

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

Monday, December 18, 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, Amber Stevens, Matt Siano, Patsy Ellis, Dottie Cannon, Denise Martin, Wendy Martin, Meg Gonzales, Patrick Cooperman, Suzanne Welch, and Bob Donald

Present online: FactTV, Cheryl Kaufman, Liisa Kissel, Lain Stevens, Donna Alexander, Charles Bonin, Lester Schwalb, and Eric Stevens

1. Call to order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.
2. Adopt Agenda: It was moved by Seth Pajcic, seconded by Cathy Siano-Goodwin to adopt the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.
3. Approve Minutes of the December 4, 2023, meeting: It was moved by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, seconded by Seth Pajcic, to approve the minutes of the December 4, 2023, meeting. Motion passed unanimously.
4. Approve Minutes of the December 11, 2023, budget meeting: It was moved by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, seconded by Seth Pajcic, to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2023, budget meeting. Motion passed unanimously.
5. Planning Commission – Update on Wastewater Technology Options: Matt Siano, Planning Commission (PC) Chair, gave an update on what the Planning Commission had been researching concerning the Village Wastewater Project. He explained what a “living machine” is and said that there is one at the Sharon rest area (I-89) that can process 20,000 gallons per day. Siano asked if the Selectboard would like the Planning Commission to continue their research on alternative solutions. Seth Pajcic would like them to continue their work and asked for a member of the commission to join the bi-weekly meetings that are convened with Tighe & Bond and VT DEC. Rich Thompson asked Siano if the PC plans to compile a report with its findings. Siano said they did not plan to but will do so if that is what the Selectboard requests. Pajcic felt that at the time, he or a Planning Commission member should attend the bi-weekly meetings and continue the discussion. The board thanked Siano for his time and efforts.
6. Village Pump Park – Open Bids: Selectboard Clerk, Rich Thompson opened the bids.
 - Ivor Stevens Grounds Maintenance (\$16,350)
 - P&L Trucking (\$18,950)
 - Daniels Construction (\$49,500)

Joe Pollio said that per the purchasing policy, a bid would be awarded at the next meeting.

7. Highway Report: Mike Faulkner said they are continuing to fix the roads where they were damaged during the recent heavy rainfall. Cathy Siano-Goodwin asked how the highway department plans to fix the deep ruts on the dirt roads. Faulkner said that they will likely be grading at night when the ground is frozen.

Parker Hill Easement: Mike Faulkner said that Scott Jensen had built a house on the top of Parker Hill Road, just before the road turns to Class 4. Jensen and Dale Wyman (property owner) made a better turn-around location for the highway crew in the winter. Morgan Wilbur wrote up an easement that needed to be approved by the board for the highway crew to turn around in that location. Faulkner said the new location is much easier than turning around in a driveway.

It was moved by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, seconded by Rich Thompson, to approve the presented Deed of Easement between Dale Wyman and the Town of Grafton for the turnaround at the end of Parker Hill Road on the class 3 section. Motion passed unanimously.

Driveway Access Permit: John Gregory said the current driveway access policy has a minimum refundable deposit of \$500 for any access permit, whether that be temporary or permanent. He thought that the price was high and typically only had issues with temporary access permits. He suggested amending the policy to have a refundable deposit of \$100 for permanent access permits and \$500 for temporary access permits. Mike Faulkner said he inspects all sites when the work is complete.

It was moved by John Gregory, seconded by Seth Pajcic, to amend the Highway Access Policy for the deposit to be \$100 for permanent access permits and \$500 for temporary access permits. Motion passed unanimously.

8. Clerk/Treasurer:

Quarterly Reports: Kim Record said she sent the quarterly reports to the Selectboard last week and asked for any questions. There were none.

9. Committee Reports:

Wastewater Committee: Seth Pajcic said since the last regular Selectboard meeting, he had put in a lot of time talking with state representatives, the Town Attorney, engineers, and community members and doing his own research. He prepared a PowerPoint presentation where he talked about the sewer/fire district issue, the problems with it, and the recommendations for how the Town should proceed. He said the map was created from the Village Center designation with a ¼ mile buffer area. Typically, fire districts are already formed in communities, and they approach the Selectboard to say a wastewater/water system is needed. When that happens, those within the district vote and pay for the entire system. However, in Grafton that was done in reverse. The Town of Grafton is the grantee on the grant agreement, which means the voters of the town would need to approve any system. Another issue is affordability. To meet EPA sewer affordability requirements, per year the cost per user would need to be less than \$1,363. With the current grant, the annual user fees are \$3,548, which is well above what is considered affordable. To get below the EPA threshold, the entire project would need to be funded by grants. If that were to happen, the annual cost per user would be approximately \$1,204. The other issue is problems with the law itself. Pajcic said that as he came to the meeting, he was informed that Joe Pollio had chosen to withdraw his property from the discussion. Therefore, Pajcic said the Town should take a pause. The grant award end date is September 30, 2026, giving time for the engineers to explore possible alternatives. Pajcic said he wrote a letter to VT DEC asking them to look at the following alternatives:

- 1) Cluster system for houses online in the village (excluding the buffer) that would exclude the MKT and the Inn.
- 2) A smaller distributed treatment system that would exclude the MKT and the Inn
- 3) A living machine.
- 4) Any other feasible lower-cost alternatives, which he had not listed, that could be supported financially just by the users of the system.
- 5) If there are no feasible wastewater alternatives, then a PFAS/PFOS system that would install, dispose of, and replace point-of-entry filters at regular intervals without a full-blown wastewater system.

