

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

Monday, February 3, 2025, 6:00 pm

Present at the meeting in the Town Hall:

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

Also: Kim Record, Liisa Kissel, Sam Battaglini, Mary Howard Feder, David Hall, David Rogers, Wendy Martin, Patrick Cooperman, and Patsy Ellis

Present online: FactTV, Joe Neal, Suzanne Welch, Charlie Bonin, and Jake Hubbard

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

2. Adopt Agenda: It was moved by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, seconded by Anna Keegan to adopt the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Approve Minutes of the January 21, 2025, meeting: It was moved by Anna Keegan, seconded by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2025, meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Approve Minutes of the January 27, 2025, special meeting: It was moved by Anna Keegan, seconded by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, to approve the minutes of the January 27, 2025, special meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Highway Report: David Rogers, Assistant Road Foreman, reported that the Highway Crew had been cutting trees on Cabell Road, as well as general maintenance at the shop such as work on the grader blades.

Excess Weight Permits: Renaud Bros Inc., Valley Crane Service Inc., and Newport Sand & Gravel Co. Inc./Carroll Concrete Inc.

It was moved by Anna Keegan, seconded by Steve Sargent, to approve the weight permits and to authorize the Town Administrator to sign and issue. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of Grader: Joe Pollio began the discussion by saying that according to Hardy Merrill, the Capital Budget Chair, the funds to purchase the grader are not yet available. Pollio explained that the Selectboard could either lease a new machine or keep the current grader for another couple of years and then reevaluate. Anna Keegan thought it would be fiscally responsible for the Selectboard to postpone the purchase. Sam Battaglini asked how the Selectboard just recently determined the funds were not available. John Gregory mentioned that the board had been using money from the Capital Budget to pay contractors for projects such as the flood repairs and the grader was not due for replacement until FY 26-27, based on the Capital Budget schedule. Gregory also mentioned that the current grader has approximately 5,000 hours on it, which he considered to be very low. Battaglini asked if graders are readily available for purchase. Gregory explained that there is a 6-month order period. Originally, the Selectboard was under the impression that it took 1-2 years to order and finally receive a grader, but that is no longer the case. Suzanne Welch asked when the conversations with Merrill took place because she did not recall that discussion at the Special Selectboard meeting on January 27th. Pollio said he never spoke with Merrill. Anna Keegan said she had a conversation with him while in the Listers office to discuss another topic. Gregory said there were concerns following the Special Selectboard meeting, so he visited with Merrill. Dave Hall asked if the Selectboard were to postpone the purchase, would the price of

the machine increase. Pollio said he could not be certain. Wendy Martin asked where a new grader would be manufactured; Pollio said he thought it would be from the U.S. Martin then asked if the parts were manufactured in the U.S. or elsewhere. Cathy Siano-Goodwin explained that Colby Record mentioned some very valuable points as to why the Caterpillar grader was the best selection, with those reasons being the Highway Department had parts that could be interchangeable on the new machine, the visibility out of the cab is better, and the crew members were familiar with the operations. Hall asked how quickly these machines depreciate. Gregory said he thought the Town could privately sell the grader in a year from now for the same amount the dealership quoted for a trade in. Welch asked if Record was aware of this potential decision. David Rogers said he spoke with Record that morning and he said that if the Town had to lease the grader, he would rather just wait and purchase it when the funds became available. Merrill reiterated to the board that the purchase is scheduled into the Capital Budget plan for FY 2026-2027.

It was moved by John Gregory, seconded by Anna Keegan, to postpone the purchase of the grader for 2 years and to revisit the discussion in 1 year. Motion passed unanimously.

Update on Trailer: David Rogers said that Colby Record, as far as he knew, had not yet received a cost estimate to repair the trailer.

