

JOHNSON VILLAGE TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
MONDAY, AUGUST 13, 2012

**Present:**

Trustees: Gordon Smith, George Pearlman, Ellis O'Hear, Walter Pomroy, Chris Parker

Others: Duncan Hastings (Manager), Rosemary Audibert (Clerk), Steve Towne, Greg Stefanski

**Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.**

**1. *Call to Order***

Gordon called the meeting to order at 4:04.

**2. *Treasurer's Report / Review and Approve Bills and Warrants***

Duncan noted that we have already spent 96% of the amount budgeted for electricity for street lights. He doesn't understand why. Rosemary said she would have Susan double check the figure.

Steve mentioned a couple of incidents that resulted in unanticipated expenses: a plugged line at Harvey Trailer Park and a failed waterline at Katy-Win Trailer Park.

The board reviewed the spreadsheet Susan had sent out comparing this year's revenues to last year's. Duncan said water and sewer revenue are up, and electric is down. Only residential electric is above projections; all other electric revenue is below projections.

Rosemary said FairPoint has paid their tree trimming bill of \$18K.

Rosemary had 3 property tax bills for village property. She asked which department the payment should come from. **Walter moved to pay the village property tax bills from the general fund, George seconded, and the motion was passed.**

**Walter moved to pay the Courtland bill for the water project out of the CIG fund, George seconded, and the motion was passed.**

**3. *Review and Approve Minutes***

Duncan had submitted some requests for changes. The board agreed with all but one. Duncan also noted that under Treasurer's Report it should say that the last 6 months' electric revenue was at about 50% of budget, not up 50%. **Walter moved to approve the minutes as amended, George seconded, and the motion was passed.**

**4. *Public Works Superintendent Report***

SCADA work at the substation is scheduled for August 16. A substation bushing repair to the main sub transformer will be completed at the same time.

A safety meeting to review the APPA Safety Manual will be held August 15.

New entry doors at the municipal office have been installed.

There is a broken pole on Gould Hill Rd. We are waiting for FairPoint to set the pole so we can get service restored.

FEMA repair work has been completed except for rip-rap around the pole behind the Union Bank. This should be done in the next couple of days.

V-Tel is asking to use FairPoint's spare conduit, which would allow them to take another route and bring cable through the covered bridge to 100C instead of going up 100C from the intersection with Rte. 15. We have a pole guyed to a corner of the building that burned, but we can't make a decision about that pole until we know whether new poles will be set on that part of 100C.

A failed waterline at Katy-Win Trailer Park is being replaced. The estimated total for booster pump and waterline repair is \$2K.

A water leak at the sewer plant was repaired today. Another one on Railroad St. is still leaking. Tom's report shows loss of about 24%, but it will be fixed as soon as possible. The fire department recently used quite a bit of water also.

There appears to be a problem with trash getting into the sewer lift station at East Highland Drive in Harvey Trailer Park, plugging the pumps and discharge line. Last Friday/Saturday we had to call in Hartigan to free a blockage caused by a mop head. This isn't the first time this has happened. Steve is not sure where the trash could be getting in. It is possible that people are dumping things into a manhole.

The board agreed to invite Tim Percy to its next meeting to present him with the NEPPA Rodeo certificate he won. **Walter moved to buy Tim Percy a \$50 gift certificate from The Hub to recognize him for placing first in the NEPPA Rodeo, Chris seconded, and the motion was passed.**

Duncan said our wastewater treatment facility employees get \$60/week if they are on call. Our linemen get \$72.50 one week (when they are on call, in theory) and \$35 the next week (when they are not on call, in theory.) He pulled some information from VLCT files about on call pay in other municipalities. A lot of municipalities are paying a flat 8 hours of regular pay for weeks employees are on call. The lowest on call pay he found for electric workers was \$121/week. It is hard to find out what other municipalities pay water and sewer employees for being on call. Some don't have alarms, so they don't have on call pay.

**George moved to adjust on call pay for both water and sewer and electric department employees to \$10 per day, Walter seconded, and the motion was passed.**

**George moved to set the minimum number of hours an employee will be paid for a call to 3 for electric department calls and 2 for water and sewer calls, Chris seconded, and the motion was passed.** (G. Stefanski arrived at 5:09.)

The trustees agreed that these changes will be effective immediately.

**5. *Greg Stefanski to Discuss Main Street Celebration***

Greg said he had come on behalf of Johnson Works. They are planning a celebration of the completion of the Main Street project. On August 28, there will be a brief ceremony at the Village Green, followed by a walking parade from the Village Green to Legion Field, where Tuesday Night Live will take place. Lea Kilvadyova has put together a list of people who should be invited. The group wants to make sure they are not missing anyone. Duncan recommended inviting Senator Leahy ASAP. He is going to be meeting with people from Leahy's office soon and he can invite Leahy through them. If Leahy can't make this event, Duncan suggested the trustees might want to have another ceremony at a time when he can attend. Greg asked if Gordon could come to the ceremony to represent the village trustees. Gordon said he hopes all the trustees can be there, along with Duncan and Lea. Walter suggested inviting anyone who has ever been on the Main Street Committee.

Greg said they are trying to keep this a no cost or low cost event, but they do want to have some activities for kids and they have been talking about a raffle. He asked if the trustees have anything in the budget to contribute. **Walter moved that the village contribute \$200 to the August 28 celebration, to spent at the discretion of Johnson Works, George seconded, and the motion was passed.** Steve offered a donation of \$60. Greg thanked the trustees for their support of this event and thanked Duncan and Steve for their work and support on the solar array at Laraway. *(Greg Stefanski left.)*

**6. *Manager's Report***

Duncan said he has a walk-through scheduled with 2 members of Leahy's staff next week. Anyone who wants to can attend.

Duncan recommended that the board hire Donna Griffiths as board secretary. **Walter moved to hire Donna Griffiths as board secretary, Chris seconded, and the motion was passed.**

The board agreed to invite Mark Cattalona to the next meeting to discuss a lease for his camp, which is located on village property.

Ellis said Bert Nadeau recommends that we wait a while, perhaps 5 years, before doing any logging on village property. It is too early to get a profit from logging.

The board signed the amended collections policy that was approved at the last meeting.

Duncan said he has created a list of projects and activities he is working on. His plan is to share it with Gordon and Eric Osgood frequently. How often would this board like to see it? The board agreed they would like to see it quarterly. Board members suggested several items to add to the list.

Chris said he is disappointed that the area where water puddles outside his property will not be fixed. There was some discussion about what steps would have to be taken to fix it.

Duncan said VTrans told us it is our responsibility to barricade the on street parking spaces during Route 15 paving, which will likely happen at the end of the month or early next month. The board agreed with Duncan that it should not be the village's responsibility.

Duncan said he is still trying to find enough time to work on the Transmission Joint Ownership MW&L.

George had applied for a CIG Building Improvement Loan for The Studio Store, to clean up a code violation. He said he is looking for a short-term loan, maybe a year. He recused himself from the discussion about approving the loan. **Chris moved to approve the CIG Building Improvement Loan application for The Studio Store for the amount of \$5000 for a term of 2 years at the rate of prime minus 2%, with a minimum of half a percent. The motion was seconded and passed, with George abstaining.**

**Walter moved to enter executive session, with all present remaining, to discuss the issue of the unacceptable sidewalks. Chris seconded, the motion was passed, and the board entered executive session at 6:07.** The board came out of executive session at 6:28.

Duncan said besides the sidewalks, there is a couple page punch list of items that need to be completed on the Main Street project. Kingsbury is planning to bring in 18-20 people this coming weekend to try to complete most of the items.

Hot Tamale will not be moving into the Woody's building. Duncan said he had advised the Whittemores that they need to amend their water and wastewater permits, no matter who their tenant is, as they are out of compliance with state and village requirements, but they have not taken action to amend their permits. The board agreed that Duncan should issue a notice of violation, give them time to comply, then take legal action if necessary. Chris said he would speak to Rich Whittemore and let him know what we are planning to do.

