

**TOWN OF GROTON  
SELECT BOARD MEETING  
February 1, 2011  
7:00PM**

**In Attendance: Miles Sinclair, Kyle Andrews, Christina McClay, Pamela Hamel (Administrative Assistant)**

**Audience members present**

Miles called the meeting to order at 7:00p.m.

**Miles made a motion to accept the minutes of January 25 as written, Christina 2<sup>nd</sup>, so voted.**

Jon Martin from FORECO was here to discuss Old Rumney Road. Miles asked Marina Chase and Pam Hamel to address their concerns with Mr. Martin directly. Ms. Chase said she hunts in that area and was very surprised at the size of the ditches. Her feelings are that the ditches are two to three times deeper than before. The first ditch was always the worst, but the second two could be jumped over. She knows someone who used to drive over these ditches. However, now they are over 6 feet in width. The Select Board has asked her to bring in proof. She does not feel that it is fair for her to bring in the others to speak about this as she is the one who initially brought this up in a meeting. One man that hunts in that area was going to come in tonight but because of the weather he did not. He drove his truck through there last year. She had never taken pictures of the road before hand, but she does have pictures that were taken this fall during the last week of hunting season. Pam explained that she has been out that far on Old Rumney Road on a number of occasions. She agreed that there were always three ditches in the area being discussed and although she herself would not have driven over them, especially the first one, it does not mean that they could not be driven over as Ms. Chase knows someone who has. However Pam believes that the ditches are not at all what they used to be like. She agreed that in the past they could be jumped over but no longer. She is not sure if they are deeper because they were dug down deeper or if it is because the road on both sides of the culverts was built up when the culverts were initially put in and this build up remained once the culverts were removed. Mr. Martin responded that there is build up when a culvert is installed and some of that build up probably remains there once the culvert is removed. He offered to remove some of it if that is what the Board would like. He said he has a Toyota Tacoma with more clearance than the average truck and he could not go through that first ditch even before any work was done on the road. He then looked at the pictures taken by Ms. Chase. There are piles of what Ms. Chase called rubble near the ditches. She also said that the trench alongside the road near the fist ditch is deeper in order to meet the culvert. Mr. Martin said that the pictures clearly show damage done by ATVs, and he asked the Board if FORECO should be penalized for this damage. If they can show that ATVs are responsible for some of this damage will the Board penalize them as well? He admitted that the ditches are a little deeper but also said there are clearly ATV ruts in the water bars. Ms. Chase admits that the road itself is in better condition but the ruts where not that deep. Mr. Martin said they did their best to restore the road to way it was. When he first looked at the road there were old pallets and boards across the ditches. This is how ATVs had been passing. He went on to say that they try to work with municipalities and land owners, and that land owners spend thousands of dollars trying to keep an access open to their properties.

Miles agreed that the pictures indicate that ATVs have gone through there. He went on to say that Class VI roads are public ways that are open to snowmobiles and ATVs with the Board's approval. Should those ATVs be on that road? No, because the Board had not given anyone permission to do it. But there are a lot of people who are not aware of what the law requires. Miles understands everyone's position, and he believes the overall quality of the road has been improved. He asked if there was something that could be done in the spirit of good relations to make these a little more traversable without compromising the integrity of the road possibly by putting a certain level of erosion stone in the ditches. He asked if FORECO would be willing to bring it in and leave it for the Town to somehow put it in place. Mr. Martin said this could imply that the Town is maintaining that section of the road. Miles said he was thinking of having volunteers put the stone in place, not the Town.

Mr. Martin had a different proposal. He said they have to do some excavator work on the Holden Road which is off Old Rumney Road. Since they will have a mini excavator out there, they could flare out the ditches so they are easier to get through. He said they cannot put erosion stone in for a number of reasons. Since the ditches have soft bottoms the stone will be pushed in by ATVs and disappear. Also, the stone might impede the water flow and finally, it would require a standard dredge and fill wetlands permit because it would be considered a wetland. They are not required to get this permit when they do a forestry notification which requires them to remove the culverts within two years of installation. He went on to say that they will restore it to within a millimeter of what it was. However, it was not pickup truck assessable before and it will not be afterwards. FORECO will do this out of their pocket. They work with a lot of clients in Groton and want to work with the community. Kyle said he is okay with this proposal.

**Miles made a motion to accept Mr. Martin's offer to try to mitigate the steepness of those three ditches on Old Rumney Road and grant FORECO permission to do that work, Christina 2<sup>nd</sup>, so voted.**

The Newfound School District public hearing will be Saturday, February 26 at 10am at the Town House to discuss a proposed warrant article which would allow the School Budget committee instead of the School Board to set the default budget.

Miles asked to have Coolidge Woods Road on the agenda. James Cross had asked the Board if they would consider putting the discontinuance of this Class VI road on the warrant. The Board agreed that if he would like to see the road discontinued then he should submit a petitioned warrant article.

