

# Greensboro Selectboard

## December 14, 2022 – Minutes

[Meeting was held via video conference]

**SELECTBOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ellen Celnik, Gary Circosta, Tracy Collier, David Kelley, Peter Romans

**SELECTBOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** None.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Eric Hanson, Tom Camarra, Nathan Hawley, Christopher Roy, Chief Dave Brochu, Jr., Kim Greaves, Josh Karp, Brett Stanciu, Beth Meacham, Dan Predpall, Barb Schlesinger, Christine Armstrong

**CALLED TO ORDER: 6:30 PM**

### ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Kim: update on contracted assessor position

### MINUTES

Minutes of November 9 meeting approved as written (T.C, E.C., D.K. in favor; G.C. abstained).

### PUBLIC CONCERNS

None this evening.

### GREENSBORO FIRE DEPT. – Chief Dave Brochu, Jr.

1. The Board reviewed Chief Brochu's November report.
2. **Electrical work at fire station.** Chief Brochu requested approval to spend funds on an overhead setup to plug in fire trucks at the station. He received a bid of \$3200 from Atwood Electric for the work. Chief Brochu thought there were funds set aside for this type of project in the Capital Budget. David made the following motion:

*The Board approves Chief Brochu's request to spend \$3200 on electrical work at the fire house, contingent on funds being available in an appropriate account.*

Ellen seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

3. **Highland Center for the Arts (HCA) – overflow parking at large events.** Chief Brochu said that at the recent Ukrainian benefit event, HCA staff were overwhelmed with the huge turnout and couldn't properly manage overflow parking. Vehicles were parked along both sides of Hardwick St., and while the fire station entrance wasn't blocked, Chief Brochu felt that there was a real safety issue. He was especially concerned about the dangerous situation that would arise if fire trucks had to squeeze through.

Chief Brochu said this generally isn't a problem for ticketed events, but he's seen this issue before during non-ticketed events, when many more people show up than expected. David agreed that this problem happens a few times a year during big events, and suggested a meeting to work out a solution.

Discussion of the town helping out by ordering and installing signage along the roadside. Who would purchase the signs was not discussed.

It was agreed that a meeting will be held with David, HCA Executive Director Keisha Luce, and Road Foreman Tom Camarra.

### **ORLEANS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT.**

The Board reviewed the OCSD November report.

### **TOWN ASSESSOR – Kim Greaves, Barbara Schlesinger**

**1. Interim Assessor position.** Town assessor Stearns Allen recently stepped down. Barbara Schlesinger, a district advisor for the state tax dept., told the Board that certain administrative tasks such as processing Current Use paperwork need to be done in the next few weeks, with other tasks coming up in early 2023. These tasks must be done in a timely fashion; she recommended that the Board appoint an interim assessor who would do this work and serve until a permanent assessor can be found.

Barbara said a town clerk may serve as interim assessor. Kim said she's willing and prepared to take on this role. She's done this paperwork in the past, and has been working with Barbara to get reacquainted with the processes. Kim added that since she is a salaried town employee, her serving in this role won't cost the town additional money. David made the following motion:

*The Board appoints Kim Greaves to serve as interim assessor.*

Ellen seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

**2. Assessor position.** Kim said she's been looking for assessor candidates and sent out an RFP, but only one bid was received. The Board reviewed the bid from Spencer Potter, who runs the VT Municipal Assessor company. Mr. Potter estimated his on-site fees to be \$21k annually, plus an estimated \$7,300 for remote work.

Kim said that in the past few days, another interested party reached out to her but was unable to submit a bid in time. She added that another possibility would be for Greensboro to share a part-time assessor with a few other towns, an arrangement that would be organized by the Lamoille County Planning Commission. Peter made the following motion:

*The Board rejects the assessor bid from Spencer Potter.*

David seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Kim and the Board will look into the town's options and prepare for further discussion at the January Board meeting.

### **FY22 AUDIT – Nathan Hawley**

Town auditor Nathan Hawley was invited by the Board to present the FY22 audit report.

David asked Nathan whether he found anything inappropriate or lacking transparency, or if he found accounting practices that could be improved.

- Nathan said that an issue of some concern is that the town treasurer has custody of bank accounts yet also writes the checks. While this is typical in small towns such as Greensboro, ideally there'd be some separation of these duties. One option to institute mitigating controls would be having another person review bank statements, making sure that all disbursements match items on the Board warrants. This person would ideally have some knowledge of the town and be familiar with typical town expenses and vendors. This person could be the town clerk, he added.
- Nathan recommended that the town adopt a Capital Asset Policy, whereby certain expenses that exceed a cost threshold are classed as capital assets.

