

JOHNSON VILLAGE TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2025

Present:

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

Others: Erik Bailey, Rosemary Audibert, Tasha Wallis, GiGi Beach, Carri Ferrari

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. Call to Order

Ken called the meeting to order at 6:02.

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

BJ noted that the date on the agenda was incorrect. It should be November 10.

3. The Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge was recited.

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

Ken added discussion of a meeting with the selectboard chair.

5. Review and Approve Minutes of Trustee Meetings

Will moved to approve the minutes of October 15, 2025, Darrell seconded and the motion was passed.

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

Rosemary said for the electric department the total of all the labor accounts up to the end of October was 81% of budget. Ten months into the year we should be at 83.33%, so we are very close. For purchased power she thinks we will be over budget by about \$125K for the year. Erik said we haven't used more power, but there have been changes to the REC rules and the cost of power has gone up. Will asked, with these trends, are we looking at a rate increase? Erik said yes. He tried to get one this year but VPPSA said we didn't have the numbers for it. Will asked if the \$125K over budget amount is the estimated year end amount or the current amount. Erik said the estimated year end amount. Rosemary said overall expenditures through the end of October are almost 72%, which is below budget. Will asked what the total power purchase amount is so far. Rosemary said it was \$86K in September. Erik said we don't have the October bill yet. Rosemary said she just estimated \$100K for each month. Some months have been over that and some have been under. Ken asked how many extra kWh that is. Erik said he doesn't know, but he doesn't think usage is the driver. Ellis asked where our rates are compared to other municipal electric utilities. Erik said we are about in the middle.

Rosemary said we received \$116K today for part of the MERP grant. She doesn't think we need to borrow any money until at least next month. Waterville paid their fire contract. Water sales are at 84% of budget and sewer sales are also at almost 84%.

Will asked if the rate for the power we are buying varies depending on the amount of the purchase. Erik said yes.

BJ asked that money in our accounts be put into the highest yield accounts that are available. Erik said accounts with higher yields have less access, so we can't put all the funds in high yield accounts. Rosemary said she can look at some 3 month CDs. The board agreed that she should find out what higher yield short term accounts she can put money into.

Rosemary said SecurShred is supposed to bring back our files on Thursday. They have about 70 boxes they have been storing. Some will go back into the vault and some in filing cabinets.

Ken asked Rosemary to look at the budget and try to find some areas where we could find cost savings.

7. *LCPC Reviews New Land Use Maps*

Tasha Wallis of the Lamoille County Planning Commission (LCPC) handed out copies of the land use map LCPC has been working on. As part of Act 181, LCPC is required to update the land use map for their regional plan. They have visited Lamoille County communities and the map has been built around what communities wanted. They made some changes to the map based on previous input from the trustees. It includes areas the village previously wanted added to the village designation. Tasha described the different land use categories shown on the map. Will asked what the Transition Infill area is. Tasha said that is an area outside the core of the village center where Johnson is likely to grow. Additional housing may be developed there. In communities like Johnson where a lot of the downtown is in the floodplain, there are more opportunities to grow outside the floodplain with a larger Transition Infill area. Board members had no issues with the map as presented.

8. *Discuss Warrants & Financials Being Sent to Trustees the Friday Prior to the Meeting*

Ken said BJ had talked to him about not having enough time to review warrants and financials at meetings. But it is a large amount of information to send out. He asked if BJ would be able to come into the office before the meeting to review the information. BJ said yes, he can do that either before or after the meeting.

9. *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 frame is all built and the wall panels are going up quickly!

Ken asked, there have been no extensions given, correct? Erik said there was an extension. Ken asked why. Erik said he needs to look into that. Ken said he personally does not want to see any extensions given without penalties. Who gave the extension? Erik said either Pia or Alec. Ken said neither one has that authority. The board didn't sign off its executive power to anyone. After Erik checks on that, the whole board needs to know in an email what he learns. Darrell asked how long the extension is. Erik said they were talking about a month and a half extension, until mid-February. He could understand giving a 2-week extension because there was an engineering snafu that was not the contractor's fault.

DR4720 FEMA WWTF Project Update:

The FEMA CRC has accepted the refined A&E document from Aldrich & Elliott and expects to have an answer for us by the end of the month or sooner.

WTF Generator Update:

I wrote the grant application for the SCRP Tier 2, part 2 grant and filed it prior to the deadline. Now we wait for approval. We are prepared to move as soon as we get the OK from the Bond Bank.

Village of Hyde Park Electric Department is under new management and has paid what they owe us. We have resumed being available for emergency assistance.

I looked into the status of the EOC cell phone and confirmed that the Town is indeed paying half of the bill.

R2 Breaker update:

Nate and Dave, the substation tech, have been working with the manufacturer to rectify the programming issues with the R2 breaker. They worked on it last weekend and more today. They finished it and it is online and working good.

I will be on vacation December 9th through the 12th. Tomorrow the offices will be closed to honor Veteran's Day.

10. 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 were submitted to the State
- We hauled 80 thousand gallons of sludge to Morrisville for processing in October
- Monthly Composite testing completed
- Mowed and trimmed all pump stations and plants for the last time this season
- Luke assisted Village Crew and Manosh using Vactor truck to pressure wash and clean out Lift Stations at Highland Heights-River Road West- and East Johnson, and wastewater plant wet well, Manosh will be back in November for catch basins and main Street Sewer Mains
- Received New tank of calibration gas for gas meters, which gives us 2 new gas meters replaced from the flood one for the Wastewater plant and one for the village crew. Inventoried and tested all confined space equipment on sight
- Tim worked with Teledyne / Isco on replacement touch pad for the New Effluent Sampler that was acquired after the flood. It was 9 days out of warranty but worked with them on covering it, saving the village \$1200.00
- Tim and Dan had a Zoom meeting Per the state of Vermont Request from Sanitary Survey with Micheal Hitchco from General Dynamics info and Technology Division to discuss Cyber Security for the Village water System, a Form was given to us to fill out after in which we will submit to them for further suggestions.

2. Operational status of Water Plant and Callouts

- Monthly reports were submitted to the state.
- Coliform samples were negative
- Lucas Completed Hydrant painting
- Pratt and smith Electrical Contractors replaced Dehumidifier at the water plant
- We relocated pressure switches at Katy Winn meter house #1 they were getting a false reading after the rework we did last fall; we relocated them further from the pumps which cured the problem.
- Add a gallon of coolant to the water plant generator. Block heater on the generator appears to be running all the time probably due to a bad temp sensor, after talking with Nate and Erik and knowing cooler weather was coming we decided to monitor it

daily and try to get by until approval comes from bond Bank for the Propane install for the new Generator which has been submitted by Erik

- Luke assisted the Village crew with fall hydrant flushing and pumping out of Hydrants for cold weather
- Exterior of Meter house #3 has been completed if we get a block of weather in November, we will Purchase more stain and finish #1 Meter house #2 was done 2 years ago and does not need to be done
- Water loss for October was 9%.

11. Electric/General Report and Any Action Items

Erik read the report submitted by Nate Brigham:

Electric Dept. –

Installed new pad mount transformer at 1111 Sinclair Rd, trued up and sent out

Outage on Gould Hill Rd to transfer poles #114 and #117. Out for 2.5hrs 21 customers affected

Control panels on the R2 and R3 Breakers at the substation are being programed and should be online by Nov 10th

JFY regulator has some bugs to be worked out to be fully operational. Village crews are shifting load onto the regulated phase to help with the balancing the solar array

Outage at 13 Log Cabin Cove. 5 customers out for 25 mins

GW Tatros dug the conduit for the electric at the new Library on School St

Removed electric service for buy out at 379 and 385 Lower Main West

Changed out transformer at 289 Wescom Rd

Brush hogging/trimming under power lines

New Shop started to get pit up

Attended meeting for Johnson flood mitigation with State and LCPC

Attended bi-weekly meetings for Shop

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

Water/Sewer -

Manosh cleaned pump stations, Rivere Road West, East Johnson and, East Highland

GW Tatros dug and tapped water main and installed sewer line to the new Library on School St

Shut off water and pulled meter 295 Wescom Rd

General Dept. –

Got plows, sander, and blower ready for winter

Installed light bar on little bobcat

Changed out bulbs on Snowflakes

Hung banner for Jubilee

Changed flags out on Green

Safety –

NEPPA safety training on 10-22 was on CPR/ First Aid and AED

Jeff is finished his CDL course online through the State signed up for TPR to record
Having issues scheduling Driving Test with DMV

Erik said the DMV is not finding data for the school Jeff went to. They need to be educated on this CDL course. Erik thinks it is new. BJ said it might be easier for Jeff to take a short course that teaches the walkthrough, which is hard to learn online. There are courses that last a few days and let you use their equipment during the course and when you go to the DMV. It might be something to look into if Jeff needs it.

Ken asked, if we removed electrical services at buyout properties, are we part of the reimbursement process? Erik said the state will pay for it.

Ken asked if the town got the sewer and water capped at the old library location. Erik said he will check. The state will pay for that as part of the grant.

12. Fire Department Report and Any Action Items

Erik read the report submitted by Fire Chief Arjay West:

Johnson Fire Department Report

Sept. 26 – Oct. 30, 2025

JFD responded to 10 calls. 8 calls occurred during the daytime (6 am - 6 pm) and 2 calls occurred during the nighttime (6 pm - 6 am.) The average duration was: 70 minutes

Nature:

Those calls were: 2 – automatic alarms, 2 – wildland fires, 3 – vehicle crashes, 1 – hazardous materials, and 1 – medical assist

Staff:

The average number of firefighters that responded was: 12

Total hours of service was: 148

Other:

We provided Fire Safety materials to Johnson, and Waterville/Belvidere schools.

We participated in a joint training with Cambridge Fire Department centered on expanding knowledge and technical information about fire suppression components of the Smugglers' Notch complex.

We participated at the annual Trunk or Treat event hosted by the Lamoille Valley Church of the Nazarene.

Ken said he spoke to Eben Patch about the siren protocol. They agreed that Ken can work with the fire department to come up with a plan to send out information before the siren goes off. They agreed that during an emergency when the EOC is in charge, the siren will not be activated unless the emergency management director and the chair of the village trustees both agree to it. At other times, the trustees can decide to activate it.

Will said he thinks information resources for emergencies should be on the village and town websites. Ken agreed. Will said he thinks there should be more than one person in charge of putting information on the website, Facebook, etc. so there are no issues if one person is on vacation.

Ken said he will meet with the officers and chief and come up with a letter and then the board can approve it and it will be put into the emergency plan. He will work with Erik and then go to the chief.

13. Discuss Holiday Lights

Ken said putting up holiday lights got expensive in the past and the board felt we had to cut back. It took more time than we wanted.

Carri Ferrari said she thinks there could be efficiency improvements. When the garland came down the second time, better efficiencies were discovered. GiGi Beach said this year there will be no garland, just lights. That should make a huge time difference.

BJ asked if the lights can stay up for a few years instead of being taken down after the season. Carri said yes, but the previous lights were up for almost 2 years and apparently they trapped salt and road dust and left a ring. Ken said it was just a little etch caused by the lights moving.

Erik said we budgeted for 2 men to spend 2 days putting up the lights. GiGi and Carri said in the past lights have been on 22 poles. Ken said he doesn't see us being able to do that many this year.

Will asked if these lights will go up and stay up. GiGi said yes, until they don't work.

The board agreed that the crew should put up as many lights as they can in 2 days.

GiGi asked if the lights can be put up at the same time as the snowflakes, for greater efficiency. Erik said he can talk to Nate and get an estimate of how long it would take to do just the snowflakes and then that time can be added on to the 2 days allotted for the lights and they can all be done at once.

Carri said the community loves lights. If it becomes a money issue, she would be happy to brainstorm on a fundraiser.

14. Discuss and Act On Employee Holiday Party Budget

Erik said the selectboard has not yet taken any action on funding the employee holiday party. The year before last, the town and village together spent \$650 and last year it was reduced to \$600, but prices have gone up. Ken moved and BJ seconded to spend \$400 for the employee holiday party if the town also agrees to spend \$400. Will suggested it would be better for the motion to approve spending whatever amount the town votes to spend, up to \$400. The motion failed unanimously.

Will moved to authorize spending \$400 or the amount the town approves, whichever is less, for the employee holiday party, BJ seconded and the motion was passed with Will opposed.

15. Discuss Parameters and Overhead of DOE Grid Resilience Grant

Erik said when the grant period is finished, we have to pay the Department of Energy back for the remaining value of equipment purchased. Diesel equipment doesn't lose a lot of value over 3 years. The cost of the machine we purchase would be about \$140K, including attachments, and we would probably need to pay back about \$112K after 3 years. We applied for a 3-year grant, not knowing about this requirement, but it is not too late to adjust it to 6 years. After 6 years we would probably owe about \$91K. Or we could give DOE the machine instead. Ken said we will have to file monthly reports during the period of the grant. Erik said that will probably take about an hour and a half to an hour and 45 minutes each time. Erik said 6 years is the maximum grant period we can request. The grant also includes \$60-70K of contracted line clearing.

Will asked if the excavator we buy will belong to the village or to the electric department. Erik said it will belong to the electric department but the water/sewer department can use it.

Will suggested we could set aside money each year for 6 years to pay for it at the end or to help buy another machine if we decide not to keep it.

The board agreed that Erik should look into what is involved with changing the grant period to 6 years. If there is no chance of that causing us to lose the grant, he should change to 6 years. If there is a risk, we should stay with 3 years.

16. Village Employee COLA Adjustment/Health Insurance Benefits for 2026

Ken said the COLA increase is 3.5 %. The trustees and the selectboard pre-approved that last year. Erik said health insurance costs will increase 4.4%. Our increase over last year is \$6400 but the cost is still \$3300 less than the year before last because we have fewer employees and an additional person opting out of our health insurance. Erik showed the board some cost information.

Ken moved to approve a 3.5% increase in pay and a 4.4% increase in insurance for employees, contingent on the town agreeing to those increases, BJ seconded and the motion was passed with Will opposed.

17. Review and Possibly Edit the VM Official Vehicle Use Policy

Ken said he and BJ came up with a proposed new village manager vehicle use policy. Erik printed out copies of it.

18. Discuss and Possibly Act on Paying to Restore Minutes to Website

The board agreed Donna Griffiths should be paid to upload copies of minutes she has to the website. There are about 12 years of minutes and she estimates it will take about half an hour per year at \$22/hr. Ken said digital copies should also be kept in the vault and Donna is authorized to buy an SD card to put them on.

19. Discussion of Meeting with Selectboard Chair

Ken said he and BJ met with Eben Patch to discuss plans for the treasurer and clerk positions. The town is moving forward with having its own treasurer and clerk and no employees with shared town/village duties. Erik will start coming up with a plan for whether we need a treasurer and an assistant treasurer or if a single person will be enough. We need to budget for a new person to work with Rosemary for 3-4 weeks. Susan Tinker is not interested in being the village treasurer. It was discussed that maybe the village could pay the town clerk to serve as the village clerk for elections.

20. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths