

# Greensboro Selectboard

February 8, 2023 – 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:** Kim Greaves, Christopher Roy, Brett Stanciu, Chief Adam Heuslein, Ashley Fontaine, Chief Dave Brochu, Jr., Eric Hanson, Isa Oehry, Liz Steel, Mike Metcalf, Josh Karp, Beth Meacham, Mary Metcalf, Michael Lew-Smith, Michael Pray

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

## ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

David Kelley: trapping on town properties

## MINUTES

1. Minutes from Jan. 11 regular meeting approved as written unanimously.
2. Minutes from Jan. 26 special meeting approved as written unanimously.

## PUBLIC CONCERNS

**Liz Steel – town website.** Liz said while she appreciated the improvements made to the town website, she questioned why the town meeting warning wasn't available there. Kim said as soon as she receives the electronic version from the printers, she'll upload it to the website.

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

Chief Brochu's report was reviewed by the Board.

- All fire trucks were recently inspected at Hill Group Garage and only minor repairs were required.
- The furnace at the fire house needed work, luckily repairs were completed prior to the recent cold snap. Chief Brochu noted that they're now keeping spare components on hand, since service is needed annually.
- GFD members re-elected Dave as chief during their last meeting, and he submitted his name to the Board for approval at the March Selectboard meeting.

## ORLEANS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT.

The Board reviewed the January OCSD report.

## ROADS

1. **Road Foreman's report – Tom Camarra.** Tom was not present this evening.
2. **Drifts.** Laura Hill submitted a letter to the town expressing concern about impassable snow drifts during a recent snowstorm with dangerous windchills. She had to go out in this weather to care for animals as well as to go to her job as an evening caregiver, and she and others got stuck in the drifts. Laura added that emergency services wouldn't have been able to get through had they needed to.  
Peter said the situation was exceptional with drifting going on all night, and the road crew does the best it can, given manpower and budget. While we want to make the roads as safe as possible for the majority of

drivers, there will times when some roads may be impassable. It's not practical or cost effective to have a road crew member out all night clearing drifts every few hours.

Peter added that the town's personnel policy requires road crew members to take a break after working a certain number of hours, which may have played a part in the gap in plowing coverage that evening. However, he said the town could have done better in this situation, and the Board will work on solutions to drifting such as investing in high-quality snow fence.

Tracy felt that the town could have done better, said she's in support of having passable roads no matter what it takes, and wondered if there's extant town policy that would clarify plowing procedures. If a road isn't passable, Tracy felt that signage should be put out to alert residents. She added that the morning after the drifting the road crew spent a number of hours clearing drifts with the bucket loader. In effect, costs saved by not plowing the drifts were spent the next day on clearing them.

Ellen noted that in mud season there are some roads that aren't passable, and residents accept that as a temporary, seasonal inconvenience.

A number of those present thanked BP & Sons for their diligent and responsive driveway plowing this winter.

- 3. Painting centerlines.** Letter reviewed from VTrans regarding scheduling centerline painting on town roads this coming summer. Tom will discuss with VTrans.

### **RESCUE SQUAD**

The Board received two letters from Glover EMS (GEMS): one detailing their intention to bill the town for certain calls when they're covering for Hardwick Rescue (HR), the other soliciting the town to sign a year-long contract for ambulance services.

Michael Lew-Smith, representing HR, said HR was shocked by the letters, and is hoping this is simply a big misunderstanding. He said squads typically work out such issues amongst themselves, and questioned why the town of Greensboro was brought into this. Michael said HR intended to send a letter to the Greensboro Selectboard in response to the GEMS letters, but for some reason it never got sent.

Michael said HR has a contract with Greensboro to provide rescue services, and that HR will absolutely continue to provide this service. HR responded to 92% of calls received, which shouldn't raise any red flags about coverage issues. Michael said HR has had staffing issues at times, but things are improving.

Adam Heuslein, Chief of GEMS, said the two letters were sent because GEMS found themselves going out on a significant number of calls for HR. These weren't mutual aid calls - which GEMS wouldn't consider billing for - but were calls due to either HR being out on other calls, or HR lacking sufficient staffing to provide base coverage. Chief Heuslein said the problem is when HR doesn't have a full crew it must rely on other area squads for coverage. When rescue calls in the area start increasing, often in springtime, GEMS has found itself responding to numerous calls for HR, while not being notified to expect this. Chief Heuslein said GEMS is responsible for the towns that contract with them, we have to pay our people, and covering HR in this way takes a toll on the system as a whole. Other towns' taxpayers shouldn't be subsidizing Greensboro calls, he said.

Both Michael and Chief Heuslein agreed to work towards better communication between the squads, and made it clear that despite the issues discussed, there wouldn't be any interruption of services.

### **TOWN CLERK – Kim Greaves**

**Town meeting.** The town report should be out next week. Everything is set at HCA, and Kim asked everyone to help spread the word about the 9 AM start time for town meeting.

## **TREASURER – Brett Stanciu**

1. The Board reviewed the treasurer’s monthly report, the FY23 budget report, and the January check warrant reports.
2. Brett is working on implementing some of the outside auditor’s recommendations, including consolidating town bank accounts.

## **ARPA FUND**

1. **NEK Broadband – request to increase ARPA funding.** At its March 11 meeting, the Board approved spending \$24k of ARPA funds on the NEK Broadband proposal, as recommended by the ARPA committee. Mike Metcalf explained that the actual amount of ARPA funding needed was \$32k, which would leverage \$63k in other funding to get the first broadband build-out underway on Shadow Lake Rd. While this first phase will only serve 17 residences, it gets things moving and is expected to speed up the buildout throughout the rest of town.

Tracy said she’s in full support of the project, adding that the Board had intended to provide the necessary ARPA funds for the broadband project and hadn’t realized the \$24k request was not the amount required.

Discussion of how increasing this ARPA request by \$8k would affect funding for the other ARPA projects that the committee recommended for funding.

Beth said the ARPA committee spent a lot of time reviewing projects and asked whether the Selectboard is planning to recognize this work by following the committee’s funding recommendations. Ellen made the following motion:

*The Board approves allocating a total of \$31,917 in ARPA funds to the NEK Broadband project in Greensboro, which is the full amount requested in order to receive matching grant funds.*

Gary seconded the motion; further discussion. David said he’s troubled that other ARPA committee funding recommendations aren’t being approved promptly. Tracy said she understood that the Board is putting those decisions on hold until the town finds a grant writer who will go after more funding for these projects and others.

Peter called the question, and the motion carried unanimously.

2. **ARPA Committee.** Peter said the ARPA committee did a great job prioritizing projects while being aware that the Selectboard will ultimately decide how ARPA funds are spent. The Board is trying to keep town budget increases as low as possible during a period of high inflation, and most towns in the area used some of their ARPA funds for town projects. The Board is responsible to the taxpayers, and there’s always the possibility that the Board will elect to spend some ARPA funds on other town projects, reducing the amount of tax dollars that need to be raised.

David said the ARPA committee deserves great deference and the Board should respect the work of its members. Beth agreed, adding that the ARPA committee deserves some recognition, perhaps a letter of thanks from the Board. The Board agreed and will send a letter of thanks to the committee.

Ellen said the committee did excellent work, and perhaps such a committee could be formed every few years to get a sense of what projects the community needs and wants.

## **ONGOING BUSINESS**

1. **New town garage.** Peter met with architects Coe & Coe. Preliminary drawings of the site and buildings have been created, and he asked Board members to comment about building configurations and locations on the lot.

Inflation in the construction industry is staggering, Peter said, and noted that Glover’s garage, only somewhat smaller than what we need, was built a few years ago for around \$650k. Our new garage, along with other structures and sitework, may cost upwards of \$1.5 million.

2. **Glover/Greensboro gravel pits.** The town of Glover has offered \$65k for eight acres of Greensboro's gravel pit. Selectboard members discussed the offer and agreed that the land is worth considerably more. No action taken.
3. **Hiring grant writer.** Ellen said in order to get applicants, we need to be more clear what kind of time commitment we're asking for, as well as how much we're going to pay. One grant writer she talked to charges \$60/hr. While the job will evolve once someone is hired and begins work, we need to get those ballpark figures out there, she said.

Tracy assumed this person would be hired as a subcontractor, not a town employee, and other Board members agreed. She will send out the information to people she knows who might be interested.

Peter talked to Craftsbury Selectboard co-chair Bruce Urie, who said that town is also looking for a grant writer; perhaps the two towns could share a person.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

1. **Library Grants.** Beth said she's planning to attend Selectboard meetings more regularly, to keep the Board in the loop about what's going on at the library, especially in light of recent conversations about library funding during the FY24 budgeting process.

The building needs some major work that may take a few years to complete, including repairs to the main entrance ramp, improvements to back yard access, addressing mold issues in the basement, and replacing old, inefficient windows.

Beth said the library is pursuing VT Arts Council and State Library grants to complete these projects, and if either grant is not awarded the GFL Board will work to raise the funds. Beth said the library is doing its best to be sympathetic to the town budget and taxpayers, yet the building has real needs that must be addressed.

2. **Trapping on town properties.** David said he and others have been working with the legislature on a bill that would prohibit recreational trapping, and allow trapping only for the protection of crops, infrastructure, and people. He said municipalities have the authority to regulate many activities on town properties, and it would have symbolic value to pass a town ordinance stating that recreational trapping on town properties is prohibited.

Dave will send the draft bill to Board members for them to consider. If the Board wants to move forward, he would recraft the bill as a town ordinance.

3. **Kingdom Games – request to hold swim meet.** Peter said moving forward, the Greensboro/Hardwick Beach Committee has requested that such events be approved by them. Peter made the following motion:

*The request from Kingdom Games to hold a swim meet at Caspian Lake is approved, pending approval by the beach committee, and subject to any restrictions or stipulations imposed by the committee.*

David seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:17 PM.

*Respectfully Submitted: Josh Karp, Selectboard Clerk*