

JOHNSON VILLAGE TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9/WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 11, 2013

**Present:**

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

Others: Duncan Hastings (Manager), Rosemary Audibert (Clerk), Steve Towne, Tom Elwood, Arjay West, Jim Watkins

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

**1. *Call to Order***

Gordy called the meeting to order at 4:01.

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

Budget status was reviewed. Rosemary said the Vermont Studio Center's CDBG grant has been completed and there will be a compliance check on October 3. Delinquent taxes are at 3.79%.

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

Duncan had suggested some edits to the August 8 minutes. In addition, it was noted that the date at the top was incorrect. **Walter moved to approve the minutes of August 8, 2013 as amended, George seconded, and the motion was passed.**

**4. *Wastewater Treatment Facility & Water System Operator's Report***

Tom said Walter had asked at the last meeting about the sludge disposal expense being high so he looked into it. The per-ton tipping fee went from \$55 to \$70. He called in a polymer expert who recommended a change in polymer to help reduce the amount of sludge we put out.

The waste water plant is running well, with good numbers. The water plant is running well, with a calculated water loss of -9%, which is not actually possible. Steve and Tom explained that there is a percentage of error on the reads, but the -9% figure means we are at just about zero losses. At one point we were over 50% with losses due to leaks. Duncan said anything below about 20% is good.

Steve Edgerley recently responded to a customer complaint about water taste and odor. He didn't find anything wrong with the water, but suggested that the homeowner, George Fisher, flush the line out. He offered a credit on flushing of 100 gallons, not realizing that he was not authorized to do that. Only the board can offer a credit. The bill has gone out without any credit. Duncan said a credit for 100 gallons would reduce the bill by only pennies. **Walter moved that if George Fisher complains about the lack of credit for flushing on his bill, Duncan and Rosemary have authorization to adjust the bill by 100 gallons, George seconded, and the motion was passed.**

Duncan said the Wescoms have hired an engineer who did a visual inspection at 620 Lower Main and determined that the leach field has failed and the occupant has intercepted the pipe from the septic tank to the leach field and diverted it into a brook. This is a serious violation. Duncan has asked ANR to take the lead on enforcement and they have agreed.

The boring contractor Steve and Duncan met with suggested, instead of putting in an 8-inch line to connect the Wescom property to our sewer system, putting in a 4-inch line and a 2-inch force main, or perhaps a slightly larger force main if we want to be able to connect other households in the future. Each unit to be connected would need its own septic tank and pump. Tom was a little worried about backflow prevention. Duncan thinks we should treat the new line under the road as an attachment to our sewer line and consider it a sewer lateral. It would be the property owners' responsibility to get the bore under the road; then the village would take responsibility for connecting to our manhole. Gordy asked, what if we need a connection for the industrial park in the future? Duncan said then it would be a capital cost of the industrial park. The ideal location for a connection to the industrial park would be in another spot anyway. Duncan said as a condition he would probably ask the Wescoms to size the pipe large enough to accommodate at least 6 houses. The engineer said 2 inches would be enough for at least 12 houses. Steve said backflow preventers will have to be accessible. Duncan would like to have as a condition of the permit that it is based on the ability to add other lines to it at some point in the future. **Walter moved to authorize preliminary capacity approval for connection to the village sewer system for the Wescom property at 620 Lower Main West, George seconded, and the motion was passed.**

Tom said he thinks he will flush lines in the first part of October. *(Tom left at 4:39.)*

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

Steve said Tom is hosting confined space safety training Wednesday morning at the wastewater plant. Steve hasn't done any more with the VTel balance and true up. The crew has been doing a lot of tree and brush trimming. They will be working on prepping the one ton truck for painting. That truck and the new pickup truck will get undercoating. We still have one day left of the planned five days of work from Hartigan. Tom doesn't have any place left that he feels needs sewer line cleaning so we may save \$1000 by not using the fifth day. The update of IOP agreements with FairPoint is still in process. Storm drainage work on upper French hill is scheduled to start next week. Fall banners have been installed. The crew has begun clearing the site for the Rail Trail trailhead building. The town will assist in the site prep for the foundation as well. A rental property owned by Rich and Nicole Whittemore was broken into and the whole water meter assembly was stolen, along with some copper pipe. After discussion with Duncan, Steve will be invoicing the Whittemores for replacement materials for the meter assembly.

Steve will be having back surgery in October. He will be in the hospital for about 5 days and will probably be out of work for about 3 weeks. During that time he will be able to do some work from home. He is not sure how soon he will be able to drive again. After he comes back, he is not sure he will still be able to do everything he does now – climbing poles, for instance.

The board agreed that over the winter Steve should try to figure out a recommended plan for replacing the brick crosswalks. Walter suggested color impregnated blacktop. Steve said he can look into that as one option. He can get pricing for various options.

**6. Arjay West to Discuss Fire Truck Committee**

Arjay said he is getting ready to form a committee to work on tanker replacement, in line with the capital truck plan, to take delivery in 2015. The committee will specify a truck that will meet the fire department's needs. At the trustees' annual meeting in April the fire department will be able to have a question and answer session for the public about the truck purchase. The truck will be paid for out of the capital budget. The committee will bring information to the fire officers, they will discuss it, and then Arjay will come to this board. Arjay would like to use any proceeds from sale of the truck coming out of service to help pay for the new truck.

Arjay would like board authorization to direct the committee to work with a single vendor rather than getting bids from multiple vendors. He would like the committee to work with the vendor of E-One trucks. That is the manufacturer that provided our last two engines. The department likes their product and we get great service from them. Their pricing for the last two trucks was in line with other vendors. His reservation about getting bids is that some vendors manipulate their bids to get a price advantage and it is hard for the fire department to be sure they are getting just what they need. If they can get the product they want within their budget, he would prefer not to have to request bids.

Walter asked if there are any legal issues with not requesting bids. Duncan said he doesn't believe so. The board doesn't have any specific policy on that. Ellis asked if there are any grants out there to help pay for a truck. Arjay said the grant we used in the past is still out there, but they don't seem to want to help us again since they already helped us once. He doesn't feel we have any other avenues to try. Duncan said it wouldn't hurt to put in an application. Arjay said he feels if we want to put energy into a grant it might be better to focus on small tools rather than a vehicle.

Arjay said if E-One can't provide what the fire department wants in a vehicle they will look at other vendors, but he doesn't want to be required to meet with others. Ellis suggested just getting some basic comparative information from other vendors and George and Walter agreed. They suggested talking to others who bought trucks recently. Ellis asked about the value of the old truck. Arjay said he thinks it is worth about \$20K and we would be lucky to get \$8-12K for it.

**Ellis moved to authorize the fire department to proceed with negotiating purchase of a new tanker through a single source, with information about the proposed purchase to be presented at the annual meeting, Chris seconded, and the motion was passed.** (Arjay left at 5:13.)

**7. Manager's Report**

Kyley Hill had excess water usage and may come in at some point to apply for a water bill adjustment.

The attorney reviewed the draft language for the agreement regarding VELCO financing of Transco Equity. Duncan will try to go to the VPPSA board meeting on Thursday where the issue will be discussed further.

Duncan had previously emailed board members the map and proposed easement language for the revised location of the Long Trail. The easement needs to have a couple of things added, e.g. the deed reference. **George moved to authorize Gordy to sign the Long Trail easement on behalf of the village, seconded by Chris.** Ellis said there had been discussion in the past about incorporating the snowmobile trail with part of the Long Trail. Does that have any effect on the easement? Duncan said the current easement is strictly for the Long Trail. The board agreed that Ellis can bring a proposal for a snowmobile trail easement at a later date. **The motion was passed with Walter abstaining.**

Walter mentioned that Mark Cattelona's camp has not been removed. Duncan said he thinks we indicated that if wasn't removed by a certain date we might remove it ourselves. He will review the letter that was sent out. Walter suggested maybe we should send a reminder letter. He said if the camp remains there it becomes a nuisance. Duncan agreed that it is an attractive nuisance.

Duncan has a meeting scheduled for next Friday with the Public Service Department regarding the Green Mountain Power and Morrisville Water & Light B-22 interconnection. Hardwick has recently increased their interest in doing the same thing and the Hardwick electric manager will sit in on the meeting. Duncan expects the buy-in to go smoothly except possibly for the question of how we will finance it. The biggest question is whether the Public Service Department will buy into our concept of how to finance. If they don't, it will be a little more complex for us. We will probably have to go out to bond.

Duncan notified VELCO that we are not interested in fiber to the sub at this time.

Solar installers are looking to install a 75kw array at JSC. They would be responsible for the cost of capital improvements to connect the array to the grid. He doesn't know if that would be financially feasible for them.

Primmer Piper Eggleston and Crammer have done an initial review of the VELCO equity assignment documents and had some recommendations for changes.

