

Town of Groton
Select Board Work Session Minutes
July 2, 2024

In attendance: John Rescigno, Tony Albert, Ron Madan and Sara Smith (Town Administrator)

John called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

Emergency Management Meeting

The Select Board, Bill Oakley, Patti Oakley, Robert Ellis, Chief Bagan and Sara Smith met for an emergency management meeting/mock training.

Bill said he would like to do a mock training but he doesn't feel it will happen tonight. He would like to do a flooding/water situation on Sculptured Rocks Road. He would like Bubba to start the phone tree and go from there.

It was discussed if we think flooding is still a concern. Everyone agreed that the work that we have done has definitely helped. There has been a lot of water but the bridges/culverts have helped. We need to get the building out of there because there is not much else, we can do in regards to that.

Bill said he has been working on the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) with Paul but it has been a lot to try to get them to meet up. They have been working on it for almost two years. Tony said that since it seems it has been hard to connect with the State, the next time we have to update the EOP we should use June. Bill said the resource management is the section they are waiting to complete. This is the regional information. Patti said they were able to complete it for the local section. Bill handed the Select Board the EOP so they could look at what they have done so far. They have reduced the size and removed a lot of items that were outdated or not needed. Bill asked Sara if she wants to take the EOP and look over what they have. Sara said she can look at it. They only have one copy so Patti will scan it and send it to Sara or put it on a drive. Bill stated that the current EOP is still in effect and doesn't expire so we will continue to use it until the new one is complete.

Patti and Bill have been signing on and using WebEOC. This allows them to get familiar with it and see what other towns are using it for. Sara mentioned that her and Patti talked before the last heat wave regarding possibly opening the WebEOC for Groton if we need to open a cooling center. Sara explained that we left the AC on down stairs in case people needed it during those days so it stayed cool. She also told Patti where the window AC units were, just in case, they needed to put those in the big meeting room. Patti said that she didn't have to fully open it but was ready in case she did. Patti asked the Select Board if they would give permission to send Groton residents to Hebron in these cases since they are also set up for this. Tony said he would prefer it to be open here for our residents since we do have the space and we don't want to make them leave town if we do not have to. They said that if it was only a few residents it may be okay but we would rather have our Groton residents be able to go to Groton.

Bill asked if Bubba has been able to test out the roads for radio service. Sara said she created a spreadsheet with all the roads so they can mark off if there is cell service and radio service on each road. However, with everything going on they have not been able to test it all out but they do plan to do so. It all depends on road and the cell phone provider. Patti said we should look at setting a date on a Saturday in the fall to test the radios. Sara and Bubba said that they could do the testing, not everyone needs to be here for that. Patti said others may want to test out their radios. Tony said that all of the Town's radios are Kenwood. Tony wondered if raised the antenna on the receiver if that would help. Bubba said we should check with OME.

Chief stated that he has a Kenwood for the cruiser but he has Motorola for his portable. The car radio works everywhere but the portables are iffy. Patti said she thinks there is a lawsuit with FirstNet ATT. Tony said there is because the service isn't as good as they said it would be and they said in emergency first responders would get first priority and all others would be kicked out and that doesn't happen. Tony said there are towers located locally but we are not sure which ones are set up and which service provider. Bubba said FirstNet was supposed to use other towers but we do not think that is happening.

Bill said Patti and Bill have been to some classes for Emergency Management. There is not really a lot that you can practice unfortunately. We can try to practice but we will never be prepared for all events because they are always different. Sara said that is true but there have been times when people didn't check in or call who they were supposed to so this would get us in a better position to walk through the steps so everyone is on the same page for when an event happens. We can practice the call tree, etc. to help us be better prepared in the event of an emergency.

Patti said that Bubba can text if there is an event and what he needs such as culverts unblocked, sand bags needed, posting roads closed, etc. Bubba said usually he will take care of the culverts and stuff but he can let them know if roads are closed. Sara said that having somewhere that we post the roads being closed and being able to track it would help because in the past for grants we have been asked how many times the road was closed and for how long. Patti said it is helpful to have a place to go and see other towns. Tony said it would be nice to know what other roads are closed. Patti said WebEOC has all of that for all towns. Tony said Bill should reach out to see what information they need from him and let them know what we have. Bubba said this is similar to Public Works Mutual Aid Program that we are part of. Towns can ask other towns for material, equipment, or whatever they need. We have not had to use it yet except for lending out cones. Tony asked how many cones, barrels, etc. we have on hand. Bubba said he doesn't have the exact count with him but we definitely have more than we used to. We also don't have the best storage right now. Tony said once the new garage is up, we should look at getting more and making a list of what we have. Chief Bagan said that he used to have individual mutual aid agreements but with the RSA change its not needed anymore. Tony said Lakes Region Mutual Aid is available. Patti said that WebEOC is available at all times. You can call and someone will be there and they are extremely helpful.

Tony said that Bill and Patti should have the contact information for the people Bubbas contacts for help or materials such as Mike Ethier, Casey, Latulippe etc. Bubba said that he has worked with Bill and has given them the information. Patti said she has the list that she can put on a drive to share it so we all have it.

Bill asked if everyone has done the Incident command classes such as the 100, 200 and 700 classes. Tony has done them all. Sara has done the 100. John and Bubba said they started but have not completed it. Sara will send the links for this again. Patti said she has some links she can send Sara too.

