

JOHNSON VILLAGE TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2025

Present:

Trustees: Will Jennison, Ellis O'Hear, BJ Putvain, Ken Tourangeau, Darrell Wescom

Others: Erik Bailey, Steve Hatfield, Alec Jones, Diana Osborn, Jacqui LeBlanc (remote), Madison Carver (remote), Sean Neely (remote), Lynda Hill, Kim Dunkley

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. Call to Order

Ken called the meeting to order at 7:01.

2. The Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge was recited.

3. Review of Agenda and Any Adjustments, Changes and Additions

BJ added items related to Secure Shed, the emergency phone, and minutes on the website. Ken added an executive session for employee review.

4. Review and Approve Minutes of Trustee Meetings

Will moved to approve the minutes of September 8, 2025, BJ seconded and the motion was passed.

5. Treasurer's Report: Bills & Warrants, Budget Status Report, Action Items

The board reviewed the budget status report. Rosemary said she will have the information Ken asked for at the next meeting. She said a reminder notice was sent to Waterville for the third installment of the fire contract. All others towns are up to date. We should receive state PILOT money at the end of October.

Rosemary said she is a little concerned about the federal government shutdown. She would like to ask for a \$400K line of credit. We are in the middle of a \$200K project. So far we have spent \$1.1 million and she has \$719K of our funds for the project. That leaves \$400K we will need if we don't get grant reimbursements. Erik said the USDA has gone silent since the shutdown started. He is assuming they are shut down. Will asked when we may need the \$400K. Rosemary said in a few months.

Will moved and BJ seconded to authorize Rosemary to secure a \$400K line of credit from Union Bank in anticipation of needing the funds and not having them available. Darrell asked, why Union Bank? Rosemary said she could check rates from different banks. Darrell said he thinks she should. **Will and BJ agreed to amend the motion to replace "Union Bank" with "the bank with the lowest interest rate after checking rates of 3 banks."** The motion was passed.

Rosemary said the state has a grant program where they are offering to reimburse what the municipal tax would have been for 10 years for any property acquired in the FEMA buyout program. They reimburse 100% for the first 5 years and 50% for the next 5. Will asked if it is guaranteed that we can get this. Rosemary said she thinks so. If total payments exceed one million then payments will be pro-rated. The town or village has to apply for this.

6. Local Concerns Meeting for the Village Sidewalk Scoping Study

Jacqui LeBlanc, a Stantec engineer, gave a presentation on the Route 15 sidewalk extension scoping study. The study will look at where sidewalk could be added along Route 15 west of the

village between the existing terminus and Wescom Road. There were 3 crashes that occurred in the study area over the last 5 years. Two involved personal injury and one only caused property damage. None involved pedestrians, cyclists or heavy trucks. The average number of vehicles traveling through the project area each day was about 8500 for 2024. Jacqui reviewed typical stages in the project definition process, which is the first part of the project. It involves defining and evaluating alternatives, selecting a preferred alternative and submitting a final report. Solutions will be developed in November and December, evaluated in January and February, and presented for public input in March. A recommended solution will be selected in April and a final report will be submitted in May.

Ken asked, the count of accidents in the study area only goes back to 2020, correct? Jacqui said yes. Ken said we believe there was a fatality in that area a year or two before that and there was a person who was hit on the side of the road in the morning hours when it was dark. Jacqui said that is helpful information. They can go back and take a look at it.

Ken asked Rosemary if there is any record of the last study in that area. Erik said it had to do with the Main St. project. Diana Osborn said that was in 2005. Jacqui asked if the town would have a copy of the study. Erik said that is to be determined. We lost a lot of things in the flood. Ken said he will talk to the person who was the village manager at the time and see if he knows who might have information on the study.

Ellis asked if putting in a sidewalk will lower the speed limit. Erik said the speed limit is up to the state. Jacqui said adding a sidewalk can change vehicle behavior. The speed limit could be evaluated separately.

Darrell said a resident asked him about what could be done to increase safety for pedestrians going the other way, toward Katy Win – for example, a sign warning of pedestrians. Ellis said he thinks the village looked at a sidewalk going that way when we did the Main St. project but the cost would have been disproportionately high.

Ken suggested Alec Jones could ask other LCPC staff if they remember anything about the past study. Alec said he can look into it.

Ken said he is pretty sure the entire board has concerns about a sidewalk on the south side of the road. He feels a sidewalk there will get taken out by a flood. Will said the outside bend of the river in that area is the area that is hardest hit by erosion. On the north side of the road, we would not have to deal with flooding. Jacqui noted that two crosswalks would be needed if the sidewalk were on the north side. Sean Neeley said Stantec will evaluate placement of crosswalks using VTrans guidelines. Alec said a VTrans staff member is part of this project and will be reviewing everything.