Sampling to check for contamination at the former Cyprus Industrial Minerals site will start work soon. The scope of work was pared down by the state. The total cost will be under \$20K and the village's share of the cost will be \$2500. Ellis asked if anyone has contacted VAST about this. Duncan said probably not, but VTrans knows about it. Steve said VTrans should talk to VAST.

The Memorandum of Understanding for the School St. project is still in progress.

Duncan said he has learned two things he didn't know when insurance options were discussed previously. One is that the Health Exchange is not offering a Medicare "carve out" plan. The board voted to offer a "cash in lieu of" payment for employees covered under another plan. That amounts to about \$298 per month, which should be enough to cover the cost of supplemental coverage under Medicare.

The other thing Duncan learned is that we don't have to offer insurance to part time employees who work less than 30 hrs a week. He has asked the two part time employees to evaluate whether they would be better off not being covered by the plans. So far it looks like there will be a small benefit to offering the insurance to them, as the board voted to do at the recent joint meeting.

Duncan suggested that for next year the board might want to consider making one change to its decision at the joint meeting. The vote was to offer the same contribution as we currently offer. It would make things easier administratively if the town/village contribution were equal to the premium of the Gold Plan. With the current contribution levels, a single person will be able to afford the Platinum Plan, while someone with family coverage can only afford the Gold Plan. If an employee picks a plan that is more than our contribution, they have to pay the difference. If they pick a plan that is less than our contribution, the difference can be rolled into a health savings account if they have a high-deductible plan. If they don't select a high-deductible plan we can set up health reimbursement accounts. That is a pool of money handled by a third party administrator. An employee can apply to the administrator for an amount of money up to the amount we put in for that person. It doesn't have to be used by the end of the year. If some money remains, we may not need to contribute as much the next year. A third alternative is to establish a flexible spending account. Duncan said he spoke with Eric Osgood today about making the town/village contribution equal to the premium for one of the categories, such as the Gold Plan. Eric didn't think we should make a change for this year.

The meeting on form based codes will be held at the school. If the trustees decide to hold a meeting after that meeting, the selectboard would like to be invited. The selectboard has voted to support a joint Municipal Planning Grant application with the village to fund work on form based code, pending a decision by the trustees to participate. The board agreed to meet at 7:00 on Wednesday to discuss whether to support the joint Municipal Planning Grant application.

George received a Commissioner Service award from NEPPA.

Town and village crews will be coordinating to install a new drainage system on Upper French Hill at the intersection with Railroad St./Lendway Lane. Work is scheduled for the week of Sept. 16.

We met with Ashley Lucht of the Water Supply Division and went through the required consultation for loan forgiveness. Duncan expects we will receive loan forgiveness in the amount of \$10K soon. Ellis asked if that will help our budget. Duncan said we haven't been paying on the loan up to now, but if we had to it would add to our budget.

Duncan distributed a proposed amendment to the artwork display agreement that was previously approved. One displayer believed the indemnification and hold harmless language made him fully responsible for liability, for instance if someone hurt themselves on artwork being displayed. Duncan checked into our coverage and he believes that if we word the document to indicate that the artwork is in our custody, control, and care then liability will be

transferred to our insurance carrier. Duncan had Doug Molde take a look at the language and he feels the amendment is more appropriately worded for our intent. The exhibitor who wouldn't sign the original agreement is okay with this language. **Walter moved to adopt the amended artwork display agreement as written, George seconded, and the motion was passed.**

The web based mapping system has been rolled out. Duncan can give the URL, username and password to anyone who wants to check it out. It will be view-only. Anyone will be able to get online and view all the map layers we have available. It will be handy for people doing title searches, etc.

**8. Adjourn**

**Ellis moved to adjourn the meeting until 7:00 p.m. on September 11, 2013, Chris seconded, and the motion was passed.**

**9. Call to Order, September 11**

Gordy reconvened the meeting to order at 7:02.

**10. Municipal Planning Grant Discussion and Action**

**Walter moved that the Village apply for a Municipal Planning Grant from the Vermont Dept. of Economic, Housing and Community Development for the purpose of form-based-code zoning, Chris seconded.**

Each trustee in turn stated their thoughts concerning the motion.

Eric Osgood explained that the Selectboard had passed a similar motion contingent on the Village Trustees passing the motion.

**The motion passed 3 to 2.**

**11. Adjourn**

**It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 7:20 and the motion was passed.**

*Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths (9/9) and Walter Pomroy (9/11)*