be buried in the ditch line of Stagecoach Road. It will rise to a new Green Mountain Power pole at the brook crossing and span overhead to a second Green Mountain Power pole leaving the existing culvert intact and then continue underground. The line will enter the land now or formerly known as DESOUSA to a junction cabinet before continuing underground to a new pole location across the street from existing Green Mountain Power pole 513166. Ward and Mason had already had conversations with Mike Faulkner, who is in agreement with their plans. Cathy Siano-Goodwin asked if there would need to be any easements from property owners. Ward said all of the work would be done within the Town right-of-way, so easements were not necessary. He also mentioned the road at times will be a 1-lane road and that M&M Excavation would be doing the excavation work. If approved by the Selectboard, Ward anticipates putting the poles into the ground within a week and then excavation soon thereafter.

It was moved by Joe Pollio, seconded by John Gregory, to approve the proposed work plan on Stagecoach Road from Green Mountain Power. Motion passed unanimously.

The Selectboard members signed a “Notification of Pole and Wire Locations” document that was presented by Green Mountain Power. This document will be recorded with the Town Clerk.

6. Brook Field Service Agreement: Morgan Wilbur said the price for the annual service on the Grafton Elementary School generator under the Brook Field Service 2024 Agreement would be \$1,171, compared to \$1,094 in 2023. The annual 2024 price for the Town Garage generator service would be \$523, compared to \$489 in 2023.

It was moved by Joe Pollio, seconded by Seth Pajcic to approve the 2024 Brook Field Service Agreement and to authorize Morgan Wilbur to sign the agreement. Motion passed unanimously.

7. Municipal Energy Resilience Program Agreement: Morgan Wilbur said she had applied for the Town Hall to have an energy efficiency study done through the Provision of Municipal Energy Assessment Services Under the Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP), which is a program under the Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services. The application had gone through and Wilbur was presented with a memorandum of agreement. She said to do the assessment, there would be no cost to the Town.

It was moved by Joe Pollio, seconded by Seth Pajcic to approve the Memorandum of Agreement and to authorize Morgan Wilbur to sign the agreement. Motion passed unanimously.

8. Windham County Sheriff’s Department Increase Budget: Sheriff Mark Anderson was not available at the time, so the Selectboard will revisit the discussion if Anderson is able to join.

After the Highway Report, Anderson joined via Zoom. John Gregory said at its budget meeting on October 30, 2023, the Selectboard added more money to the line item in hopes of increasing the patrol hours. Gregory asked if the increase in hours could start immediately, rather than waiting for the next fiscal year (July 1, 2024). Anderson said they could start with the increase, and he would send Morgan Wilbur the amended contract. Gregory requested that the deputies focus on the following locations: Townshend Road, the village of Houghtonville, Cambridgeport, Route 35, and the village (Main Street/Route 121 East). There was some discussion regarding how many miles per hour over the speed limit for a deputy to issue a ticket. Anderson said as a department, the decision is left up to the deputy and that there are several factors that can lead to issuing tickets.

It was moved by Joe Pollio, seconded by John Gregory to increase the Windham County Sheriff Department’s contract to 12 hours per month and to request police presence on Townshend Road, Houghtonville, Cambridgeport, Route 35, and Main Street. Motion passed unanimously.

Note: after looking at the proposed budget from October 30, 2023, the Selectboard chose to increase the budget to 14 hours per month, rather than 12 hours.

9. Windham Foundation Generator Town Contribution: Joe Pollio mentioned that Bob Donald, the CEO of the Windham Foundation, sent the Town a letter requesting a contribution of funds to aid in the expenses of the generator that the Town is also connected to. Pollio thought it would be best for the Town to purchase an independent generator with an automatic transfer switch.

It was moved by Joe Pollio, seconded by John Gregory to get bids for purchasing and installing a generator for the Town Hall and to send a letter to the Windham Foundation informing them of the plan. Motion passed unanimously.

10. Highway Report: Mike Faulkner reported that Bazin Brothers would be in town in the coming week to finish the paving projects. The highway crew would continue to grade roads and patch some pavement themselves. Eastman Sand and Gravel will start hauling in gravel to the stockpile for the winter.