Paving Request for Proposals: Joe Pollio stated that there is approximately \$498,000 available for paving this year, \$200,000 of which is part of a grant that the Town has received. John Gregory suggested having a discussion to identify other roads in Town that needed to be paved. He explained that the proposal presented is for repaving a portion of Route 121 East, approximately 3,700 feet. He estimated the cost of that would be between \$200,000-225,000. Gregory felt that if there were additional places in Town to be paved, a contractor will likely bid on all projects which could help reduce the cost. Pollio said there was not a huge rush to get these RFPs out because the money can't be used until after July 1st. Wendy Martin asked if the grant was federal funding passed through the state. Pollio said he thinks it was all state funded. David Rogers said that the portion on Route 121 East should not be postponed past this year; it needs attention. Mary Howard Feder noted that Pleasant Street was also in bad condition. Pollio recommended postponing the request for proposals until the board could meet with Colby Record to discuss additional sections.

Certification of Highway Mileage 2025: Joe Pollio explained the only change in the Highway Mileage was for the discontinuation of Theron Fisher Drive, which was 0.05 miles.

It was moved by Anna Keegan, seconded by Steve Sargent, to accept the 2025 Certificate of Highway Mileage with the only change being the discontinuance of Theron Fisher Drive. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Clerk/Treasurer: Kim Record said tax payments are due on February 18th, the Town Reports are available to be picked up in the Town offices, and she reminded everyone that the rabies clinic will be at the Town Hall on February 15th from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Record also mentioned that Sullivan, Powers & Co. will virtually attend the February 18th meeting to discuss the audit. Joe Pollio said the Town Report is the best report he's seen.

7. Committee Reports:

Personnel Committee: There was no report.

July 2023 Flood Update: John Gregory mentioned that a drilling company was scheduled to drill at the Eastman Road retaining wall that week, but they needed to postpone. Gregory said they had not yet scheduled a new date. He also mentioned that the Town has not received any more money, however his estimate was that they only owe the Town for the administration, the Eastman Road retaining wall project and the Hinkley Brook Road culvert. He explained that the State of Vermont owes the Town their share of 7.8%, but that would not be paid until all of the projects are completed.

8. Ordinance Regulating Dogs and Wolf-Hybrids: Joe Pollio said the Ordinance Regulating Dogs and Wolf-Hybrids had not changed much and that it had been reviewed by the Town Attorney. Cathy Siano-Goodwin expressed concerns about requiring dogs to be leashed on only some roads. She referenced that dogs are on Parker Hill frequently and she always worries about one getting hit because they are off leash. Mary Howard Feder felt that all Town Parks and Cemeteries should be on the list to require dogs to be leashed. David Rogers noted that the swimming pool should be included as well. Wendy Martin asked why this would only require particular locations and how would it be enforceable because it's so confusing. Pollio mentioned that the Animal Control Officer could help enforce it. Kim Record mentioned that it would be for the heavily populated areas, such as the village. There was some discussion about ownership of the roads. Pollio felt that if he had a dog and wanted to walk to his mailbox on Middletown Road, then he would be required to have it on a leash, which he didn't think was necessary.

It was moved by Anna Keegan, seconded by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, to amend the Ordinance Regulating Dogs and Wolf-Hybrids to include all Town Parks, Cemeteries, and Town Roads. The motion failed by a vote of 2-3 (Anna Keegan and Cathy Siano-Goodwin voted yes; Joe Pollio, John Gregory, and Steve Sargent voted no).

9. Other Business: There was no Other Business.

10. Public Comment: Wendy Martin asked the Selectboard if they were all in agreement of what is written each month in the Chairman's report for *The Grafton News*. Furthermore, she stated that in her opinion, the email thread between Bill Kearns and Joe Pollio about the Windham Foundation and Grafton Village Cheese Company was unprofessional; she said if she were the company buying the cheese company, she might have second thoughts before doing business in Grafton. John Gregory expressed that he was not in agreement with the email exchange and felt as though the Pollio was speaking on behalf of the Selectboard, which he did not think was appropriate.

Suzanne Welch asked Kim Record if there would be a candidate's forum at the Pre-Town Meeting. Joe Pollio responded and said yes. Welch also asked for an update on where the Short-Term Rental Ordinance stood. Anna Keegan said she had not had a chance to discuss the feedback that they had received at a recent Selectboard meeting with Morgan Wilbur, but they would soon.

11. Next regular meeting: Tuesday, February 18, 2025, at 6 pm.

12. Adjourn. It was moved by John Gregory, seconded by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, to adjourn the meeting at 6:47 pm. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Morgan Wilbur
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