

Town of Groton
Select Board Work Session Minutes
October 15, 2024

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

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

Transfer Station Concerns- Release Agreement

Sara stated that as the Select Board is aware, there have been some concerns with spillage when the container exchange/swap takes place. Last week there was broken glass, screws, nails, batteries and other items on the pull off on the side of the road. A resident was kind enough to clean it up. This is not the first time it has happened and we need to work something out to avoid this from happening. If this resident didn't clean this up then someone could have had damage to their car or a runner/walker/biker could have been injured. Sara did ask the resident for pictures and did reach out to the Select Board right away when it was brought to her attention on Friday. Last Monday morning she emailed Casella to bring it to their attention and also sent the email to Norm. Since then, Norm said he has talked to Casella and he would like the exchange to take place in the transfer station and not at the pull off anymore. He said it used to take place at the pull off when there was not enough room but we have added room since. Sara had told Amber that she would like the driver to make that call. He said he will try but they agreed that if he doesn't feel that there is enough room, or he feels it is adding too much time on to his routine, etc. that he will let us know. Sara did talk to Norm and stated that regardless of where the exchange happens, that things can still spill so they need to make sure they are being diligent about cleaning up after it because people drive and walk through both places.

Since then, Amber from Casella called and left Sara a message and sent an email on 10/10/24 that they cannot fit in the yard with the trailer so they will continue to use the pull off. The driver is aware to clean up anything that falls out. Sara emailed Norm letting him know this and to make sure he is there on these days to clean up as well.

Also, Casella was concerned about the new pavement and the weight of their vehicle. Norm doesn't think it should be an issue and Sara asked Tony. He thinks it is settled enough now. Casella would like the Town to sign a release stating that they are not responsible for damage to the pavement or driving surfaces resulting from the weight of their equipment in providing service and that they require that the Town makes the appropriate arrangements for safe access to the property such as ice or snow removal, sanding, etc. The Select Board agreed that we should add "within normal operating procedures" to the part that states they are not responsible for damage to the pavement or driving surfaces resulting from the weight of their equipment in providing service. **John motioned to sign the release agreement now that we have added within normal operating procedures, Tony 2nd, so voted.** Sara will send this to Casella tomorrow.

Sara wanted to mention there was a concern about paint all over the new pavement as well. This was brought to her attention and she has since noticed it as well. This concerns her especially since they could come check on how the grant funds were used and that would not look good for the Town.

Annual reports

We need to decide who we would like to use for our town reports. Also, we have been doing 250 and usually have quite a few left but last year we had less than a dozen left over. Sara sent out request for quotes and only two have responded.

- The company we used last year, Bridge & Byron quoted exactly what we did last year and the cost would be \$1780.82 for 250 books.
- RC Brayshaw provided the following quote: Price: \$1,013.00. Plus \$0.018 per additional page, times the number of books. No charge for layout of cover or delivery. They do 103 towns and provided multiple examples for us to look at.

It was agreed to go with RC Brayshaw and keep our reports the same size and still do 250. **John motioned to go with RC Brayshaw, Tony 2nd, so voted.** We can always order more if we run out. Sara will contact both companies and let them know.

Need to set a time to clean basement and big meeting room

Sara reminded the Select Board that we need to set a date in November or December to clean the basement and the big meeting room. It was agreed that with elections in November, that December may be better. We will revisit this later.

Budget Meetings

Planning Board Budget

Deb Johnson submitted the budget but Deb was out of Town so no one met with the Board to discuss the Planning Board budget.

Postage

Deb proposed an increase of \$100 making this \$200.

Advertisement

Deb proposed a decrease of \$100 making this \$300.

Mileage

Stayed the same

Recording Fees

Deb proposed a decrease of \$75 making this \$350.

Application Fees

Stayed the same

Dues

Stayed the same

Supplies

Deb proposed a decrease of \$50 making this \$100.

Seminars/Training

Stayed the same

Legal & Professional

Deb proposed an increase of \$1,000 making this line \$6,000.