Four Chimneys Road Signs: Joe Pollio said Lynne Gugenheim had written the Selectboard a letter requesting a “no outlet” sign be posted at the end of Four Chimneys Road. Numerous times, people travel up the road thinking it is a through road. Pollio mentioned there was a “no outlet” sign posted on Avery Park Drive for the same reason, and it had worked well. Mike Faulkner agreed to put the sign up but recommended that if Gugenheim wanted a “no trespassing” sign, she would be responsible for that since it wouldn’t be on town property. All were in agreement.

Townshend Road Signs: After discussion with residents who live in the vicinity of 1528 and 1537 Townshend Road, Mike Faulkner and Morgan Wilbur will research and ask the sheriff if the speed limits could be adjusted by 5 mph and move the current 50 mph sign that is placed near the driveway to 1624 Townshend Road south so that it is further around the corner. Faulkner will also order a “blind driveway” sign to be placed at the driveway to 1561 Townshend Road.

Adam Witkowski also asked Faulkner if he was aware of the culvert at the base of Turner Hill Road. He said during any rainstorm, it constantly causes issues with the road and surrounding properties.

Bell Road Culvert: John Gregory said a motion is needed so that the Town doesn’t have to bid out hiring an engineer for the alignment of the Bell Road culvert or to do the plans for the block wall on Eastman Road. Gregory said this was recommended by FEMA to use the same engineer, especially for the block wall on Eastman Road that did the plans for Irene in 2011.

It was moved by Joe Pollio, seconded by John Gregory, that pursuant to the provision in the procurement policy providing for the waiver of bids for items costing between \$5,000 and \$20,000 the Selectboard waives the necessity to put the engineering for alignment of culvert #1 on Bell Road and the block wall on Eastman Road out to bid, based on both the cost cited and the Selectboard’s familiarity with the engineering firm’s capabilities and work quality. Motion passed unanimously.

11. Clerk/Treasurer: There was no report.

12. Committee Reports:

Personnel Committee: Cathy Siano-Goodwin said they were waiting to receive applications for the Equipment Operator/Truck Driver position.

Cemetery Committee: Joe Pollio said one of the abutting property owners to the Houghtonville Cemetery was selling their house, so the committee is waiting for the new owners to confirm they are fine to move forward with expanding the cemetery. Mike Faulkner mentioned the fallen tree in the Middletown Cemetery had been cut up and placed over the stone wall. Pollio will talk with Mike Waysville to get the broken stones repaired.

13. Other Business: Joe Pollio mentioned the Town received a letter of commitment from the Windham Foundation to be responsible for 50% of the drainage pipe in the village; the Town would be responsible for the other 50%. Pollio also said there was a meeting in regard to the Walker Bridge. The contractor will begin minor work through the winter and starting March 1, 2024, the bridge will be 1-lane.

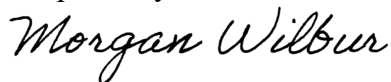
14. Public Comment: Don Dougall asked if there would be a 90% report from Tighe & Bond for the Wastewater project. Joe Pollio said yes, there would be, but they didn't know how soon that would be, and that the group would be meeting on Wednesday, November 15th to get an update. Dougall then wanted to confirm that the project would not proceed unless it was fully funded through grants. Pollio said he did not know the answer to that. Discussion continued regarding charcoal filtration systems in homes that had a high-test level of PFAS. Seth Pajcic said the town doesn't have the capacity to have a full water system in the village, but they would be looking into the filtration options. Dougall asked if PFAS has anything to do with wastewater. Pajcic said the PFAS would need to be treated before it's transported to the disbursement site.

Dottie Cannon asked for an update regarding the fence at the Village Cemetery. Joe Pollio said he would be asking Springfield Fence for a price to install a new one.

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

16. Adjourn. It was moved by Seth Pajcic, seconded by Joe Pollio, to adjourn the meeting at 6:47 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Morgan Wilbur