

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

**Monday, June 17, 2024, 6:00 pm**

Present at the meeting in the Town Hall:

Selectboard: Chair Joe Pollio, Vice Chair Cathy Siano-Goodwin, John Gregory, and Steve Sargent

Also: Morgan Wilbur, Kim Record, Tim Jones, Dan Austin, Wendy Martin, Dottie Cannon, Patsy Ellis, Amber Stevens, Suzanne Welch, Colby Record, Patrick Cooperman, Liisa Kissel, Anna Keegan, Sherry Brown, First Sergeant Robert Lakin, and Sheriff Mark Anderson

Present online: FactTV, Lain Stevens, Donna Alexander, Cheryl Kaufman, and Charles Bonin

1. Call to order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. Adopt Agenda: Morgan Wilbur requested the agenda be amended to approve a cemetery deed. Joe Pollio suggested approval before Other Business.

It was moved by John Gregory, seconded by Cathy Siano-Goodwin to adopt the agenda as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Approve Minutes of the June 3, 2024, meeting: It was moved by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, seconded by Steve Sargent, to approve the minutes of the June 3, 2024, meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

4. GMP Line Reconstruction Project Along Route 121: Dan Austin and Tim Jones from Green Mountain Power said they have been working on a resiliency project that will provide power to Grafton from Westminster. Austin explained that Grafton's power currently comes from Chester, however, the new circuit will be in Westminster. The new construction includes a much more durable, storm-resilient wire and taller power poles both of which will withstand limb strikes better. He said that the majority of the project is for the new overhead wires but there would be approximately 600' of underground work. This would be near Chris Gates' property in Cambridgeport, all of which is private property. Austin said they are hoping to be "shovel ready" by September. By then they will have all required permits in place, materials, and contractors available. Austin also said that he would be working with Colby Record, the Highway Foreman, to get feedback from him about the placement of the poles. As the Foreman, Record will need to ensure the project does not interfere with the traveled highway. Suzanne Welch asked what the traffic disturbance would be like. Austin said that they had no intention of closing the roadway. There would be periodic single-lane closures. Liisa Kissel asked how long the project is estimated to take. Austin said that has not been determined yet; it is based on the hired contractor but likely would take months to complete.

5. Highway Report: Colby Record reported that the culvert replacement and ditching work along Wright Orchard Road had been completed. He planned to close Fisher Hill Road on Thursday, June 20<sup>th</sup> from 8 a.m. until 12 p.m. to replace a culvert. This culvert site is near the driveway to 1100 Fisher Hill Road. The crew planned to also replace a driveway culvert in the vicinity. Once the Fisher Hill Road culvert work is completed, he planned to do more ditch reshaping on Route 121 West as well as cutting some trees within the town right-of-way. Cathy Siano-Goodwin asked about roadside mowing. Record said they had been trying to do it on Fridays, but will whenever they have time. He said that Townshend Road is complete for mowing and they would like to do Route 121 next. Siano-Goodwin noticed that the center yellow lines throughout the town had been painted. She wondered if the stop lines would be painted. Morgan Wilbur said she had been trying to work with a neighboring town who has the equipment to do so and will follow up with them that week.

Suzanne Welch asked John Gregory if the Walker Bridge would remain a single-lane bridge in September. Gregory said he expected the bridge would stay single lane for quite some time. He said that the expected completion date keeps getting delayed each time they receive a financial update. Welch said it is just something to keep in mind; there is potential for disruptions with traffic at the Walker Bridge and with the Green Mountain Power work if they begin work in the fall.

Tree on North Orchard Road: Colby Record stated there is a tree within the town right-of-way on North Orchard Road that needs to be cut. However, he and his crew are not comfortable cutting it because of the way it is leaning with the potential of damaging the house. Joe Pollio suggested the Town hire a tree company to take care of this. Record said he would contact 802 Tree. Morgan Wilbur will let the homeowner know that the Town is taking care of this issue.

Record Road Easement: Colby Record met with Lester Schwalb on Record Road. A turnaround will be constructed to allow the Town to turn around in the designated area rather than the driveway because Schwalb has redone his driveway and has given permission to the highway crew to do the turnaround.

It was moved by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, seconded by John Gregory, to approve the presented Deed of Easement between Lester Schwalb and the Town of Grafton for the turnaround at the end of Record Road. Motion passed unanimously.

Paving Projects: Joe Pollio said the Selectboard should be thinking about sections of the road to be paved. Colby Record said that it is pretty late in the season to put any projects out to bid. He mentioned the quality of the paving usually isn't very good late into the fall/early winter. Record suggested paving in the springtime of next year, 2025.

It was moved by John Gregory, seconded by Steve Sargent, to delay all paving until the spring of 2025. Motion passed unanimously.

Morgan Wilbur said there is a grant through VTrans for \$200,000 to repave a section of Route 121 East between the Sessler Bridge and Dug Road. Wilbur spoke with Meghan Brunk from VTrans about the possibility of using the funds to pave other sections. Brunk said the language in the grant could be broad and not specific to one particular location. Wilbur was looking for guidance from the Selectboard about what they'd like to do. After some discussion, it was decided to have the language in the grant agreement be broad for paving within the VTrans grant.

Anna Keegan asked if paving the section on Route 121 East could be coordinated with Green Mountain Power, to do at the same time; if that would be beneficial or not. Colby Record said that the power company will have completed its work before a paving contractor could be hired.

Transportation Alternatives Grant: Morgan Wilbur said that there is a Hazard Mitigation Grant Program available to towns across the state with \$90 million available. Wilbur said she had a list of approximately 6-7 projects that she hoped to apply for, one of those being the Fisher Hill Road culvert #10. Since the Town has received an award letter for the Transportation Alternatives Grant, Wilbur asked the Selectboard if she should apply for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and send a decline letter for the Transportation Alternatives Grant. John Gregory asked when a decline letter would need to be submitted. Wilbur was unsure but hoped to have an answer for the next regular meeting.

6. Windham County Sheriff FY25 Contract Discussion: Windham County Sheriff, Mark Anderson introduced himself and First Sergeant Robert Lakin. In July 2023, Anderson said that the Town of Grafton entered into a contract with his department for patrol services for approximately 8 hours per month. In December, the contract

increased to approximately 14 hours per month. Anderson explained that there were staffing changes within his department and that a deputy had not been assigned to Grafton. Due to the scheduling issues within their system, Anderson presented the Selectboard with a reimbursement for \$2,604 which was the numerical difference for the services they did not provide to the Town. Anderson and Lakin said that when the Town had asked for assistance on various things, they had been diligent to follow up and provide services where they could. John Gregory asked if the Windham County Sheriff's Department could fulfill the FY25 contract that was presented for approximately 14 hours of service per month. Anderson said that they just had 3 graduates from the Police Academy, so, yes, they are comfortable fulfilling the contract. Morgan Wilbur said that since she had reached out to Anderson, a deputy had been in Grafton for 18.25 hours within the month of June, thus far.

Cathy Siano-Goodwin asked if the sheriff's department is notified when there is an emergency call. Anderson said that the State Police responds to emergency calls, but sometimes will call upon them for assistance. Anna Keegan asked if there wasn't an emergency, who should be called? Anderson said that the town has access to the State Police and his department, but response may not be immediate depending on if a deputy is available.

Siano-Goodwin asked if there were any situations within Grafton that residents should be aware of. Lakin mentioned a drone issue on Eastman Road that he followed up with. He said that, like any other community, drug activity is prevalent. They try their best to address drug activity requests during the slower hours, but most of their focus has been on motor vehicle enforcement. Anderson briefly talked about a drone bill that had recently been passed and will go into effect July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Liisa Kissel mentioned there have been some instances where there have been concerns about firearms being shot in the evening. Anderson said that if it's an emergency, call 9-1-1. He then said that if it is before 10:00 p.m. at night, under State law, shooting firearms is not illegal. However, if the residents do not feel safe, a deputy could investigate this under reckless endangerment.

Patrick Cooperman asked if the contracted 14 hours is limited only to motor vehicle issues. Anderson said that within the contract there is a scope of work section. They can do more in-depth investigations such as burglaries, for example, but they may direct those instances to the state police for cost-effectiveness.

Sherry Brown described a situation that she witnessed the previous Saturday when a large group of bicyclists were in the village. She said a motor vehicle sped past the large group in front of the Grafton Nature Museum. She said they were going so fast and driving recklessly that she was very concerned about a possible mass casualty. Anderson said that in situations like that, he recommends trying to identify the license plate number and then reporting it to his office.

Discussion continued about various instances of reckless driving. Brown also noted concerns about the signage for the construction work at the Walker Bridge. There had been several times, she said, where she nearly was rear-ended because motor vehicles are not paying attention. Anderson advised the Selectboard to contact the project engineer and the VTrans District Coordinator to see if additional signs or placement of the signs could be changed.

Joe Pollio signed the FY25 Contract with the Windham County Sheriff's Department. Siano-Goodwin thanked Anderson and Lakin for their services.

## 7. Clerk/Treasurer:

Quarterly Reports: Kim Record sent quarterly reports to the Selectboard the week before. She explained that there would be one more accounts payable and payroll to be paid out within the fiscal year. She also noted some line items that appear as expenses but are also on the revenue side such as wastewater and any grants that the

Town received. Record said that the expenses will like exceed the budget. Joe Pollio reminded everyone that the budget was put in place well over a year ago and there were some unexpected changes, for example, payment for connection to the Windham Foundation generator, an employee resigned and benefits had to be paid out, the Sheriff's contract increased, etc.

#### 8. Committee Reports:

Cemetery Committee: Joe Pollio said he spoke with Springfield Fence about the cemetery fence repair at the Village cemetery. He said they promised someone would be in town to do the repair. Pollio also mentioned that the Town is actively looking for land because the cemeteries are filling up.

Personnel Committee: Cathy Siano-Goodwin said that employee evaluations will be done by July 1<sup>st</sup> and she reminded the Selectboard that a decision needs to be made about hiring a 4<sup>th</sup> highway crew member.

Wastewater Committee: Morgan Wilbur said that since the Selectboard's letter to the Commissioner was sent a few weeks ago, they have not heard back. Wilbur said that Suzanne Welch made a suggestion that Joe Pollio and she try to call the Commissioner directly. Wilbur and Pollio were in agreement and will try to get in contact with him in the coming week.

July 2023 Flood Update: Morgan Wilbur said that she and Bill Kearns had been actively working with FEMA about the Eastman Road block wall. There had been some confusion about this project. FEMA was under the impression that the Town only wanted reimbursement for engineering costs, however, Wilbur and Kearns have been diligent to explain that the wall needs to be repaired. Wilbur said she hopes for a better update by the next meeting.

9. Worker's Compensation Discussion: John Gregory said there are some people who we pay their Worker's Compensation for already, such as any part-time employees (for example Bill Kearns to assist with flood paperwork and anybody who does traffic control for the highway department). Kim Record said there were concerns about fixing the gravestones at various cemeteries. She mentioned that Fenton & Hennessey may do that type of work. Joe Pollio requested that Record contact Fenton & Hennessey to see if they would be interested and able to repair the stones. Record also mentioned that there may be some masons who could do stone work and carry their own worker's compensation policy. Pollio said that the Selectboard needs to come up with some type of policy; whether the Town pays for any exposure charge for contractors who do not carry their own policy, or not. Gregory said they had asked for advice from the Town Attorney but he had not responded to Morgan Wilbur's phone calls or emails. Gregory suggested that Pollio, as the Chair of the Selectboard, contact Steve Ankuda, the Town's Attorney himself.

10. Cemetery Deed: A cemetery deed was presented to the Selectboard clerk, Stephen Sargent. This deed is for selling a plot in the Houghtonville Cemetery to William Hofman.

It was moved by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, seconded by John Gregory, for the Selectboard clerk to approve the deed for William Hofman's plot at the Houghtonville Cemetery. Motion passed unanimously.

11. Other Business: Cathy Siano-Goodwin asked Morgan Wilbur if she had obtained any price estimates for the installation of the transfer switch for the generator. Wilbur apologized that she had not but would work on that as soon as possible.

12. Public Comment: Suzanne Welch asked for a status update on the draft Short-Term Rental Ordinance that was presented months ago. Joe Pollio said that it is at the hands of the Town Attorney and that he would call the attorney to remind him to give the Town feedback.

13. Next regular meeting: Monday, July 1, 2024, at 6 pm.

14. Adjourn. It was moved by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, seconded by John Gregory, to adjourn the meeting at 7:16 pm. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

*Morgan Wilbur*  
Morgan Wilbur