

2021 APR 14 PM 1:55

Lauree Pudaral



## Town of Griswold

### Board of Selectmen

Regular Meeting

April 13, 2021

6:00 PM

VIA ZOOM



### MINUTES

1. **Call to Order/Roll** -- Meeting was called to order at 6 PM by Todd Babbitt, First Selectman

**Members Present:** Todd Babbitt, First Selectman  
Richard Grabowski, Selectman  
Jared Picco, Selectman

**Others Present:** Lisa M. Wood, Executive Assistant  
Erik Christensen, Finance Director  
Tina Falck, Senior Center Director  
Rob Parrette, Senior Center Building Committee Chairman  
Scott Davis, Board of Finance Chairman  
7 other interested citizens

2. **Approval of Minutes**

- a. **March 23, 2021 – Regular Meeting Minutes**

**MOTION:** Motion was made by R. Grabowski, seconded by J. Picco, to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen of March 23, 2021.  
**Motion carried unanimously.**

3. **Correspondence** – It was noted for the record that a letter was received from Judith Merrill.

4. **New Business**

- a. **Discussion and possible action on six tax refunds for a total of \$940.89 as presented by Leona Sharkey, Tax Collector**

**MOTION:** Motion was made by J. Picco, seconded by R. Grabowski, to approve the six tax refunds for a total of \$940.89 as presented by the Tax Collector, Leona Sharkey. **Motion carried unanimously.**

- b. Discussion and possible action on authorizing the First Selectman to sign any necessary settlement documents for the Sunrun appeal and refund of \$3,000** – T. Babbitt noted there was information provided by the Town Attorney regarding an agreement stipulation with Sunrun. R. Grabowski noted it appears the town is losing the appeal. T. Babbitt noted the appeal is being handled as a group with all the towns and the mediating judge has indicated that the intent of the state statute was not to make the solar panels taxable and basically noted the towns were not going to win. T. Babbitt confirmed there are three other companies involved. R. Grabowski also noted any legislation going forward would only take effect next year. The town attorney recommends settling. J. Picco asked if all towns would settle as a whole. T. Babbitt noted that the towns all received a stipulated judgement which may have different numbers depending on that town's situation. R. Grabowski noted it would most likely cost us more than \$3,000 to continue. J. Picco made a motion based on the attorney's recommendation that is likely the town is not going to win and that it would cost the town more money to continue.

**MOTION:** Motion was made by J. Picco, seconded by T. Babbitt, to authorize the First Selectman to sign any necessary settlement documents for the Sunrun appeal and refund not to exceed \$3,000. **Motion carried unanimously.**

- c. Discussion and possible action on re-appointment of Larry Laidley as a member of the Inland Wetlands & Conservation Commission for a term of 1/1/2021 – 12/31/2024**

**MOTION:** Motion was made by T. Babbitt, seconded by R. Grabowski, to re-appoint Larry Laidley as a member of the Inland Wetlands & Conservation Commission for a term of 1/1/2021 – 12/31/2024. **Motion carried unanimously.**

- d. Discussion and possible action on senior center referendum** – T. Babbitt confirmed for R. Grabowski, that the amount to go forward to referendum is \$760,000. T. Babbitt asked S. Davis if the amount is passed at referendum, if according to the third paragraph of the wording provided by the BOF, if the building committee would have to go back in front of the BOF at that time. S. Davis noted that he did speak with G. Rooke-Norman to make sure he had a full understanding of her motion. S. Davis noted that it would only have to go back to the BOF if there were significant changes within how the amounts were spent within the appropriation. T. Babbitt noted his concern with the known fact that there may be an increase, mid-April, in costs and how that would affect each line item. R. Grabowski noted he is not sure what the intent of the BOF was, but the number has to go to referendum with the set figure of \$760,000 and they have to be allowed some flexibility within the costs of each item. S. Davis noted the intention was that the ceiling amount is \$760,000. He noted there were specific appropriations with the motion because they wanted to make sure those specific items were what the money will be used for and the best estimates are provided. S. Davis noted if there is grant money received say for the kitchen in the amount of \$200,000 than that amount

