



# Town of Griswold

## Board of Selectmen

### Regular Meeting

March 24, 2015

6:30 PM

Griswold Town Hall, Downstairs Meeting Room  
28 Main St, Jewett City, CT 06351



## MINUTES

1. **Call to Order/Roll** – Meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Kevin Skulczyck, First Selectman

**Members Present:** Kevin Skulczyck, First Selectman  
Steve Mikutel, Second Selectman  
Philip E. Anthony, Third Selectman

**Others Present:** Lisa M. Wood, Executive Assistant  
Todd Babbitt, Road Superintendent  
Tom Giard, EDC Chairman  
12 interested citizens  
2 members of the press

2. **Approval of Minutes**

- a. **March 10, 2015 – Regular Meeting Minutes**
- b. **March 12, 2015 – Special Meeting Minutes**

**MOTION:** Motion was made by S. Mikutel, seconded by P. Anthony, to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2015 regular meeting and the March 12, 2015 special meeting. **Motion carried unanimously.**

3. **Correspondence - None**

4. **New Business**

- a. **Discussion and possible action on tax refunds as presented by Rich Grabowski, Tax Collector**

**MOTION:** Motion was made by P. Anthony, seconded by S. Mikutel, to accept the tax refunds as submitted by Tax Collector, Richard Grabowski. **Motion carried unanimously.**

- b. Discussion and possible action on presentation by Todd Babbitt on seasonal Grounds Maintenance Worker** – T. Babbitt wanted to make sure the same policy for hiring would be approved as it was for the Youth Services Bureau at the last meeting. P. Anthony commented he has no problem with that as long as the Selectmen are kept informed. S. Mikutel noted he was okay with it as it is a temporary position but does stress having a background check done if the person is not known.

**MOTION:** Motion was made by S. Mikutel, seconded by P. Anthony, to in this particular case, allow Todd Babbitt to recruit and interview and hire a seasonal grounds maintainer similar to last year. **Motion carried unanimously.**

- c. Discussion and possible action on request by EDC, as presented by Tom Giard, for establishing a Revolving Loan Fund** – T. Giard briefly reviewed the proposal of a Revolving Loan Fund as discussed before. He presented an outline of recommendations for the program. He suggested the fund could be started with some funding from the recent sale of property to UCFS. S. Mikutel asked how the bank would be supplemented for their service. T. Giard commented there would be an RFP that would go out and hopefully something would work out between the interest being gained on the account and the loan going out. K. Skulczyck noted the Borough has a similar fund. T. Giard did confirm the Borough's program and their good track record of success with the program. S. Mikutel likes the concept but it is a matter of working out the details and would like more information on what other towns have encountered as problems and how they worked to resolve them. K. Skulczyck noted they did have a meeting with Jason Vincent who administers the Norwich program and he was able to give information about how the details are worked out. P. Anthony asked if they know what the banks charge for facilitating in the Norwich program. T. Giard did confirm that grant money cannot be used for the fund. P. Anthony did note that the worst case scenario may be when the borrower renigs on the loan and the town may have to expend some legal costs to recoup the money. He did note the Borough had one such case. S. Mikutel noted the details about setting up the fund has to be worked out and the Board of Finance has to have some input in it. K. Skulczyck commented everyone wants to see this happen and also noted our ordinance 29-2 noted that coming up with such ideas is exactly what the EDC is supposed to do. K. Skulczyck would like to be able to move forward with the RFP as we work out the details. A special meeting of the BOS and EDC along with NCDC was proposed. It was suggested having the RFP ready for that meeting to be reviewed and possibly approved to move forward.

- d. Discussion and possible action on request by EDC, as presented by Tom Giard, for marketing of Town commercial property** – T. Giard briefly reviewed the town commercial properties and presented a listing of the properties. The idea is to sell the properties and get them back on the tax roll. T. Giard went over the proposed outline in finding an agent to market those properties. K. Skulczyck noted there are a substantial amount of commercial properties on the pre-foreclosure list. The idea is

to market perhaps one or two properties at a time. It was suggested updating the BOS every quarter with an updated list of town owned commercial properties. T. Giard suggested moving forward with an RFP. P. Anthony suggested the BOS and EDC meet to discuss what properties they would like to start with.

**MOTION:** Motion was made by P. Anthony, seconded by S. Mikutel, to authorize the chairman of the EDC to issue an RFP to local agents, if they so choose, for the proposal before the Board of Selectmen tonight as presented by Mr. Giard and the EDC in marketing town owned commercial properties. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**e. Discussion and possible action of reappointment of Erika Bevis as an alternate member of the Recreation Commission for a term of 1/14/2015 to 1/13/2016**

**MOTION:** Motion was made by P. Anthony, seconded by S. Mikutel, to reappoint Erika Bevis as an alternate member of the Recreation Commission for a term of 1/14/2015 to 1/13/2016. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**f. Discussion and possible action on setting a special town meeting date of April 8, 2015 at 6 PM at Griswold High School Cafeteria, to vote whether or not to appropriate up to \$45,934 from the capital non-recurring fund to pay for building security upgrades at Griswold Public Schools - S. Mikutel noted they had planned to have this money allotted as part of the capital improvement fund, but that account had to be trimmed down and the BOF helped with that by funding this project through the LoCIP program and possible reimbursement of this. This is really a recommendation of the Board of Finance.**

**MOTION:** Motion was made by S. Mikutel, seconded by P. Anthony, that the Board of Selectmen set a special town meeting date of April 8, 2015 at 6 PM at Griswold High School Cafeteria, to vote whether or not to appropriate up to \$45,934 from the capital non-recurring fund to pay for building security upgrades at Griswold Public Schools. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**5. Old Business – None**

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

**MOTION:** Motion was made by S. Mikutel, seconded by P. Anthony, to bring onto the agenda an update on the progress of the Bicentennial Committee. **Motion carried unanimously.**

P. Anthony commented there is a non-attending member who has only been to two of the meetings and the request by the Committee to resign. There is a person acting as a chair of a sub-committee who is not a regular member of the main committee and has no voting rights. S. Mikutel noted the person who wants to do the work should be put on.

**MOTION:** Motion was made by S. Mikutel, seconded by P. Anthony, to bring onto the agenda the appointment of a member to the Bicentennial Committee. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**MOTION:** Motion was made by P. Anthony, seconded by S. Mikutel, to add to the Bicentennial Committee Cece Norwood as a full time member. **Motion carried unanimously.**

K. Skulczyck recognized Matthew Krzeminski, a boy scout, who was present in the audience tonight as part of his club duty.

## **7. Public Forum**

(Discussion on proposal to increase the BOS from a three member body to a five member body)

**Julian Smith** – J. Smith asked why this came about? Did they see this model work somewhere else, or what is the reasoning behind it? K. Skulczyck noted it came about in the form of a petition and was heard by the BOS. The question proposed is all that can be acted on at this time. S. Mikutel noted it is a consequential vote the people have to make for themselves. He answered, for J. Smith, that there are 18 towns in the state of CT that have five member boards and 75 towns have three member boards. K. Skulczyck noted since 1916 a statute states anything less than 10,000 in population should be a three member board, those above qualify for a five member board.

**Judy Webster** – J. Webster asked board members to explain what the drastic change would be that is mentioned in the paper and what additional meetings there would be. S. Mikutel did note it would be a significant alteration to the current three member board. S. Mikutel noted everyone has to make their own determination as to whether a larger board would be more effective or not. He noted he feels a larger board would be less effective. P. Anthony noted he has not yet come to a personal conclusion and individuals have to be informed to make their own decision and that is why the meetings are so important.

**Ed Burdick** – E. Burdick noted there were more people present at a past meeting. He also confirmed that the Bulletin article also referred to it as a drastic change to the government. However it will still be a Board of Selectmen form of government and efficiency should not be the only criteria of how good a board of selectmen is and that results should of the board and its policies should be criteria of how good a board is. There are other boards in town that work efficiently and have more than three members. E. Burdick noted this petition is being handled differently than others and is being dragged out.

**Tom Giard** – T. Giard noted efficiency has nothing to do with the number of members of the board but rather the quality of the board. He noted that when he previously served on the BOS and it was three members the votes often came down to 2 to 1. Having additional voices would bring forward more ideas. He noted he feels based on population we have reached the point where we should increase to a five member BOS and it is line with the rest of the commissions within the community.

**Shawn Krzeminski** – S. Krzeminski used an analogy of a diaper size and not wanting to wait till the diaper is too small and explodes. Why not step up now since we have reached that 10,000 population threshold.

**Norm Higgins** – N. Higgins asked S. Mikutel to find out for the next meeting, of the towns that have a three member board, what is the highest population count. He also noted he feels the town is not quite ready for five members. We are trying to increase commercial development and trying to make the road smoother for that. More board members may make it more difficult.

**Ransom Young** – R. Young noted he feels maintenance needs to be taken care of foremost, before addressing expansion. He also noted due to the decreased birth rate, class sizes are going to diminish and we will be left with great big schools and no tax base to support them. He feels three members would be more interested in making this town than spending money.

**Alex Grzelak** – A. Grzelak wanted to know when the salaries would be decided and if there would be an increase to the budget? S. Mikutel noted that would be decided by the BOF. K. Skulczyck noted the question at hand is specific to expanding from three to five. There has been opportunity to comment, but is not really something that can be answered at this point. A. Grzelak wanted to know if this would take place this November and how it would affect minority representation. K. Skulczyck noted it would take place this November and representation would be governed by state statute. A. Grzelak also noted he is in favor of establishing the revolving loan fund.

**David Vieaux** – D. Vieaux commented that increasing to five members is going to cost the tax payers something even if it is in the cost of supplies rather than salaries and stated that amount needs to be known before voting on it.

**Julian Smith** – J. Smith noted it is important to know the selection process and the election process before moving forward. S. Mikutel noted it would go through the normal selection process through the political parties or petitioning candidates.

**Phil Flowers** – P. Flowers asked what happened to the special town meeting that was addressed on February 4 for February 10<sup>th</sup>. L. Wood noted the meeting date could not have been set on the 4<sup>th</sup> for the 10<sup>th</sup> for something that night due to noticing requirements.

**E. Burdick** – E. Burdick commented he supports the school but they need to stop coming back for more money. K. Skulczyck commented the funding is coming from LoCIP funding that can only be used for certain things.

**Norm Higgins** – N. Higgins commented that the Revolving Loan Fund has to have the approval of the Board of Finance. T. Giard responded Mr. Higgins is correct but the idea is that the BOF will bless the opening of the account and from that point forward distribution would be approved by the BOS. N. Higgins also commented the money from LoCIP is doing the right thing in procuring the safety of the children.

**Phil Flowers** – P. Flowers wanted to know why the town is just going after marketing the commercial properties. K. Skulczyck commented that the idea is to try it first with the commercial properties. Then additional miscellaneous pieces will be addressed. P. Flowers then asked for an update on the ambulance. K. Skulczyck noted there has been one workshop on the contract and details cannot be discussed but they are working with all properties involved. As soon as an agenda item can be added for an update, it will be put on for discussion.

## **7. Adjournment**

**MOTION:** Motion was made by S. Mikutel, seconded by P. Anthony, to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 PM. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Lisa M. Wood,  
Executive Assistant**