- Nathan suggested finding a way to reduce the number of town funds. There are currently 19 funds, and he felt that having so many funds add unnecessary complexity to the town’s accounting systems.
- Nathan noted that there are several funds with large balances. David asked how the town can conservatively maximize yields on these funds. Nathan recommended that if the town is looking at anything beyond CDs, an investment advisor should be contacted.
- Nathan concluded by stating that the town’s financial statements are accurate, and were prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

## **ROADS**

1. **Road Foreman’s report – Tom Camarra.** Tom said the road crew has transitioned to winter road maintenance.
2. **Hydroseeder.** The town shares a hydroseeder with four other towns, and the contract needs to be renewed. Tom and perhaps a Selectboard member will attend the contract meeting.
3. **FY2024 budget.** David asked Tom to closely review the proposed FY24 road budget and see if any cuts can be made. Tom will work with Brett on this.
4. **Porter Brook Bridge.** Bids for the replacement of the Porter Brook bridge on Craftsbury Rd. were reviewed. There were five bids ranging from \$422k to \$548k, with Ron Fenoff Excavating submitting the low bid. Peter made the following motion:
 

*The Board accepts the Fenoff bid for the replacement of Porter Brook Bridge on Craftsbury Rd.*

Ellen seconded the motion. Discussion. Gary asked how the town will pay for this very expensive project, given that less than half of the cost is covered by grants at this time. He suggested using ARPA funds for some of the remaining cost.

The question was called and the motion carried (P.R., E.C., T.C., D.K. in favor; G.C. against). Gary explained that he voted nay since he felt the Board didn’t have a substantive discussion about how to pay for half of the project.
5. **Plowing Sidewalks.** Tom has heard of two people interested in the sidewalk plowing job. It was agreed that Tom and Peter will conduct interviews.

## **TREASURER – Brett Stanciu**

1. The Board reviewed the treasurer’s monthly report, the FY23 budget report, and the November check warrant reports.
2. **Lanphear House – demolition.** Demolition and basic site reclamation have been completed and the bill came to \$25,800. It was agreed to pay for this out of the Town Properties-Grounds and/or the Town Properties-Repairs & Maintenance accounts.
3. **Investing town funds.** David expressed concern that funds with large balances, being taxpayer dollars, aren’t being fully utilized as they should be. Tracy asked whether the town should work with a financial advisor to invest these funds.
 

Brett and Peter will compile information about investment options and the Board will further discuss at its next meeting.
4. **Auditor’s recommendations.** Brett said she’s talked with Nathan about all his recommendations, and agrees that one of the highest priority issues is to consolidate town bank accounts.
 

Brett suggested that Nathan be asked to review town financials on a quarterly basis. This would help keep accounts in good order, and serve as valuable training for her.

David suggested setting up a committee to discuss which of Nathan’s recommendations should be implemented. It was agreed to revisit this in February after the budget and town reports are completed.

## **BUDGET FY2024**

The draft FY24 budget is showing an increase of  $\pm 9\%$ . Tracy said while the Board has budgeted carefully these last few years and the tax rate has remained stable, it appears inflation has finally caught up with the town.

In addition to inflationary pressures throughout the budget, appropriation requests have also increased.

The budget committee will continue its work. Kim said the budget must be adopted no later than January 12 due to town report deadlines.

Brett asked Board members, as well as members of the public, to send her comments, questions, or concerns about the draft budget.

Tracy thanked the budget committee for their hard work.

## **TOWN CLERK – Kim Greaves**

- 1. Hazard mitigation Plan.** The town's Hazard Mitigation Plan needs to be updated. A contractor needs to be hired to assist the town with this project, which is estimated to cost \$10k. A \$7,500 grant has been received, with the town required to contribute \$2,500 of cash or in-kind matching funds to the project. Tracy made the following motion:

*The Board authorizes Kim to advertise for a contractor to complete the Hazard Mitigation Plan update.*

David seconded the motion which carried unanimously. Discussion about who should be responsible for overseeing the project, such as a Selectboard member or a new committee. This will be discussed further at the January meeting.

Christine said Craftsbury did a great job updating their plan and suggested that the Board give it a look.

- 2. Fire contract with Stannard.** The Fire Protection Agreement between Greensboro and Stannard is up for renewal. David made the following motion:

*The Board approves the updated Fire Contract with Stannard.*

Ellen seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

- 3. Town Meeting 2023.** The state is no longer allowing town meetings to be held by Australian Ballot as was done during the past two pandemic years, meaning in-person meetings will resume. At this time, there was no discussion of venue or other details.

Kim asked Selectboard members give some thought to the Greensboro Award. Tracy added that anyone in town can suggest candidates to the Board.

## **ONGOING BUSINESS**

- 1. ARPA committee – update.** ARPA committee member Dan Predpall said 26 applications for funding were received. He explained the process used by the committee to rank the applications. Ellen suggested that the budget committee review the applications at its next meeting given that some of them, if selected by the Board for funding, may reduce line items in the FY2024 budget. David expressed concern that if the Board was not careful, these special ARPA funds could get sucked into the black hole of the general town budget. The Board expects to make decisions about disbursing ARPA funds at its January meeting. Brett added that the town has until 2026 to spend its \$208k ARPA fund.
- 2. New town garage – update.** No update.

3. **Glover/Greensboro Gravel pits – update.** No update.
4. **Hiring grant writer – update.** Ellen said that many towns have been looking into hiring a grant writer, due in part to the large amount of federal infrastructure money that’s out there. Ellen wondered if ARPA funds could be used for this, effectively leveraging those grant funds in order to receive considerably more federal grant funds.  
Peter said that in some towns, there’s a Selectboard member who dedicates themselves to writing grants.  
Brett determined that Maddie Johnston of Craftsbury is not a good fit for the town, as she doesn’t have relevant grant writing experience.  
Tracy said the town could consider looking for a grant writer beyond our region, that perhaps we’d find a very qualified person a distance away who could do the job remotely.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:30 PM.

*Respectfully Submitted: Josh Karp, Selectboard Clerk*