Duncan said one punch list item is to look at the topsoil in areas where grass was planted and is not growing well and to reseed where necessary. Chris said some of the grass areas are being mowed and some are not. He said now that we've put the money into this project, we can back it up by taking care of the grass. Ellis asked if we can include the Main Street grass strips in the mowing our contractor does. Duncan said we could. However, Eric Osgood, who lives on Clay Hill Road and mows a grass strip, feels that if the village is going to mow the strips on Main Street, they ought to mow all the others. Eric suggests amending our ordinances to say that if homeowners do not mow their strips the village will do it and bill them. Duncan said it would probably more than double our current mowing bill to add the grass strips. Chris said he thinks we should keep this issue as a point of active discussion and we should think about how much nicer our streets would look if the village took care of the strips. Gordon said he doesn't want different types of surfaces on different strips. Steve said the areas planted with grass can't be plowed too early in the season, before the ground is frozen hard. It will also be hard to plow around all the objects that were put on Main Street, so there will be berms of snow this winter. The board agreed that is fine.

Duncan said he had asked USDA RD if there is additional funding to cover the overage on the Clay Hill Water Project. It appears that we will not be able to get additional funding. Gordon thanked the trustees for allowing another hydrant.

Kelly Ford would like the village to consider an adjustment on her water/sewer bill for her property on Route 100C. Due to the fire, the water was left running all night. Steve said he is trying to come up with internal guidelines for village employees who respond to fires. He wants to institute a guideline that power and water be shut off in any building that catches fire.

Kelly Ford has also requested a tax abatement hearing. The village trustees will be asked to participate in tax abatement hearings for her and for Pomerleau. Duncan explained that a tax abatement hearing is a formal process where if there is loss or destruction of property a taxpayer can request abatement and the Board of Abatement can abate in part or whole the tax due on the property for the current year only. The taxpayer must present evidence and there are specific criteria under which the board can abate taxes. By statute, the board of abatement for the village includes the village trustees, as well as others, including the auditor and any justices of the peace residing in the village. Both taxpayers are also requesting abatement from the town, but as several trustees are not available on the date set for the town abatement hearing, it appears that separate meetings will be needed. Duncan said he can try to put together some information for the trustees about roles and responsibilities of boards of abatement. Walter asked if we can just accept whatever the town does without a hearing. Rosemary said the board members do not have to be present; the process can be done in writing. Duncan said he will try to find out whether the taxpayers want to go to the village for an abatement hearing.

A new application is being submitted for the Regional Collaborative Trailer Mounted Vactor/Jetter Program, to try to reduce local share by 50%.

The Final Proof of Loss from flood damage on April 27, 2011 for the wastewater treatment facility has been submitted. This should complete the claim. We got what we should have.

CPG was issued for Laraway Youth and Family Services for a group net metering system. Duncan checked into standard offer possibilities. It doesn't look like that will happen any time soon, but the company that put in Laraway's system would be interested in putting in a net-metered solar array for our buildings. If we became our own net metering customer it would reduce the number of other potential net metering applicants we would have to accept because there is a kilowatt-hours cap. The company would install the system with no capital investment on our part. We would save 5 cents off the rate we would otherwise be paying. Duncan is not sure if it's worth it. Walter said we would be able to lock into a rate for 20 years, so there could be bigger savings 20 years from now. Duncan asked if he should pursue this idea. Walter said yes and no one disagreed.

Steve said Tom had a discharge into the river through the sewage plant on July 31. One of the SBR tanks was hit with a toxin that killed the microbes in the tank. Dissolved oxygen went down to the point where the process failed. We have tested since and everything is now fine. The Agency of Natural Resources is not going to fine us or put anything bad on Tom's record. It was just a one-day problem. Tom quickly responded and got the system back up and running. The sewage did go through UV disinfection before being released, but did not meet state criteria for Biochemical Oxygen Demand. We don't know what the toxin was or

where it came from. Steve thinks it would be a good idea to take 2 samples every time. We could send one in and keep the other for 5 days until we get results back. Then if there was a hit we could analyze the other sample to see what was in it. He also thinks we need to get a better handle on where trash is getting into the Harvey Trailer Park lift station. George suggested it would be worth checking with our insurance company to see if the Harvey's blockage is covered. Duncan said he can check on that.

7. ***Adjourn***

**Ellis moved to adjourn, Chris seconded, the motion was passed and the meeting adjourned at 7:24.**

*Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths*