

TOWN OF GROTON
SELECT BOARD MEETING
July 25, 2023

In Attendance: John Rescigno, Tony Albert, Ron Madan and Sara Smith (Administrative Assistant)

Audience Members Present

John called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

MINUTE APPROVAL

John motioned to approve the Work Session Meeting minutes of July 11, 2023 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted. John motioned to approve the Non-Public Work Session Meeting minutes of July 11, 2023 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted.

John motioned to approve the Select Board Meeting minutes of July 11, 2023 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted.

NEW BUSINESS:

Building Permit- Map 6 Lot 69

The owner submitted a building permit for their property located on Dodge Road to tear down existing shed and replace with a 12x36 shed. This is on a private road so Sara sent this to the Planning Board and they discussed it at the July 19, 2023 meeting. We are all set to approve this permit and they submitted the release for municipal liability. **John motioned to approve the building permit for Map 6 Lot 69 and sign the release, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Building Permit- Map 1 Lot 100

The owner submitted a building permit for their property located on River Road put a 28x24 home. They provided the PUC approval information for the building but they didn't provide the DES septic approval. **John motioned to table the building permit for Map 1 Lot 100, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Local septic approval- Map 1 Lot 100

The septic designer emailed in a Septic Plan and local approval for Map 1 Lot 100. All the information is correct. **John motioned to sign the local septic approval for Map 1 Lot 100, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Letter from USPS regarding Will Colburn Road

USPS sent a letter regarding Will Colburn Road and that there is also a Will Colburn Road in Rumney. The Select Board agreed to change it to Will Colburn Path. Sara will let USPS and 911 know that this change was approved. We will also have to let the residents know and will have to order a new street sign.

Chief Bagan mentioned that there are two 160 Halls Brook Road. Sara will look at Groton's 160 Halls Brook Road and have 911 look into this.

HB349 Update

John went over with the residents the update that we will be putting online regarding HB 349. He gave them the handout that will be posted online.

John also mentioned that they did have the conversation with the new superintendent and he seems open to allowing our students to go to Newfound High School but they would have to tuition in. This is all to be decided

and discussed further if the bill is approved. John said they are hoping the new superintendent will come out to one of our August meetings.

The handout states the following:

Update.

The Governor will soon sign HB 349 into law. This law is called enabling legislation. It grants legal authority to the Towns of Bridgewater, Hebron, and Groton to withdraw from the 7-town Newfound Area School District and establish our own 3-town school district based on a K-8 model.

The creation of our new school district is contingent upon a majority vote in each of our 3 towns at our 2024 annual town meetings. If our voters approve, the effective operational date of our new school district is July 1, 2025.

This bill received widespread bi-partisan support in the legislature. It passed unanimously in both the House and Senate. All three state senators representing the 7-town Newfound Area School District voted in favor and voiced strong support in committee hearings.

Such widespread legislative support confirms this is an excellent concept and a once-in-a-generation opportunity to improve education outcomes for our children. Moreover, a smaller tight-knit school district allows greater voter input and control over education costs and curriculum, and shorter bus rides for Groton's students. Sometimes smaller is better.

Next Steps.

The new law sets out a series of sequential steps over the next two years culminating in the July 1, 2025, operational date of the new school district.

The first step requires our select boards to appoint a withdrawal committee to begin administrative planning for the new district prior to the 2024 withdrawal adoption vote.

This committee will create a draft school budget and coordinate high school tuition agreements, superintendent services, and activities. The goal is to provide as much information as possible to parents and citizens prior to the withdrawal vote.

The next step takes place at our 2024 annual town meeting. After the vote by the 3 towns to adopt the provisions of this act, the State Board of Education issues a "certificate of withdrawal" from the Newfound Area School District.

After the withdrawal vote, follow-on steps include a special election for a new 3-town school board and budget committee. The act requires new school board members and district officers to organize promptly "to take any action necessary to carry out the provisions of this law."

Transparency.

An informed citizenry makes their communities better. Our select board will strive to provide you with the knowledge and resources to help you help our community make this new and exciting educational opportunity for our children a reality.

As the process evolves, our selectman plan to hold "face-to-face" meetings to update you on progress, answer questions, and listen to feedback.

Our Vision.

As noted from the outset, our vision is simple: we aspire to improve educational outcomes for our children with an innovative alternative to a traditional Middle School. We strive to do this by fulfilling the provisions of this act to establish our own 3-town school district and reconfiguring the Village District School to a K-8 model.

A smaller tight-knit school district allows greater voter control over education costs and our citizen's tax burden. It also allows for more intimate input over curriculum and administrative policy, and shorter bus rides for Groton's students. As noted above, sometimes smaller is better.

For more information on HB 349, please review the following position papers linked here:

- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Final Facts](#)

Chief Bagan asked what happens if one of the three towns does not vote in favor of the change. John said it would not go through; it would have to be all three towns.

John said his goal is to be on the committee and make decisions for what is best for the students. He said this would allow the Town to have more control. Of course, there will be some higher costs at the beginning to get this up and running but then the Town would have more say over things that happen in the school.

Tony said we could tuition kids from other towns into the new school too. For example, the kids from Alexandria could tuition in if they wanted to continue to go to that school.

SELECT BOARD ITEMS:

Casella Contract

At the last meeting the Select Board motioned to go with Casella for our Solid Waste Disposal and Transportation and to come in and sign the contract when it was ready. They had flooding so it delayed them sending it over but they did send it today. **John motioned to sign the Casella contract, Tony 2nd so voted.**

Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector

We are looking for a Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector. The Town will be offering \$17/hr. and they would be looking for the person to work about 15 hours a week. This has to be a town resident.

DEPARTMENT ITEMS:

Police Department

- Chief Bagan said that he will be hosting another Identity theft workshop following the August 8th Select Board meeting. Sara will put this online.
- There have not been any more car break ins reported at this time.

COMMITTEE UPDATES:

Old Home Day Committee

Old Home Day is scheduled for August 19th, the third Saturday in August like it always is. Sara will talk to Gina to see if we should put up the flyers and will talk to Fred about putting up the Old Home Day signs.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

Road Repair

Slim asked what the posting in the newspaper for the road repair bids are for. Sara explained that it is from the December 2022 storm damages. Province Road, North Groton Road, Edgar Albert Rd and River Road all experienced some damages that we need to get repaired. FEMA will be out to do their site visits for this on Thursday, July 27th and then the contractors that will be submitting bids for the work will be out on Tuesday, August 1st for that site visit.

Building

Tony asked if we have received an update regarding when the building project will be sent out for bid. We have not received a date at this time but have been constantly reaching out and explaining we need to move forward.

Having no other business to conduct, John motioned to adjourn at 7:26pm, Tony 2nd, so voted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sara Smith
Administrative Assistant