Sara mentioned that her and Patti have been working on training on Genasys. This will be a great tool for communicating emergencies, road closings and other town events by texts, emails or calls. If they have signed up to receive alerts they will be on this list. Sara and Patti have completed some training on this and have more. Sara has worked in the test site and has sent herself some texts and emails. Once they have both completed the training, they will meet up together and work on getting this set up for the Town.

It was agreed that we will meet again on September 17, 2024 at 5:00pm for the mock training. Sara will look at the phone tree and make sure it is up to date and make copies for the next meeting. We will also work on creating a log of what information we should provide when we call each other. Patti feels we should do "trees and wires down on North Groton Road" for this testing. Patti will work on a checklist of what we need. Sara and Bubba will work on the testing of service on the roads.

Meeting with Casey Kuplin- Public Works Building Update

Casey and Heath had to reschedule due to their work schedule. It was rescheduled for tomorrow, Wednesday July 3, 2024 at 6pm. Sara posted this. Bubba stated that he cannot attend tomorrow but he doesn't have anything to add at this time. Sara said it is mostly paperwork that needs to be completed on Casey's end, working on the Select Board and Casey filling out the notice of award and the notice to proceed, discussing the start date for the project and timeline of when it is expected to be completed and discussing what the next steps are.

Tony said that Jeremy was asking if they changed the specs for the concrete. Sara said she believes this was agreed on when we sent the suggested changes. She said once we have the meeting tomorrow, we will need to have a preconstruction meeting with USDA, Doug, Casey, the Select Board and Bubba to go over the construction and we can discuss details like the concrete and other items. This is a requirement and we have to have this meeting before the construction can start according to the preconstruction requirements. Sara will email Doug and Rena to see when they can meet and let them know we would like to ASAP like next week if possible.

Sara will also email Rena to make sure we are all set to move forward with awarding the project. She sent an email on 6/24/24 stating that we were but the preconstruction requirements state that the loan specialist would issue correspondence and we have not received anything besides the email. Sara doesn't want to award the project unless we receive the okay so that we do not jeopardize the grant. The Select Board agreed for Sara to reach out to Rena regarding this.

Sara stated that she will update the notice of award and notice to proceed to reflect the meeting date of July 3, 2024 instead of July 2, 2024 so that we are all set to sign them tomorrow at the meeting as long as Rena gives the go ahead.

Computer/Lap Top for Minutes

Dave ordered the lap tops and they have come in. He is setting them up. He wanted to know if we want to create email addresses for Conservation Commission and Cemetery. The Select Board agreed to set them up.

The Select Board asked Sara to have Dave to order a laptop for emergency management and see if they have an email address set up.

Sara let Bubba know that his laptop will be here and set up with email. Dave can assist him with setting it up to the printer. Bubba asked if the laptop could be set up to a TV screen so he can see it better. Sara said she believes so but will ask Dave. John said he knows it can. Sara will reach out to Dave to assist Bubba with this.

Meeting 7/16/24

Sara let the Select Board know that Shannon requested to meet with them tonight since it has been 60 days since we last met and she is looking for an update. We did not have any room on the agenda so Sara scheduled her for 7/16/24 at 6:30pm. Hopefully we will have information from DRA and our attorney by then.

Building Permit Concern

John said that he did meet with John, the guy that has the sawmill and submitted the building permit for the cover/pavilion over it/ He said it sits pretty far back and away from the neighbor. It does not have electricity; he is using a generator. There are fluorescent lights that he is using. He also moved his camper to block the light from the neighbor. He said he does sometimes run it after 9 but there is no ordinance

against this. John said it doesn't seem like he is doing anything wrong. Sara said there is nothing on the building permit that asks about electricity, just if it is heated or cooled and if so, you need PUC approval. She said he just put on his permit that there was no electric and no water. People put electrical in their sheds all of the time. John said that as the Select Board has discussed before, he technically could set this up with electricity and it would be ok according to the way the permit is written.

Meeting with Bubba

Bubba said they have been mowing the sides of the roads.

Bubba said the other thing he would like to discuss is the bridge that Dorchester is going to be putting in on Province Road. He has some concerns when the bridge goes in. It will affect the Town of Groton more than Dorchester because it will add on traffic to 10 miles of roads for Groton with Sculptured Rocks and Province Road and not that much in Dorchester. This will require more road maintenance. John asked if he thinks it will be used that much and if people in Hebron will use it too. Bubba said it will be used a lot, for Groton and Hebron too, especially for those going to Lebanon. It cuts a lot of time off. Tony said the bridge used to be used all of the time before but the road was different then. It is in much better condition now. Back then, cars could not make it through. Bubba said now all vehicles can make it through. It is only one lane and, in most places, there is not enough room to even pull over to let a car go by, you have to back up. There will be concerns with speeding on that road and Sculptured Rocks Road. Tony said that will be an enforcement issue. Bubba said we could see more accidents and there is no cell phone service on parts of that road. He said it is very different now than when the bridge was there 25 years ago. Tony said we do have some time before it goes in. John said the letter made it seem like it wouldn't be in until end of 2026. Bubba said he understands that but we need to be thinking of these things now. Tony said that we need to make sure we bring all of these concerns up at the meeting in Dorchester on July 18, 2024.

Having no other business to conduct, John motioned to adjourn at 6:45pm, Tony 2nd, so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Smith
Town Administrator