



TOWN OF GRAFTON
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**SELECT BOARD
PUBLIC OUTREACH MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, January 19, 2023
7:00PM
Community Meeting Room
Grafton Public Library
35 Grafton Common
Grafton, MA 01519**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm. In attendance were Chair Colleen Roy, Clerk Andy Jefferson, Ann Marie Foley, and Ray Mead. Vice Chair Mat Often was absent. Staff in attendance were Town Administrator Evan Brassard, Assistant Town Administrator William Blake, Chief of Police Normand Crepeau, and Fire Chief Eric Mathieu. Guests in attendance were Michael Milanoski, President of the Grafton and Upton Railroad Company (GURR) and Norma Griffiths of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

Mr. Brassard presented a recap of everything the Town, railroad, and residents' have gone over since 2019 and the options they have moving forward. He stated that in 2019, Option A was chosen, which is the existing condition.

Residents shared their experiences with excessive horn blows and wait times in their vehicles at the railroad crossing. They also expressed concerns about EMS access.

Mr. Mead spoke on efforts to create a quiet zone and the need to resolve public safety concerns.

Ms. Griffiths noted that there is a service available called TrainFo that alerts EMS to traffic delays at railroad crossings. She spoke on the FRA's grants to help eliminate crossings.

Mr. Mead noted the increase in length of these traffic delays in the past 18 months.

Mr. Milanoski spoke on the delays and horn blows and highlighted the improvements to operations that have been made by partnering with the Select Board. He noted that GURR does not have any control over when CSX delivers cars to them. He explained how the CRISI grant would create a third track and allow for less back-and-forth switching of cars. He noted that Alternative C in Mr. Brassard's presentation also helps with the vehicle congestion at this intersection.

Ms. Foley asked for the timeline of the CRISI grant. Mr. Milanoski stated that the grant should be awarded early this summer, contracts should be signed at the end of the year, and construction may be complete in 2025. He estimated that traffic delays from trains would be reduced by one third.

Mr. Mead offered to monitor the railroad crossing stops to determine the length of wait times and the times of day when stops happen most often.

Mr. Milanoski described GURR's daily routine after a resident suggested that Mr. Mead should know when to expect the most activity.

A resident asked where the new track would be placed. Mr. Milanoski showed it on the map and noted that it would also reduce the 1:00 to 2:00am noise from CSX delivering cars because they would no longer need to back up. He discussed how this project will relate to the new bridge over Route 20, which has already been funded by another grant.

Residents shared their thoughts on where the new bridge should be placed. Mr. Milanoski explained that additional track can easily be installed to reach the new bridge.

A resident appreciated that this meeting was held and noted that GURR and the FRA are not required to participate in these discussions with the Town.

A resident stated that GURR does not work with the community.

A resident asked if GURR could change their hours of operation to avoid delays at rush hour. Mr. Milanoski spoke on the dangers of operating in the dark and the restrictions on hours.

A resident asked if railcar switching could be scheduled to accommodate school traffic. Mr. Milanoski highlighted the importance of daylight operation and keeping a consistent schedule throughout the year.

A resident spoke on the importance of EMS access to schools.

Mr. Mead appreciated the quality of the meeting and stated that the Board would continue working to resolve these issues.

A resident requested a discussion of the derailment on Christmas Eve. Mr. Milanoski described the accident and explained the steps taken by CSX and GURR to notify others.

A resident stated that they were never notified that everything was okay after the derailment. Mr. Brassard stated that CodeRED could be used to contact the neighborhood in the future.

A resident asked if the resolution to trains running all night would be long-term. Mr. Milanoski stated that it would, but there may be exceptions for testing procedures.

A resident asked if GURR has had a State fire safety analysis after it was delayed by COVID. He also asked if the results from the analysis and the Flint Pond water safety testing were public. Mr. Milanoski spoke on GURR's safety upgrades. Mr. Brassard stated that he or Chief Mathieu could reach out to the State Fire Marshal.

Ms. Roy thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23pm.

Select Board meeting materials are available at: <https://www.grafton-ma.gov/AgendaCenter/Select-Board-4>

A full recording of this meeting is available at: https://youtu.be/qKav_VGWEwY