Last winter the remnants of the Minnich Farm were burned. The Board had referred this to the Groton Fire Chief. He contacted the Department of Environmental Services who did an investigation. They found that a few violations were committed but no asbestos was found. They issued what basically amounts to a letter of reprimand.

The Board reviewed the current electricity usage at the Transfer Station. There has been a recent spike in the usage. Glen Hansen reported that Gary Easson has checked the amperage draw on the compactor oil tank heater and found no problem. The power usage during the last 2 months has almost quadrupled, back to pre 2008 usages. New Hampshire Electric Coop provided a printout of electric usage beginning in December 2005 which indicates that there was a significant drop in usage in 2008, 2009 and most of 2010. The usage amounts are now back to prior years. Glen Hansen does not know the reason for the spike and will continue to look into it. The Board wants to make sure there is enough money budgeted to handle the usage. They decided that in the proposed budget they will add \$500 to that line and take the money from the grant line. This will reduce the grant line to \$4,900.

The Board discussed the warrant articles dealing the police department. Michelle Clark from the Department of Revenue said these articles are advisory and basically to get the sense of the meeting as they do not contain appropriations. As far as their legality she advised the Board to contact the Town's attorney. However, as the Board plans to fulfill the wishes of the people they feel no need to contact the Town's attorney.

The Board also discussed two proposed warrant articles pertaining to an expendable trust fund for cemetery maintenance and a 2% COLA for certain employees. These will be discussed in full at the upcoming February 8 budget hearing.

The Board rescheduled a work session with Junkyard Dog Ken Knowlton for 6:00pm on February 15.

Avitar will try to set the value of the wind farm as proposed for purposes of a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) agreement with Groton Wind LLC. Christina was able to get referrals for some other utility appraisers. However, since they are all located out of state she expressed concern about whether or not they are New

Hampshire certified and/or qualified to make New Hampshire assessments. They can still be used as consultants. The Board would like Pam to contact all the assessors on the list and ask if they are qualified to make New Hampshire assessments, if they would be interested in doing an assessment of this project and, if so, to provide an estimate.

A Safety Committee meeting was scheduled for Feb 22 at 6 pm.

The Town received a Quitclaim Deed for the Spurgas property. The deed was signed in 2002 but only recorded in December 2010. However, this property was taken for back taxes by the Town in August 2010. Pam will contact the registry to get any information they might have.

Miles reported that above the poured foundation of the new section in the basement is an opening which is allowing cold air from under the old part of the building into the basement. He will use some spray foam insulation to block it. The alarm system wire has been rerouted and the weather stripping on the front door is repaired.

**Christina made a motion to approve the Groton Historical Society's request to use the Town House on April 8 and April 16, Kyle 2<sup>nd</sup>, so voted.** There was some discussion regarding the heating of the Hall for private organizations. If the Hall is rented then a certificate of insurance is required. However, no insurance is required when a voluntary donation for use of the Hall is given. The Board has been discussing how to move forward regarding this issue but no decisions have been made.

The Board reviewed the bylaw change proposal by the New Hampshire Public Works Mutual Aid Association which allows for a more workable amendment process for its members. **Miles made a motion to complete the ballot indicating they agree with the proposed change, Christina 2<sup>nd</sup> so voted.**

The Select Board's Office will be closed at 1:30 on Thursday.

The Board reviewed the two submissions for the Groton Historical Society's (GHS) report for the Town's Annual Report. One was submitted in December by Louise Traunstein, the second submitted on January 31 by the current GHS officers. Ms. Traunstein has submitted the report for this organization for several years. Miles said he has had his fill of being caught in the middle of the issues in the GHS. Christina agreed. She questioned why the Board would promote this internal struggle by putting the GHS submission in the Town Report? Kyle believed they should use the most recent submittal as it is from the officers. They have rejected the traditional report submitted by Louise Traunstein. Christina is very disappointed in how this has been handled. Miles is tired of being caught in the cross fire. He said he has been approached by Pam Yinger to meet with her and Roland Bixby to discuss what he thinks would be the Veteran's Memorial and a possible event to take place in May. He made it clear to Ms. Yinger that he will hear them out but if he gets that feeling that this should be a meeting with the Board then that is what will have to happen. **Miles made a motion to put both submissions into the Town Report, Christina 2<sup>nd</sup>, so voted.** Pam will identify who submitted each report.

There will be a hearing in Concord on Tuesday, February 8 at 1:00pm in room 304 of the Legislative Building on HBO302 which proposes a change in New Hampshire's Renewable Portfolio Standard, removing the local aspect of the portfolio as well as the mandate that it be in the best economic interest of New Hampshire, and allowing the inclusion of large scale hydro. This bill does provide the opportunity for those opposed to the Northern Pass Project to address this legislative committee at the public hearing.

The Library Trustees have created an informative website for the Groton Public Library, which will have a link from the Groton website home page. The Library is open every Saturday from 10:00-2:00. The Trustees are planning a story time event in February, more details to follow.

**Kyle made a motion to adjourn at 8:59pm, Christina 2<sup>nd</sup>, so voted.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Pamela Hamel  
Administrative Assistant