

JOHNSON VILLAGE TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MONDAY, APRIL 8, 2013

Present:

Trustees: Gordon Smith, George Pearlman, Ellis O’Hear, Walter Pomroy

Others: Duncan Hastings (Manager), Rosemary Audibert (Clerk), Steve Towne, Tom Elwood, Brad Moore

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. Call to Order

Gordon called the meeting to order at 4:05.

2. Treasurer’s Report & Review and Approve Bills and Warrants

Walter noted that general operations and maintenance is already at 50% of budget. Steve said there hasn’t been much electric work, so his crew have been booking more of their time to general, for things like cleanup or truck and trailer work. Duncan asked why not book pro-rated amounts to general and to water and sewer for cleaning around the building, working on equipment, etc? Steve said he can charge some of the shop time to electric instead of putting it all under general. Steve said all of our trucks were tested and there was an issue with the boom on the electric truck. This treasurer’s report includes the cost for that and also 3 months’ worth of payroll.

Rosemary said Belvidere and Waterville both paid the additional cost for fire department insurance. Johnson State College has paid for Lea’s position but not yet for the fire department for last year.

Walter moved to authorize Gordy to sign a placement of lien on Lloyd and Ginger Bedell’s property and the motion was seconded and passed.

Mark Cattelona called and said he and Rick Jewett are not interested in a lease. They will tear their cabin down this summer. The board agreed that Duncan should send a letter accepting his decision and giving him a deadline of the end of August for removing the cabin.

3. Review and Approve Minutes

The March 11 minutes mistakenly listed Duncan as being present for the executive session.

Walter moved to approve the minutes of March 11, 2013 with that error corrected, Ellis seconded, and the motion was passed.

4. Wastewater Treatment Facility & Water System Operator’s Report

Tom said Brent from the VT Rural Water Association was here today to listen to the two leaks on Main St. One is 20-25 gallons a minute and has come to the surface. We will dig to find it as soon as the frost is out of the ground. In the first week of March a volume of something came through that took the air out of the water at the wastewater plant. This seems to happen when the JSC students come back from vacation. Steve said both the Main St. leak locations are in areas that were part of the Main St. project. Duncan said the section of pipe along Route 15 from 100C to where the pipe goes over to Katy-Win is old 4-inch cast iron pipe with bolts that are almost rusted through.

Tom said a sewer backed up several times recently at the Studio Center. He went out there to provide access to the manhole. George said Hartigan couldn't get past one spot in the courtyard. Apparently a pipe was hit and part of it was replaced during construction. He thinks there has been a problem since then. Right now the Studio Center is bypassing the main pipe coming out of the Red Mill building and dumping into the sewer manhole. There is also a discharge report by a footing of the bridge right across from this area. George thinks it is leaching down. Once the frost is gone they will have to dig to find the problem.

Steve said he talked with Hartigan both times they came out to the Studio Center and they said there was a lot of grease in the lines. They said the grease trap was undersized. George said they have another grease trap to put in. Steve and Tom talked about the need to find out whether businesses in Johnson have appropriate grease traps and to educate business owners about how grease in the water lines affects all rate payers.

Steve asked the board to approve paying Hartigan \$5500 for 5 days of line jetting. **Walter moved to approve paying Hartigan \$5500 for line jetting, George seconded and the motion was passed.** (Tom left at 4:47.)

5. ***Public Works Superintendent Report***

Steve said VTel has sent a revised Pole License Agreement but it is still incorrect. They are planning to dig up parts of Main St. and he thinks some of Pearl St. They have not yet applied for the Right of Way permits.

A little tree trimming is going on now. Street sweeping hasn't started yet. Truck testing is done. The maintenance line work at JSC has been completed. Howard Romero is hoping the Village can help with the power supply at Legion Field for Tuesday Night Live. Steve recommends that the board authorize the Village to purchase all the conductor and conduit through our vendors as it will reduce cost. It should cost about \$300. We can help oversee the installation as well. Duncan said the Town can pay for it. The board agreed to Steve's recommendation.

Steve has a quote for \$1000 to have some repairs done to the 1-ton pickup body, which is rusted. The board agreed it would be all right to spend the money. Cliff got an estimate for body work and detailing on the rocker panels for the Chevy pickup, which is also rusted. Steve will get more information before asking for board approval.

Steve described his plans for setting a new service pole by Legion Field.

Duncan and Steve said we need a new line striper. Walter asked if we can contract out line painting. Steve said yes. Gordy asked for a cost comparison for next month of contracting the work out vs. buying a unit and putting general labor into line painting. Duncan stated that he had asked the Town to share the cost of a new line striper last year and had not gotten a firm answer. He would like to ask them again, as the town owns half of the municipal parking lot and actually owns all the streets that the Village paints crosswalks on.

6. ***Brad Moore Excess Water Use Application***

Brad explained that one of his tenants had a toilet running upstairs. He fixed it 2 days ago, so some of the excess usage will appear on his next bill also. Brad did not have a completed

application prepared. Walter moved to table Brad Moore's request for an excess water usage adjustment until he provides a complete application and the board gets further information on all the charges and to suspend interest and late fees until that time, seconded by George, and the motion was passed. Brad said he will pay as much as he normally does for this month. The board agreed that will be fine; adjustments can be made next month. *(Brad left at 5:11.)*

7. **Manager's Report**

We have a contract to purchase power from NextEra Energy Power Marketing through VPPSA for January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2022.

There is proposed state legislation that would affect disconnects for water and sewer. It was originally proposed to implement the same disconnect rules as for electricity when a tenant was involved. What came out of the senate is not as bad as that. It would require us to notify the tenant and allow the tenant to pay the bill going forward to prevent disconnect. Duncan thinks we could live with it. It hasn't passed the house yet.

The Village loan to Mike Comeau required him to have \$1 million in insurance, but he was only able to get \$500K from NFIP. CDBG has agreed that he can proceed with NFIP coverage alone. **George moved to eliminate the requirement for Mike Comeau to get an additional \$500K insurance as a condition for the Village loan, seconded by Walter.** Duncan said he had suggested that Mike could put aside in an escrow account the \$3K per year he would have paid for the insurance. Mike was open to the idea, but he had just discovered that he will need to pay an additional amount to replace the refrigeration equipment, so his willingness will depend on that cost. **The motion was passed.** Walter said he doesn't think \$3K a year is enough to be important so it is not worth asking him again about putting the money away.

Mary Sladyk sent a letter regarding her excess water adjustment request. She included an invoice for repair and stated that the water did not go into the sewer. **Walter moved to adjust Mary Sladyk's water bill to not less than 3 times the average of her last 3 bills and to adjust her sewer bill to the average of the last 3 bills, George seconded, and the motion was passed.**

Duncan said the deed for the 200 acres the Town and Village own together refers to a VELCO easement. Duncan investigated and learned that the easement was never executed so it is not in effect.

We have been awarded a 2013 PACIF Scholarship Award of up to \$1,575 for 7 employees to attend the Utilities plus Construction Outreach Program training. Cliff, Nate, and Tim will take the training. Duncan, Steve Towne, Tom, and Steve Edgerly have already taken the training, which Duncan thinks was very intensive and good.

We were part of a state study on stormwater outfall water testing and the results we got back showed two issues. One was a chlorine residual in the outfall of the state system on Route 15 (probably due to hydrant flushing when they sampled.) The other is an outfall by the Pearl St. Bridge that may be a drain from VSC. Steve thinks that outfall had soapsuds in it. It could be migrating from the break in the line that George discussed.

The Public Service Board published its rules about the new Standard Offer program and they set aside a certain number of mW as a “provider block” (for utilities.) This could be an opportunity for us to build a solar installation and get a guaranteed high price for the output for 25 years. The 11-acre Osgood meadow well site seems like a possible location. The Osgoods have an approval clause built into the deed for any structures not used for the water system. The board agreed that Duncan should ask the Osgoods if they would give approval for a solar installation.

It is time for LEDC membership renewal. LEDC is looking for a \$250 contribution from the W&L Dept. Walter asked if LEDC is helping with the grocery store. Duncan said they are loaning \$50K to Mike Comeau and he thinks last year they loaned money to the Town to do the study for the industrial park. **Walter moved that the Village contribute \$250 from Water & Light for our LEDC membership renewal, George seconded, and the motion was passed.**

LCPC did a preliminary review of the draft Village Plan to see if it could receive regional approval. They have a checklist for meeting all the elements of a plan as required by statute and a separate checklist for meeting all the goals of Act 200 planning. Duncan thinks that is inappropriate because the goals of Act 200 were not meant to be used that way. Duncan and Lea found the checklist review disappointing. LCPC was going to recommend that the Village Plan not be approved by the Regional Planning Commission. Lea and Duncan met with the Regional Planning Commission. Duncan asked them to show him where it is in statute that they can deny approval based on these criteria. The Planning Commission will discuss whether to incorporate staff recommendations for changes. Once they adopt the plan it will be sent to the trustees; then the trustees will have to have a public hearing and adopt it. Then it will be up to the Village to seek regional approval if we want to. If the plan were not regionally approved it would mean less access to certain grant dollars. Duncan recommends getting our plan adopted then dealing with this issue in front of the whole Regional Planning Commission.

The Town has submitted a water and sewer application for the trailhead building. Duncan met with Arjay West today. They are working to file the state waste water permit. **Walter moved that the Village waive fees for water and sewer connection at the Rail Trail trailhead building, George seconded, and the motion was passed.**

There may be a dry hydrant program application. Duncan has talked to Arjay about it but it is not certain at this point.

Duncan issued Final Connection approval for a waste water permit to Barbara Burmeister.

Robert & Sons said they are willing to contract for mowing for the same price again this year. They said they could mow the green strips on Main St. for an additional \$300. Duncan pointed out that once we decide to mow those strips it will be hard to change if the price doesn't stay that low in the future. Walter asked, what about people on other streets? Gordy said the Main St. project, which not all wanted, created these spaces. He thinks we should

take care of them. Duncan said there were green spaces before which people had to take care of. Gordy said he thinks if people have to care for the spaces themselves we will end up with different surfaces. Some will put down bark mulch or gravel. Duncan suggested it might be better to take separate the issue of extending the contract and adding mowing the green spaces.

George moved to contract with Robert & Sons for mowing at the same price as last year, Walter seconded, and the motion was passed.

George moved to contract with Robert & Sons for \$300 to maintain the green spaces between the sidewalk and the curb that were affected by the Main St. project, Gordy seconded, and the motion was passed with Walter opposed.

8. *Review of School Street Project Plans*

Lea reviewed what is proposed for the School St. project. In front of the school the drop-off area is proposed to be enlarged and the sidewalk extended to the College Hill intersection. One concern of the school board is that if the sidewalk is extended to the intersection it will prevent cars from pulling over and parking at the side of the road and people who are unable to pull over will stop traffic. Lea said she never sees anyone park in the road or the dirt strip next to the road, but she would like to watch in the mornings for a week to document what actually happens. Another concern of the school board is that the sidewalk would be too close to the school yard. Our engineer says there will be an 8-ft. separation at one point, narrowing down to a 2-ft. separation. There will be some vertical drop from the playground to the sidewalk.

Some board members suggested that the board should reconsider the decision made at a previous meeting to put the new sidewalk on the East side of College Hill instead of on the West side of College Hill. Lea stated that she thinks it would be harder to get the School Board agreement on the overall project if that decision is re-considered. The general consensus was that the sidewalk on the West side of College Hill makes much more sense. The Trustees felt this was worth re-visiting and to discuss with the Selectboard, as they own and maintain the highway. Duncan said even if the drop-off area were made smaller than what is proposed, part of the project would still be out of the highway right-of-way and we would still need an easement from the school board to proceed, so coming to an agreement will be important.

Lea said she wants to set up an onsite meeting with the school board to discuss the project, but wanted to discuss it with the trustees first. She thinks it will be easier to come to an agreement with the school board if we do not propose putting the sidewalk on the West side of College Hill. Several board members pointed out that college students currently cut through school property, which does not seem to contribute to safety and probably will continue to do so no matter where the sidewalk is. Lea said if the sidewalk is put on the West side of College Hill either the playground fence will have to be moved, or the road moved to the East. .

George suggested that the trustees try to meet at the site with selectboard members and someone from the college to discuss the project. Duncan said he would try to set up that

meeting. Lea said VTrans said that in extreme cases they may request a payback of grant funds if a project is not proceeding but they are not considering that now.

Gordy asked if it is feasible to move the sidewalk further from the school if it is on the same side as the school. Lea said yes. A rough cost for moving the road to make that possible is \$10K.

9. *Manager's Report (continued)*

Steve and Duncan have been meeting with George Lague about an electric system voltage conversion and T&D study. Our existing contract with Fairpoint has an out of date figure for the cost of setting a pole. We may need to look at amending our operating agreement with Fairpoint to use an up to date figure, then determine which poles are out of compliance to determine Comcast's or others' share of the make-ready work. George Lague will assist with developing a plan that would detail the sections of the system that would require contractor assistance. Duncan said savings won't pay the cost of line conversion, but line conversion will improve the reliability of the system. He also stated that system conversion was something that was identified in the 1996 System Study, is something the DPS and PSB has been pushing for, and was identified as a major goal in our application to upgrade the substation. We will have to bond for it if we decide to do it. Duncan sees the conversion as a several-year process. Steve said it depends on how much of the work we contract out. It could be done in a year if we contracted it all out. The board is comfortable with hiring George Lague for work not to exceed 40 hours.

Steve and Duncan recently toured the Lowell Mtn. wind project. Duncan was very impressed.

The board consented into executive session at 7:04 to discuss the Kingsbury legal issue, inviting Duncan to remain. George moved to come out of executive session at 7:20, Walter seconded, and the motion was passed.

10. *Adjourn*

Walter moved to adjourn at 7:20, George seconded, and the motion was passed.