Master Plan & Town Planning

Deb proposed a decrease of \$500 making this line \$0. It was agreed to make this \$1 in case we need this line in the future.

The Select Board was okay with the Planning Board budget as is.

Transfer Station Budget

Norm Willey met with the Board to discuss the Transfer Station budget. Norm mentioned that the budget does not reflect the revenue received from the scrap, cans, fees, etc.

Wages

Norm proposed an increase of \$1,500 making it \$27,500. This is to reflect a 4% merit increase to be competitive with surrounding towns. He said he has been looking around and in this area for certified operators it is \$20/hr. This will not get us there but will get us closer.

Stipend

Stayed the same

Telephone

Norm proposed an increase of \$850 making it \$1,500. This is to include both internet and phone costs. Sara said that his phone and internet is \$132.22 a month so this would be \$1586.64. The Select Board agreed this should be changed to \$1,600.00 and the name of this line should be changed to Telephone/Internet.

Training & Certification

Stayed the same

Electricity

Norm proposed a decrease of \$200 making it \$1,300.

Propane

Norm proposed a decrease of \$200 making it \$600.

Supplies

Norm proposed an increase of \$50 making it \$500.

Compactor related expenses

Stayed the same

Mileage

Stayed the same

Dues

Stayed the same

Portable Toilet

Stayed the same. We did change to Best Septic. They did not have any Handicap available but we are on the waiting list. It was agreed to change this to \$2,400.00.

Transportation costs

Norm proposed an increase of \$2,000 making it \$68,000. He had asked when the contract runs out and Sara explained not until April 30, 2027. She doesn't think we need to increase it especially since we were under for 2024. It was agreed to keep this at \$66,000.00 since we are so far under at this point.

Recycle costs

Stayed the same

Uniforms

Stayed the same

Safety

Stayed the same

Tire disposal

Stayed the same

Other, bush hog rental

Norm proposed an increase of \$300 making it \$500 stating that we need a yearly brush service. John said that we could see if Richard Braley could look at it and see if this is something he would be interested in doing.

Backhoe maintenance

Norm proposed an increase of \$500 making it \$3,000.

Landfill repairs

Norm proposed an increase of \$200 making it \$700.

Landfill Monitoring

Stayed the same but could be less. Sara feels we can lower this substantially to about \$6000 or so. She pulled up the email from Bettina at Credere that was sent in January of 2024 that went over the expected costs over the next few years. It showed the first year with them would be the most at \$12,300 which was 2024 because of the changeover to them and all of the initial reporting and permitting. It showed that the monitoring and reporting for 2025 should only cost \$4,200. There are always things that come up that we do not expect which is why she thinks that \$6,000 would be safe. She said she will reach out to Bettina and see if we can get an updated estimate from them for 2025.

Dump closure/monitoring-other

Stayed the same

The Select Board was okay with the Transfer Station budget changes as agreed upon.

Other concerns:

- John asked Norm to use a wet wire brush to try to clean up the paint off the asphalt.

Police

Chief Bagan met with the Board to discuss the Police budget.

Police Chief Wages

Chief Bagan proposed an increase of \$1,500.00 making this \$50,435.00 to reflect a 3% increase.

Full Time Police Officer

Stayed the same

Part Time Police Officer

Stayed the same

Telephone/Communications

Stayed the same

Dues & Subscriptions

Stayed the same

Equipment Repairs/Maintenance

Stayed the same

Office Supplies

Stayed the same

NH Special Ops

Stayed the same

Dispatch Service

Stayed the same.

Prosecutor

Stayed the same.

Vehicle Maintenance

Chief proposed an increase of \$1,000.00 making this \$2,500 because the cruiser needs tires.

Cruiser Equipment

Stayed the same

Uniforms

Stayed the same

Books/Periodicals

Stayed the same

Equipment (Guns, Ammo, Taser, etc.)

Stayed the same

Mileage

Stayed the same

Postage

Stayed the same

Gasoline

Stayed the same

Advertising

Stayed the same

Training

Stayed the same; It was agreed to lower this to \$2,000.00.

Animal Control

Stayed the same

Special Detail

Stayed the same

SOU Stipend

Stayed the same

Other Concerns

- Chief will see if someone from the Sheriffs Department can cover the elections.

The Select Board was okay with the Police budget changes as agreed upon.

Town Clerk/ Tax Collector

Ruth met with the Select Board to discuss her budget.

TC Salary

Ruth proposed an increase \$1,388 bringing this to \$36,088 which is a 4% increase. She noted that the cost of living has increased more than 3%. Sara wanted to say that she thinks that Ruth is significantly underpaid and thinks this should be increased more than that. The Select Board asked Ruth will do a little research on what other towns make. Sara offered to help her with this.

Deputy Wage

Ruth proposed an increase \$700 bringing this to \$14,700.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector Dues

Ruth proposed a decrease of \$60 making this \$80.00.

Town Clerk Expenses

Ruth proposed a decrease of \$500 making this \$900.00.

Tax Collector Expenses

Stayed the same

Workshops/Seminars

Stayed the same. Ruth made a note that Hilary often stays with friends in North Conway but if the venue changes, then she will need a room too.

Telephone/Internet

Stayed the same

Computer Maintenance/Software

Stayed the same

Advertising

Stayed the same

Supplies-general

Stayed the same

Postage

Stayed the same

Election supplies/Expense (ballots, advertising, etc.)

This is a different budget meeting and will be done in the Moderator's budget.

Ballot Clerks

This is a different budget meeting and will be done in the Moderator's budget.

Checklist Supervisors

This was a different budget meeting and will be done in the Supervisor's budget.

Mileage

Ruth proposed an increase of \$600.00 making this \$1,800.00. Sara said we are already at \$1,800 and that doesn't include the conference she just went to. Tony said we should increase this to \$2,000. Everyone agreed.

The Select Board was okay with the Town Clerk/Tax Collector budget as is.

Highway Budget

Robert Ellis met with the Select Board to discuss the Highway Budgets.

Highway Administration

Road Agent Wages

Bubba proposed an increase of \$2,913 making this \$54,600. This would to bring him from \$28.54 which he is at now to \$30.00.

Assistants

Stayed the same; Bubba worked under this line last year for quite a few months which is why this line was over.

Telephone

Stayed the same

Training/CDL Testing

Stayed the same

Electricity

Stayed the same

Heating fuel

Stayed the same

Mileage

Stayed the same

Membership/Dues

Bubba proposed an increase of \$5.00 making this \$30.

Supplies

Stayed the same

Highway Streets

Vehicle-Equip Maintenance and Repairs

Stayed the same

Contracted Services/Equipment Rentals

Stayed the same

Material

Stayed the same

Signs

Stayed the same

Uniforms

Stayed the same

Tools & Equipment Purchases

Stayed the same

Gas

Stayed the same

Diesel

Stayed the same

Salt, Sand, Deicer

Stayed the same

Hydrants

Stayed the same

Culverts

Stayed the same

Safety

Stayed the same

Tree Maintenance

Stayed the same

Groton Roads

Bubba proposed an increase of \$10,000 to start putting more money in to Province Road in preparation for the bridge. We have done little repairs to it but we need to add material and grade it. If we get in the habit of doing this every year the cost will go down. The Select Board agreed this is a good idea.

Utility Charges, street lights

Stayed the same

Other Concerns

- Sara and Bubba did the cell phone and radio testing. The radio testing showed that there was not good radio service through Town. Tony mentioned that Chief has a higher frequency radio so it was agreed that he should do the testing with Sara to see if his works better than the one in the Highway Truck.
- Bubba stated that he went to pick up the truck today and they wouldn't let him take the truck without payment today. Bubba said it has never been this way. We have always picked it up and then mailed in the check. They changed the process. Bubba said we didn't have the check with us. Sara ended up being able to make the payment over the phone. However, it doesn't seem to be worth the hassle to take the truck down there anymore.

The Select Board was okay with the Highway budget as is.

Having no other business to conduct, Tony motioned to adjourn at 6:57pm, Ron 2nd, so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Smith

Town Administrator