would be subtracted off the top. If the OPM grant goes through it is kind of a moot point. It was confirmed that the language and amount should not exceed \$760,000 and could be less. E. Christensen noted he agreed with the explanation. J. Picco asked S. Davis to confirm that if the line-item amounts exceed the estimate if the BOF could then go back and adjust those amounts. S. Davis noted that was the intent to have flexibility within the line items in consultation with the building committee. S. Davis confirmed for R. Grabowski that the building committee does not need to come forward to the BOF for each line item within reason. He also noted those line items were ear marked to make sure those items get completed. T. Babbitt noted his last comment based on the selection of the equipment for the kitchen and that the BOS may have to have oversight on that process. R. Parrette noted he did have a discussion with S. Davis and confirmed the building committee will keep the BOF up to date with how the money is being allocated but wanted clarity on what specifically is expected of the building committee to the BOF and BOS. S. Davis noted a monthly update is sufficient. T. Babbitt noted the only thing he saw was oversight on selection, reductions, and cutbacks of the kitchen equipment. T. Falck asked for clarification that if the total of an individual line-item price goes up higher than what is allotted, do they not have to go back before the BOF for approval. S. Davis noted that if the total cap of \$760,000 is not sufficient to meet the project, then certainly that would have to be revisited. If a line item goes up a minimal amount within reason, each line item does not have to be visited. S. Davis noted he wished the line-item amounts were not listed, but that is the way the motion was made. T. Falck noted that she received an email from David Fritz of PAC Group today, that confirmed his previous statement that the prices provided were only good through mid-April and would likely see increases after that. It was agreed that there is concern over the way the motion was made and the lack of flexibility in the line items. S. Davis confirmed for T. Babbitt that it is feasible that a special meeting of the BOF could be scheduled should the line-item prices go up and discussion needs to take place. J. Picco noted that it has been stated that the BOF can revisit the line items if needed, but the key is that all parties involved communicate and keep the project moving along. S. Davis noted for R. Grabowski that each line item does not have to go to the BOF for approval but monthly updates on the project should be provided. S. Davis confirmed for R. Parrette, should the money be approved the building committee needs to act immediately, and should one item come in under and another come in over, that money can be moved around as long as it is on the items indicated. S. Christensen noted he agreed with being able to transfer amounts from one line item to the other as long as the amounts were under \$600.

T. Babbitt read the language provided and suggested by the Town Attorney. The question for the voting machine was "Shall the Town of Griswold appropriate an additional \$760,000 for the construction of the Griswold Senior Center?" The time and date have to be added in.

J. Picco asked if language of "in order to complete the senior center project" should be added. T. Babbitt noted it would actually take about \$900,000 to complete the project. J. Picco suggested something noting "in order to get a certificate of

occupancy”, to better inform the residents on what they are voting for. T. Babbitt noted the language above does include “to reasonably complete the project”. J. Picco agreed that would suffice. J. Picco noted that S. Davis was disconnected but asks if the motion includes “to be taken out of surplus”. T. Babbitt noted we can add that and have the attorney review it. E. Christensen confirmed it should say “it is coming from unassigned fund balance”. T. Babbitt than noted the question would say “Shall the Town of Griswold appropriate an additional \$760,000 from the unassigned fund balance for the construction of the Griswold Senior Center?”

**MOTION:** Motion was made by R. Grabowski, seconded by J. Picco, that the BOS approve the BOF’s appropriation and go to referendum to obtain a certificate of occupancy for the new senior center and a figure not to exceed \$760,000.

T. Babbitt noted he did receive permission from the school to use the High School on Wednesday, May 5<sup>th</sup> from 6 AM to 8 PM. This should allot enough time for the absentee ballots.

Motion on the floor was voted on. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**MOTION:** Motion was made by T. Babbitt, seconded by J. Picco, that the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Griswold resolve that the following question be put on the electors and the voters for a vote on the voting machine tabulators, said vote to be on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at Griswold High School between the hours of 6 AM and 8 PM with the question on the ballot being, “Shall the Town of Griswold appropriate an additional \$760,000 from the unassigned fund balance, for the construction of the Griswold Senior Center?” **Motion carried unanimously.**

## 5. Old Business

- a. **Discussion and possible action on Social Media Policy** – It was noted the town attorney was reviewing information related to a question that arose at the last meeting.

**MOTION:** Motion was made by J. Picco, seconded by T. Babbitt, to table this item until the next regular meeting. **Motion carried unanimously.**

## 6. Any Other Business that may properly come before the Board

- a. **MOTION:** Motion was made by R. Grabowski, seconded by J. Picco, to bring the item of the Brownfields grant for the Triangle Wire property onto the agenda for discussion. **Motion carried unanimously.**

T. Babbitt provide an update noting the full application has been submitted and accepted as complete. They will not award anything till about June or July and they have received multiple applications. He also noted they still meet weekly in order to prepare should the grant be awarded and provided further detail.

## 7. Public Forum

David Vieaux – Leha Ave. - D. Vieaux asked for updates on the church property, Patrylo property, the lack of posting minutes, and the status of enforcement of storage containers in town. T. Babbitt noted the office will put out a reminder to committees to submit their minutes for posting. He has contacted DEEP regarding the Patrylo property for forgiveness on the timeframe for starting the clean up and has contacted the attorney to update the paperwork regarding the foreclosure process that was started a couple of years ago. He noted we are waiting to get through the court for a clear title for taking of the church property. He also noted he can again attempt to have sub-committee meeting with P&Z regarding the storage containers.

Jennifer Gauthier – Talcott Ave. – J. Gauthier noted her concern with the Sunrun issue and that the judge said he was not going to make any decision until the legislation had passed and Sunrun admitted in their own testimony that they were liable for taxes up to now. T. Babbitt noted the presiding judge is not noted on the paperwork but would look into it.

## 8. Adjournment

**MOTION:** Motion was made by R. Grabowski, seconded by J. Picco, to adjourn the meeting at 6:53 PM. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**Residents that wanted to listen to the meeting were invited to sign in with Zoom.**

**Meeting ID: 736 2325 5724**

**Passcode: tE7ewH**

**Respectfully Submitted,**



**Lisa M. Wood,  
Executive Assistant**