Pajcic finished his presentation by saying the system could be managed by a Selectboard, a fire/sewer district board, or a wastewater or sewer commission. At a meeting with the state and engineers, Pajcic was told that Grafton would need to create a district. However, according to the law, the Selectboard could manage the system and appoint a commission (such as the Planning Commission, for example). At the end of Pajcic's presentation, he opened up the discussion to questions. Kim Record asked if the PowerPoint slides would be available to the public. Morgan Wilbur will post them on the Town Website. Wendy Martin asked if the Selectboard still planned to host a public meeting with the Town Attorney in January. Pajcic said with the new information regarding Pollio's property, he thinks the engineers need to reevaluate and the public meeting should be postponed until they have more information.

Personnel Committee: There was no discussion.

10. Beaver Issue on Fisher Hill Road: John Gregory noticed that just before the schoolhouse on Fisher Hill Road, beavers had put in 3 dams. He said that before the heavy rainstorm, the beavers kept building it up and it posed a potential threat to the culvert and road. Gregory had asked Morgan Wilbur to draft a letter to the property owners asking them to contact the Fish and Wildlife Game Warden to help mitigate the problem. Gregory asked if there was any objection to sending the letter, and there was none.

11. Generator Connection with Windham Foundation: Bob Donald said that at the end of October, the Windham Foundation wrote a letter to the Town requesting a contribution for the connection that the Town Hall has to the Windham Foundation's generator. Donald said they recently installed a new generator and the expected life span for it is 20-30 years. Seth Pajcic said he read that the Windham Foundation was requesting a \$15,000 one-time fee for connection. Donald said he wrote that as a rough idea, but ultimately wanted the Selectboard to contribute what they felt was reasonable. Morgan Wilbur had met with 3 generator sales people, who all gave quotes for install of \$15,000-20,000, which does not include the yearly routine maintenance and operating expenses such as propane.

It was moved by John Gregory, seconded by Seth Pajcic, to install an automatic transfer switch for the Town Hall and to pay the Windham Foundation \$15,000 for the life of the generator and for a legal agreement to be written and presented to each entity's attorneys. Motion passed unanimously.

12. Village Drainage Pipe Update & Agreement with Windham Foundation: John Gregory and Morgan Wilbur met with Ted Reeves from Reeves Consulting LLC in Chester to come up with ideas on how else to drain the water from the ballfield, rather than going into the drainage pipe. Reeves was not interested in consulting on this specific project but did give some helpful information. He said there are potential funding opportunities, such as CWSRF and ARPA funds. He also gave 2 other recommendations for engineers who may have the capacity to work on this project. Bob Donald said he and Russel Hodgkins at the Windham Foundation are very interested in being included in further discussions with the engineering firms.

It was moved by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, seconded by Rich Thompson, to move forward with contacting another engineer for assistance with the village drainage pipe and to include Bob Donald and Russel Hodgkins in the conversations. Motion passed unanimously.

13. Other Business: There was no Other Business.

14. Public Comment: Wendy Martin asked the Selectboard if anyone had driven on Kidder Hill Road to look at the flood damage that was caused by that day's rainstorm. Joe Pollio said he and John Gregory both had driven on the road and evaluated damages. Patsy Ellis said that her property, again, suffered damage because of the high waters. Patrick Cooperman encouraged the Selectboard to come up with a "global" plan to mitigate obvious problems that are caused by stormwater throughout the village. He was surprised that there is no mention of things such as utilities, wastewater, clean water, etc. in the Town Plan. He thought having a

statement about long-term goals would be beneficial and it was noted that amendments could be made to the Town Plan.

15. Next meeting – Capital Budget Hearing: Tuesday, January 2, 2023, at 5:45 PM

16. Next regular meeting: Tuesday, January 2, 2023, at 6 pm.

17. Executive Session 1 V.S.A. . § 313 (2) “negotiating or securing real estate purchase or lease options”: At 6:53 p.m., it was moved by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, seconded by John Gregory, to enter into Executive Session to discuss a real estate purchase, per 1 V.S.A. § 313 (2). Motion passed unanimously.

At 7:05 p.m., it was moved by Seth Pajcic, seconded by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, to exit Executive Session. Motion passed unanimously.

Action after executive session: the board gave permission to Joe Pollio and John Gregory to contact surrounding landowners for the property in question.

18. Adjourn. It was moved by Seth Pajcic, seconded by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, to adjourn the meeting at 7:06 pm. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Morgan Wilbur

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