**Town of Grafton**

**Board of Selectmen**

**Tuesday, December 20, 2022**

**Members Present:** Cindy Kudlik, Chair, Leif Hogue, Vanessa Grinley (recorder)

**Others Present:** LeeWhay Pasek, Ryan Huff, Maureen O’Reilly, Jake Vogel, Sandy Griffin, Gary Whitney, Paul & Denise Vogt, Billy Robinson, Representative John Sellers, David & Heather Hunter, Kathy Lund, Russell Poitras, Steve Kudlik, Jennie Joyce and Pierre Blanc.

**Acceptance of Minutes**

Leif motioned to approve minutes from December 6, 2022 Public meeting and December 14, 2022 Non-public meeting. Cindy second. Motion passed.

**Ex-Officio Reports**

Leif reported that Katelyn Cooley has resigned as Library Director, effective December 31, 2022 and that the Trustees discussed porta-potties and warrant articles at their meeting. The Planning Board did a lot merger. The Fire Department held their election of officers.

Cindy announced that at the 12/14 non-public meeting with the Road Agent payscales for Highway Department employees were set. She also reported that the Cemetery Trustees meeting was canceled as all trustees weren’t available to meet so the budget surplus will just roll over into the General Fund. Insurance Write Offs and clean signed copy of Insurance Write Off Policy have not been received from the Ambulance Department. The grant couldn’t be discussed because Heather wasn’t at the meeting and she also spoke with the EMS Chief about how members park at the town office when responding to a call. Cindy also reported that Joe Braley has quit the Highway Department without notice and asked people to please be patient with the Road Agent who is now the only full time CDL licensed employee. The Budget Committee met on the 7th and discussed and approved the following budgets at the same amount as the Selectmen: Supervisors of the Checklist, Planning Board, Emergency Manager, Fire Warden, Cemetery Trustees and Recycle Center. Sue Smith has declined to do the Town Report again this year so we are in need of someone to do it. She also reported that the heat was left up to 8 degrees last week and reminded everyone that it needs to be turned back down to 60 when leaving after an event. Cindy also stated that Petition Warrant Articles are due in the Selectmen’s office by 4:30pm on Tuesday, January 10th.

**Public Comment**

 None

**Appointments**

* Allan Treadwell, Twin Bridge Computers – 6:15pm – no show
* State Rep John Sellers – 6:45 scheduled, given the floor at 6:15 – Representative Sellers stated that he won by 4 votes, so every vote does count. He was sworn in on December 7, 2022. There have been about 821 bills submitted, 76 of them involve schools. He himself has submitted 4 bills, one regarding veterans plates and 3 involving schools. The county is sitting on $12 million in covid funds. Cindy aske to be informed if there was something that we would qualify for and to get applications for those funds. Lex Berezhny is our other state rep who lives in Grafton and they are working together on some bills. If you would like to contact John his website is johnsellersnh.com and it includes his phone number and email. He will reply!
* Public Hearing for Town Hall Fees – 6:30pm – Cindy opened the public hearing at 6:30 and stated that we currently charge non-residents a $25 fee to use the Town Hall but Grafton residents are not charged. The Selectmen would like to add a $50 refundable cleaning deposit to both residents and non-residents who use the hall as there have been several times that rules weren’t followed and messes were and/or garbage was left that we had to pay someone to clean up. The Selectmen also feel it’s appropriate to charge businesses who use the hall for profit to pay $10 per hour so the taxpayers aren’t providing free electricity, heat, etc. for a private business to profit.

Sandy Griffin asked if the board knows how much other towns charge. Cindy stated that she did not. Pierre Blanc stated that he’s part of a group that uses the Enfield Community Center and they pay $50 a month and use the building once a week.

Maureen O’Reilly asked for clarification of the fee and the cleaning deposit being refunded.

Steve Kudlik asked what happens with the $50 fee if it’s not cleaned and who will inspect it. The money will go into the general fund to offset the cost of having it cleaned and either Sara, the cleaning person or one of the selectmen will inspect the building after it’s used.

Cindy closed the public hearing at 6:34pm. Leif moved to adopt the fees as discussed; Cindy seconded. Motion passed.

**New Business**

* Fire Department Election of Officers - There was some discussion as to the validity of the elections being held on the same night as nominations as that’s contrary to the bylaws. One member nominated for office wasn’t even in attendance at the meeting. Further discussion regarding whether or not background checks are being conducted and by whom. Leif will talk to Roger and the Selectmen will revisit this at the January 3rd meeting.
* Vacant Selectman Seat – There were five letters received to fill the seat until March elections: Billy Robinson, David Hunter, Maureen O’Reilly, Pierre Blanc and Jennie Joyce. Cindy asked each of them to briefly state why they applied.

Bill Robinson said that he saw a need for it to be filled, has lived here 6 years and is retired and single so he has time to devote to the town.

David Hunter said that he’s lived here a few years and also saw the need. He stated that there’s been a lot of disruption causing chaos and his motto is “Let’s leave Grafton alone.”

Maureen O’Reilly stated that she’s lived here 32 years and has a lot of experience on different boards, knows the RSAs and is aware of the issues in town and can work with the board.

Pierre Blanc stated that he’s lived here a year, knows how government works and wants to help out.

Jennie Joyce said that she was born and raised here and has been a Selectmen since dinosaurs roamed the earth.

Cindy inquired of Maureen if she was aware of it being a conflict and she couldn’t serve as a Selectman and Budget Committee member. Maureen said that she would resign from the Budget Committee if appointed as a Selectman.

Leif stated that he appreciates everyone who sent in letters but with everything that needs to be done we need experience. He feels Jennie and Maureen are the best choices. Cindy agreed and also expressed that she’s concerned for the hole that would be left on the Budget Committee if Maureen resigned; she is too valuable to lose in that spot right now. Moderator Steve Kudlik stated that anyone who wants to run in the upcoming election can’t wait until March, and needs to decide and sign up between January 25th and February 3, 2023. Leif pointed out that you must be a registered voter to run for office. Cindy stated that she prefers the experience Jennie would bring to the table, considering how little experience all of us and Sara have. Leif would like to table it until the next meeting. Cindy said she’d prefer it not be pushed out any longer with so many important things needing to be done right now. Leif moved to appoint Jennie Joyce as the interim Selectman to fill Tom McGinty’s seat; Cindy seconded. Motion passed and Jennie moved up to the front table and was sworn in by Leif.

* + Ambulance Grant - Kathy Lund was asked to join the Selectmen to discuss what happened with the USDA grant for the new ambulance. Cindy asked Kathy to come up and give the board an update on the grant. Kathy stated that Heather had been working on it and was told by the woman from the state that had been helping her to go for 35% of the total cost instead, which comes to $92,070 and it had to be in by last Friday. Cindy stated that the Selectmen made it quite clear that they wanted to see the application before it was filed, mainly because of a previous grant application that was full of errors and Homeland Security contacting the Selectmen about it being incomplete and Grafton potentially being ineligible for future grants. She stated that Heather had also told her she needed a login as the Select Board Chair before the grant application could be submitted. Kathy said she doesn’t know how that changed but she has an email stating that wasn’t needed. Discussed the warrant article needed to get the voter’s approval to complete the purchase. Further discussion regarding requirements from the USDA for an informational meeting to be held and a newspaper ad required 10 days in advance of that. The Selectmen agreed to do that at the January 17th meeting. Cindy also stated that she would reach out to the NHMA for advice on how to word the warrant article with the grant amount we may receive being unknown.

**Other Business**

* Wild Meadows Culvert Update – Chris Fournier emailed the Selectmen’s office that we lost the FEMA grant because of a June email no one responded to and have three options: to stop the project, fund it completely ourselves or apply for another grant he found that would cover 90% of the cost, rather than just the 75% the FEMA grant would have covered. The deadline to apply is December 31, 2022. Leif moved to apply for the grant; Cindy seconded. Motion passed.
* Warrant Article Follow Up – Cindy asked if the other Selectmen would like to place an article on the warrant again to make the Police Chief an appointed position. After a brief discussion Jennie motioned to put this article on the warrant again; Leif seconded; Cindy agreed. Motion passed.

**Correspondence**

* Letter regarding the Mill Brook Church motion to dismiss being denied and the hearing regarding their tax exemption denial still being scheduled for March 14, 2023.
* A letter regarding the Fire Station’s ISO inspection coming in at an 8B.
* Letter from the state DoT that the town should receive a one-time bridge payment of $103,933.82 in December.
* A letter from the NH DES regarding an illegal burn at 435 Kinsman Rd. on November 28th
* Letter from Drummond Woodsum regarding rate increase to $230/hr effective January 1, 2023.
* A payment request from the Recycle Center to pay Wesley Joyce $75 for plowing the dump before it was opened on Sunday. After some discussion regarding Joe Braley having not done it before he quit and Geoff coming down to use the loader to clean it after Wesley’d already gotten enough plowed so cars could come through, Cindy said she’d speak with Rick to get more details and an invoice if needed.

**Public Comment**

* Ryan Huff asked what the expectation is for roads to be plowed when it snows at night and who’s responsible to replace personnel. Leif said with a full road crew, once there’s 2-3 inches they should start plowing, but with a road crew of 1 with a CDL and some part time guys without, bus routes are the first priority. The Selectmen and the Road Agent are responsible for hiring more personnel. Ryan also commented that the Junkyard Ordinance isn’t followed properly by the Selectmen.
* Jake Vogel asked about the need to sign in as a meeting attendee, also a pending court case and why the Selectmen would try a warrant article again that had failed last year.
* David Hunter stated that he wanted to thank the Road Agent for doing such a great job when there was a fire on Sargent Hill Rd. He said that once the tone dropped he was right there on scene making sure the vehicles could get in and out and he deserves recognition for it.
* Gary Whitney asked about hiring contractors to plow.
* Paul Vogt inquired about whether the tiny house legal issue is because of targeting.

**Final Comments**

* Cindy commented that we have 2 applicants for the road crew and have met with the Road Agent to raise the payscales and have also added family health insurance and dental to the benefit package offered.
* Cindy announced that the Budget Committee met last week and reviewed the requested budgets for 2023 for the Highway, Library, Ambulance, Fire, Police, Tax Collector, Town Clerk and Welfare Departments.

Leif motioned to adjourn. Cindy second. Meeting adjourned at 8:07pm