

Town of Groton
Select Board Work Session Minutes
September 3, 2024

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

John called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Building paperwork update

Sara informed the Select Board that she had sent the contracts and forms to the attorney and to Primex for review. They both came back with some changes that Sara sent to Casey and Jen. They had called Sara to discuss their concerns. They then sent the draft with changes. They did not make all of the changes that were suggested so they provided a list of what did change and what didn't that the attorney requested. Sara sent that information to both the attorney and Primex. Sara went over what the concerns were from Casey. She mentioned that the invoice has been updated so the last payment was split up to half is due when the finish work is started and the other half is due when all work is complete.

Primex did send back some final recommendations. Sara reviewed these with the Select Board by each recommendation that was noted. The attorney agreed strongly with Primex. The main item is that both do not recommend arbitration as it can potentially cost the Town more and the Town will not have as much control. They said this is ultimately a local decision but both Primex and our attorney feel this way. They feel it should be litigation in a court of competent jurisdiction.

The Select Board discussed all of the recommendations and it was decided that we really should follow what Primex and our attorney are recommending since they represent the Town. We have to think of the Town of Groton and the residents and they would not be happy if the Town went against the advice of our insurance company and our legal counsel. Also, even though we are confident that nothing will happen, in the event something did happen, Primex and our attorney would not represent us if we went against their recommendations and we cannot put the Town in that position.

The Select Board tried to call Casey but he didn't answer. Tony left a message. The Select Board gave Tony permission to talk to Casey about what was discussed during the meeting. Sara will also send an email to Jen and Casey tomorrow explaining all of this. Once the changes are made the Select Board will come sign the forms. **John motioned to come in and sign the forms when they are ready, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Spectacle Pond Concerns

Sara received an email the level of E Coli in the samples they took at the boat launch was 307.6 cts/100ml, over 3 times the limit of 88 cts/100ml for a public beach. It was stated that it was only higher at the boat launch. Sara Steiner from the watershed program stated that in terms of the Boat Launch at Spectacle Pond, since this is a launch site and not a public beach, the level would technically be compared with the standard for all other surface waters which is E. coli not to exceed 406 mpn/100 mL. The result is below that number. However, since it has been stated that people do swim here or bath here, they are concerned of these levels. This came up in 2017 and we have since put a porta potty out there and that has helped. We also started pitching in with paying for the water testing. Sara had responded asking the following:

- Has this been retested since? This similar thing happened back in 2017 and then when it was retested it was okay. Back in 2017, we received an email on 8/29/17 stating the water had been tested on 8/3/17 and the level was 866.4 MPN/100ml. It was agreed that since so much time had passed that it was better to retest. It was retested on 8/30/2017 and the levels were < 1.0 MPN/100 mL, so basically zero. Since this test was from July 30th, she wanted to know if a recent test been done. They plan was to retest today 9/3/24 so we should have the results soon.

- Also in 2017, we received a letter from the association dated 10/11/17 which stated that the NHDES will post a “Beach Advisory” stating “WATER CURRENTLY NOT SUITABLE FOR WADING OR SWIMMING!” if either two or more samples exceed the state standard of 88 counts of E. coli/100 ml of water or when one sample exceeds 158 counts of E. coli /100 ml of water. Sara asked DES posted the advisory. She was informed that no advisory was posted because this is not considered a beach. This is considered a boat launch. Sara Steiner from DES stated that since this is launching site and not a public beach, the level would technically be compared with the standard for all other surface waters which is E. coli not to exceed 406 mpn/100 mL. The result is below that number.
- Is there anything specific you are asking the Town to do at that time? They responded that they thought the Town should know and maybe post it so residents know and maybe look at options to avoid this in the future.

Sara mentioned that they kept talking about people not picking up after their dogs and that they think this is causing the problem.

Sara said that she sent this to the Conservation Commission for their review as well since they agreed to pay for the water testing. She has not heard back from them yet. She also put it on the website because even though it is considered a boat launch, we do know people swim there and bring their dogs to swim there so she thought it would be better to make people aware. She also asked for a quote for two signs to put at Spectacle Pond, just in case the Select Board would like to post something there. The first one is the one for the event that the water tests with high and we need to state it is not safe for swimming and the other is a sign to remind people to pick up after their dogs. They are \$25 each. Sara asked the Select Board if she should order them. This is technically a boat ramp and not a beach so we should not order any signs that say anything about beach advisory or water not safe for swimming. The testing did come in under the limits for a boat ramp so we would not be required to post anything since it is not a beach. The Select Board agreed to just order the one sign that says clean up after your dogs since they kept saying that they believe this is causing the problem. Sara will order this sign and will let the Spectacle Pond Association know that this is what was discussed and decided.

Important Dates/Updates

Sara wanted to let the Select Board know that she has started working on the budgets, warrant articles, important date list and the annual town report. She is waiting for NHMA to update their deadline lists so she can create our timeline. So far, she has done the following:

- Created a memo about budgets due date; she put a copy of this in their folders
- Created a memo on warrant article due date; she put a copy of this in their folders
- Created budget worksheets for all departments and put the 2024 approved budget on there, the YTD amounts as of 8/27/24 and a column for them to enter their 2025 proposed budgets
- Created a schedule for budget meetings; she put a copy of this in their folders
- Emailed the memos and worksheets to all departments and put in their mailboxes and put in the email the date and time they are scheduled to meet with the Select Board to discuss their budget
- Started working on all the budgets that she and the Select Board are responsible for submitting
- Requested quotes from multiple companies for the annual town report. The memo will go out next week with the submission due date of 12/12/24.

Gina-basement

Gina mentioned that she was down in the basement and it was a mess. There are boxes that have mouse droppings in them. John said that there is a lot of items that should be thrown away. Sara asked what we should do about this and who would be responsible for cleaning that up since some items are the library's, some are Old Home Day and some are other departments. The Select Board agreed that we should all get together over the winter when things slow down a little to clean this up. Sara will add this to another agenda

to schedule a time in November for us all to go through it and we can get the dump truck and equipment here so we can throw a lot of it away.

Updates on Projects/Items

- The Town House repairs started on August 26, 2024.
- The grading and paving on North Groton Road were completed last week.
- As of right now, the grading and prep work for paving at the Transfer Station was completed today. The paving is scheduled to take place on the September 5th.
- We received another bill from Nucar. Sara cut the check for the amount that they are saying we owed. The Select Board agreed this was okay to send.

Meeting with HSEM

Sara wanted to touch base on a few things from this morning's call with HSEM regarding the North Groton Road Culvert Project Grant, HMGP 4516 16R.

- They mentioned the match commitment letter and asked if it would be possible for the Town to come up with our match which is only 10% of the project before March. This amount is \$50,000.00. They stated that if we were able to come up with the money now and submit the new letter by the end of the month, then the project could be awarded asap. Sara mentioned that we could possibly take money out of the Town Bridges Capital Reserve Fund. The purpose of this fund is to cover construction, reconstruction, replacement and maintenance of all Town Bridges and with the size that this culvert is and is being changed to, it would be considered a bridge. There is currently \$28,517.80 in that account. If we transferred \$28,500.00 that would leave \$21,500.00 that we would need to come up with. There is currently \$4,227.50 in the grant line that we can use, that has not been used in this line this year. We could use that amount or more and go over on this line since it is a bottom-line budget as long as we have room everywhere else. If we used just that amount then there would be \$17,272.50 that we would still need to come up with. We could always reach out to DRA to see if we can use money from the unreserved fund balance for this and what steps we would have to take to do so. Sara said that if we can take it from Unreserved this is money that has already been raised. Tony said this is money that we have so we won't have to raise it and if we take from the Capital Reserve Fund, we will want to raise the money to put it back in there. The Select Board agreed to see what they say about the unreserved fund balance. If we can use that then it would be best to take the full \$50,000 from there. Sara looked it up and when we ran the MS-535 and MS-434 there was plenty of money in the unreserved fund balance and would still leave plenty to apply towards taxes if needed at the end of the year. It was also agreed that if we have to have a public hearing, the Select Board agreed to have Sara go ahead and post it in the paper asap and then they can sign the match letter at the same time as the Public Hearing, as long as it is done by the end of the month.
- The other item that they mentioned is the Acknowledgement of Programmatic Requirements. Sara received this email earlier and sent to Select Board for review. **John motioned to sign the Acknowledgement of Programmatic Requirements, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Meet with Bubba

Bubba met with the Select Board to go over the following:

- 95% of the Town has been mowed. This was definitely a good purchase and has paid for itself.
- Chip Sealing is tentatively scheduled for September 18, 2024.

Having no other business to conduct, John motioned to adjourn at 6:50pm, Tony 2nd, so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Smith
Town Administrator