Diana Osborn asked how this project integrates with other work being done, for instance at Holmes Meadow, that will change river dynamics. Ken said he can't see the amount of lowering that will be done at Holmes Meadow having much effect on erosion. Ellis agreed. Will said according to the state, the work at Holmes Meadow won't change the elevation of the next flood. It won't change that bend in the river.

Diana asked how this project might integrate with past studies and other work that is being done now. Ken said he thinks a sidewalk wasn't put in that area during the Main St. project due to lack of funding and because the foreman, village manager and trustee board at the time were opposed to putting sidewalk on the south side of the road.

Steve said there is somewhat of a blind curve by Jolley's. It might help to have a blinking light there. Jacqui suggested visibility for pedestrians might be better on the north side.

7. *Members of the Public*

Diana Osborn introduced herself. She is on the Recreation Economy Task Force. The group is interested in hearing from everyone and they haven't heard back from the trustees. They are interested in getting input. Ken said the group's meetings haven't worked well with his schedule. Members of the public can come up with ideas and present them to the trustees. The village is mostly involved with utilities and sidewalks.

Diana said the group identified sidewalks as a real need. Another need that has come up is parking. They are hearing that people with boat trailers and snowmobile trailers are looking for parking. If trustees are aware of some need, it would be helpful for the task force to hear about it. Ken suggested that the task force come to the trustees if they have a plan they think the village can be involved in. He has been pushing for sidewalk extension. He is aware of people wanting to have sidewalk to Katy Win.

Will asked, the task force is getting feedback that there is a need for parking for snowmobile trailers and boat trailers? Diana said apparently the existing boat put-ins are not great. Kim Dunkley agreed that they are not. There is not a safe, easy put-in anywhere. Can some buyout land be used for that? Will said the buyout properties will become town property. He agrees that the last two buyout properties on Route 15 would afford easier river access.

Kim said people often use the supermarket parking lot to park. She doesn't know if the village has any influence over what happens with the buyout land. Will said it does not. Ken said we can let the town know what we support. Darrell said a lot of people would love to park snowmobile or ATV trailers where the store was. Will said he believes the asphalt has to come up as part of the buyout. Kim said we can have gravel parking. Ken asked Erik to let Tom Galinat know the trustees have concerns about what happens to that property and that we may be interested if the town is willing to let the village acquire the property after the buyout.

Will suggested planting wildflowers on the buyout lots. Kim said donated trees could also be planted. It would be good to anchor the land with vegetation.

Lynda Hill thanked the board for the new sidewalk on School St. Are other sections of sidewalk on School St. going to be done? Ken said the board is looking into it. It would be very expensive. Lynda said a lot of people walk on School St. and a lot of drivers come through the bridge fast. It is dangerous because there is no sidewalk. Ken mentioned the cost of the current scoping study. The village would have to raise taxes to pay for more scoping studies.

Lynda suggested that buyout properties should be brush hogged at least every year or two to keep them from turning into woods.

8. Village Manager's Report and Any Action Items

Erik read his report:

Water & Light Garage Project Update:

The new Water & Light garage is going up fast! The steel is here and it is being erected at a very quick pace!

DR4810 FEMA Utility Pole Project update:

The engineering firm has returned an initial options analysis, and we have responded with our input on the pluses & minuses of each option. They will refine it and we can bring the project plan to FEMA for approval and realignment of the project.

DR4720 FEMA WWTF Project Update:

Aldrich & Elliott is very near having a product for the CRC to review to finish our 428 process. Region 1 has assured us that once those are filed, the 428 valuation process will be fast-tracked.

AMI/El Dorado Update:

As most are aware of, the PUC has made AMI metering mandatory for VT utilities. To that end, the VPPSA utilities secured a 50% grant to defray the cost of implementation. That grant requires the meters to be installed by 12/31/2026. Due to restricted resources, I have positioned Johnson W&L at the "end of the line" to be the final VPPSA utility to bring AMI online. Working with Alan Stamp, the engineer contracted to coordinate the meter implementation, Jackie Lemmerhirt, the consultant hired to coordinate the training and implementation of the CIS software, and Gretchen, the lead process engineer at El Dorado, we are backwards planning the El Dorado start-up based on an October 31st, 2026, goal of having the AMI system online. We are having monthly update meetings and will have the draft timeline hammered out soon. Currently EL Dorado is going through some hurdles getting set-up for solar net-metering in Jacksonville, and implementation in Orleans, we are letting those processes play-out before we get going on implementation, as we benefit from the other utilities working out the kinks first. We have several training opportunities coming up for both the DCU, AMI Meter install side, and the admin/account set-up side. We have also agreed it would be useful to send personnel to train over the shoulders of Orleans and/or Barton when the time comes. As the implantation timeline draws nearer, I will work with VPPSA on bringing in temporary technical support staff to assist with the transition to the new CIS software.

Back in 2021, when the previous administration began work on the Katy Win water pump stations upgrade, a SEARCH Grant was awarded to pay for the Preliminary Engineering Review (PER). Assumedly because they decided not to go with the recommendations in the PER, the grant paperwork was never finished back then, and the grant money never awarded. I recently became aware of this oversight and got the process going to close it out ahead of the deadline. With great assistance from Rosemary, we were able to satisfy the grant requirements with payment records, etc. from back then, and the state cut a check to us for the full reimbursement amount of \$15,157.44.

The SCRP Tier 2, part 2 grant application period just opened. This is the program I was waiting on to pay for the propane tank installations for the new WTF generator that will be bought with the original SCRP Tier 2 grant. I discussed this in person with Ken Linge of the Vermont Bond

Bank last week, and they are eagerly awaiting our application, and indicated that we are very likely to be awarded the funding.

Ken questioned why we would want to be last for the El Dorado implementation when the amount of meters is restricted. Erik said we will have our meters. Our equipment is already on order. Ken said VPPSA was worried about getting meters for everyone. Erik said our order is included with the whole second wave. We aren't getting the last meters. Meters for everyone in the second half of implementation are all being ordered at the same time. Ken said he is not happy about going last. We could miss out on the 50% grant. Erik said our supply will arrive at the same time as the whole second half of VPPSA members. They are all part of one bulk order. We are only last in line for setup, which is good because they are having a lot of issues with setup and it is similar for all utilities.

Ken asked about the \$15K we got from a grant. Where is that funding going? Erik said it went into water revenue.

BJ said we will be using El Dorado and the town will be using NEMRC. The town system won't speak to ours. Office employees will be dealing with two separate systems. Is there third party software that will work with both? Erik said not that we know of.

9. *Water/Wastewater Report and Any Action Items*

Erik read the report submitted by Dan Copp:

1. Operational Status of Wastewater Plant and Callouts

- E-DMR's and Wr-43's was submitted to the State
- We hauled 68 thousand gallons of sludge to Morrisville for processing in September
- Monthly Composite testing completed
- Had an Alarm for a plugged syphon on main street bridge, called Manosh to jet it out, Nate assisted with lifting the cover, turned out to be rags, Low flows possibly a contributing factor to build up also some tree roots possibly got by when the plug was opened by the graded school last month. Alarm Float was reset
- Mowed and trimmed all pump stations and plants as needed
- Thad Leugemors with the State of Vermont Flood Recovery Team/ Vermont emergency Management came and met with us gathering information on the building and taking measurements for the ongoing FEMA claim for the Village
- Maine Cal performed the annual calibration and certification of all of our lab equipment.

2. Operational status of Water Plant and Callouts

- Monthly reports were submitted to the state.
- Coliform samples were negative
- Lucas has been working on Hydrant Painting and is 98% complete with a few far outlying ones they will be finished in October
- Lucas Assisted Nate with an issue on Cabin Cove lane, customer complained of Strong bleach smell and indicated maybe it affected some of their clothes/

washing machine, free chlorine sample came back within a normal range appeared the problem might have been heavy bleach use in the washing machine from the cleaners, also note it was an Air BNB with cleaning crew hired out by owner

- State of Vermont came and did sanitary Survey, Dan and Tim walked through Survey with Mathew Caldwell, no deficiencies found, but under the advisement of the state we are now signed up in a ‘cyber security’ zoom to assess the vulnerability of the villages water system,
- Add a gallon of coolant to the water plant generator. It takes about a gallon a month while we wait for funding for a new one.
- A couple dropped communication Alarms from Mission, there working on things on their end, none had to be responded to
- Tim has been working on painting the exterior of meter houses #1 and #3 in Katy Winn mobile home park. Tim feels this will get the buildings through 2-3 more years, suggests within 3 years maybe put in the budget and have them vinyl sided.
- Water loss for September was 9 %

10. Electric/General Report and Any Action Items

Erik read the report submitted by Nate Brigham:

Electric Dept. –

Hyde Park Mutual Aid – 16hrs broken pole on grimes Rd and bad service at the Opera house and billed out

Outage for St Johns Knoll for transferring lines to new poles, 2.5hrs 21 customers

Reinstalled service to 320 Sinclair Rd

Installed cover up at 441 Clayhill Rd and Katywin pump house 3

Installed new panel for JFY regulator having problems with programming it, working with Manufacturer.

Control panels on the R2 and R3 Breakers at the substation are have programming issues, working with manufacturer.

Brush hogging/trimming under power lines

Connected up new service at 188 Lower Mian St east

Installed new Transformer at 665 Railroad St

Cut trees at 552 Railroad St

Completed line transfers on 100C and turned job over to cable and telephone companies

Paved at the Woolin Mills finishing up that job and trued up

Worked on Chipper replaced alternator and battery

New Shop steel arrived

Attended meeting for the rip-rap job behind the Union Bank

Attended meeting for Jewett property

Attended bi-weekly meetings for Shop

Completed monthly meter reading, high/low checks, substation check, and dig safes

Water/Sewer -

Lucas and Matt did the hydrant flushing and fall pump downs

Paved between the Village/Town garages where we installed two water shutoffs

Sewer main blockage at Main St bridge syphon camber

General Dept. –

Meet with VLTC for Village builds

Relace a small section of sidewalk on School St

Changed out banners to the fall banners

Town sidewalk repair completed on Railroad St, Main St, and School St

Prepped Lower storage building for Town to move equipment in

Safety –

Send Bucket Trk and Digger Trk out for service and inspection

Jeff is finished his CDL course online through the State signed up for TPR to record driving times so he can take the driving test

Matt went to his apprenticeship class

Ken asked what happened with the old bucket truck. Erik said it was sold to Mark Lehouillier for \$13K. Ken asked if the money will be put towards the bond. Erik said he thinks so. He will check with Rosemary.

11. Fire Department Report and Any Action Items

Erik read the report submitted by Fire Chief Arjay West:

Johnson Fire Department Report

Aug. 29 – Sept. 25, 2025

JFD responded to 9 calls. 6 calls occurred during the daytime (6 am - 6 pm) and 3 calls occurred during the nighttime (6 pm - 6 am.) The average duration was: 101 minutes

Nature:

Those calls were: 2 – automatic alarms, 2 – wilderness rescue, 3 – vehicle crashes, 1 – hazardous materials, and 1 – other (unpermitted burn – assist Fire Warden)

Staff:

The average number of firefighters that responded was: 11
Total hours of service was: 155

Other:

We have had discussion about developing procedural guidelines for the Village Community Warning Siren, which includes ideas for quarterly testing and methods by which information can be made available for the public. This has spotlighted the need to clearly identify several topics: authority (Town Emergency Management vs Fire Department Command), distribution of public information after a signal (in my opinion the most important factor to prevent confusion and ensure the correct Emergency statement/information is made available). There is significant work remaining.

Ken said he will talk to Eben Patch about this. He doesn't think Eben will have an issue with the village trustee board chair having authority. Will said it is important for everyone within range of the siren to know where they can go for more information. Ken suggested that we work on permissions and direction and then address the final part in a joint meeting to get agreement from all parties. Erik said one issue is how people will access information when they hear the siren without electricity or internet. Will said it is important for people to know about testing and who not to call when they hear the siren (e.g. 911 or the fire station.)

12. Village of Johnson Director to Lamoille County Planning Commission

Ken said Steve Hatfield said he would stay on as the village representative for a year.

13. New Village Personnel Policy Discussion

BJ said the selectboard had a meeting and voted to have their own personnel policy. He thinks it would be good to have Erik move forward with updating the policy we have and customizing it for the village. Ken suggested that Erik come up with a suggested revised version, or possibly more than one version, of the policy to present to the board.

14. SecurShred

BJ asked if we are still paying for SecurShred to store our files or if we got them back. Ken asked Erik to look into that.

15. Emergency Phone

BJ said we talked about no longer paying for part of the emergency phone and asking the town if they wanted to pay 100%. Did we stop paying? Ken said he thought we agreed to share the cost 50-50 with the town. At a joint meeting he and Eben both stated that they wanted to keep the phone.

BJ said there could be a cheaper option, such as using a prepaid phone. Ken suggested we should start by verifying whether the town is going to pay half the cost. BJ said if they did say they would pay half, we should confirm that they are doing that.

16. Minutes on Website

BJ said unfortunately the old minutes were never transferred over to the new village site. Once the town's old website was gone, our minutes were gone. Donna Griffiths said she has copies of the old minutes. BJ suggested maybe we could pay Donna to upload old minutes. Ken asked Donna to give Erik a rough idea of how much her time would cost. He thinks we should go back only as far as the state requirement.

17. Other Business

Darrell said he keeps hearing that the village will take ownership of the water, sewer and electric lines in the industrial park. Why would we want that? Ken said we don't have to take ownership of them beyond our shutoff. Erik said the services would definitely be privately owned. If the municipality adopts the road and it becomes a public road, and if the water and sewer mains were put in according to specs, that would be when we would take over the mains. Darrell asked why the village would want to have future responsibility for those. Ken said it would add to the asset value of the water and sewer plant, which would help with loans. But we do not have to take those over. Will said he doesn't agree with taking over even the mains. Darrell said he wants to make sure that is something the board votes on. Ken said he thinks the only thing we would willingly take over would be the power lines.

18. Executive Session

Will moved to enter executive session as allowed by 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) for evaluation of a public officer or employee, Darrell seconded and the motion was passed at 8:33.

The board came out of executive session at 9:18.

19. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:18.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths