

JOHNSON VILLAGE TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
MONDAY, JANUARY 20, 2020

**Present:**

Trustees: Scott Meyer, Gordon Smith, Bob Sweetser, Phil Wilson

Others: Meredith Dolan, Rosemary Audibert

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

**1. *Call to Order***

Gordy called the meeting to order at 6:00.

**2. *Changes, Additions to Proposed Agenda***

Meredith added review of the merger study schedule and an additional personnel matter for executive session. The board signed warrants and the Waterville fire contract.

**3. *Policy on Pre-Employment Background Checks***

Gordy said he, Eric and Rosemary did interviews for the assistant clerk-treasurer position and they discussed doing a background check on whoever we hire, as the municipal office handles millions of dollars each year. Eric will bring this up to the selectboard. The recommendation is that whoever we hire would go through a pre-employment background check unless already employed here.

Phil asked, we don't currently do this for anyone? Meredith said she can't recall if a background check was done on her. She did a background check for one employee for whom it was hard to get many references.

Scott asked what they look at in a background check. Meredith said she thinks it includes criminal history, sex offender status and credit history. She thinks we can choose different options based on how much we want to pay. We may want to revisit this in the future and be more specific about what we will check for. She doesn't have language for the policy yet but she thinks the board could adopt this policy and later she could come back with more specific language. She would want our attorney to look at any language. We may want to talk about whether we want to require a drug test for certain positions. Phil suggested for some positions we might want to require a physical.

Meredith read suggested language for a motion that does not include an exemption for an existing employee. We could add that, or the board could vote to waive the background check on an individual basis for existing employees. Scott said he would be concerned about requiring a background check for an existing employee because it wasn't part of their employment when they were hired that they would have to go through that process. He also wonders if it will be a bargained issue with the union. Meredith said that depends on how they are treating the personnel policy language in the draft contract.

**Scott moved that it shall be the policy of the Village of Johnson to conduct pre-employment background checks as a condition of all offers of employment unless specifically waived by the village trustees, Phil seconded and the motion was passed.**

#### **4. Summer Beautification Projects and Beautification Committee Membership**

Gordy said the Beautification Committee recently had a meeting. He wants to see if a second trustee wants to be on the committee. They are trying to get either 5 or 7 members. Kyle Nuse is the chairperson now. He is also wondering about the board's thoughts on work that was done previously.

Phil said he talked to Peter Moynihan last fall and he was frustrated about the timing of the decision to employ him. By the time he got the contract it was too late to buy good annuals and start planting. He felt what he did last summer was not a good representation of his work because of the timing.

Scott said he thought we weren't going to do annuals. He thought we were going to do perennials. Meredith said in certain areas it makes sense to do annuals. Phil said the flower boxes should have annuals.

Gordy said the committee discussed the flower boxes on the Railroad Street bridge and the covered bridge, welcome signs, and doing more on the village green. He mentioned to the committee that Andrea Blaisdell had a good start on doing something with the municipal building property.

Phil said someone can easily go and put annuals in the boxes. Meredith said they need to be watered regularly during the summer.

Gordy said he passed on to the committee what he had heard from a trustee – that before we take on anything new we should take care of what we have.

Meredith said she feels we should more publicly advertise the opportunity if we are going to hire someone again.

Phil said he thinks we should continue to use the planters. Meredith said those were purchased by the town for the town bridges.

Scott said he might be willing to be on the Beautification Committee.

#### **5. Merger Study Schedule**

Meredith reviewed Kent Gardner's schedule for meeting with employees, board members and others. Trustees discussed when they could meet with him.

Meredith said the public meeting will be on Monday, January 27 at 6:00 in the municipal building. If all trustees attend but don't engage in conversation together she thinks that will be fine, but she will warn a special meeting of the board to be sure.

Scott asked if people can submit written comments. Meredith said she is sure they can. She thinks she and Brian Story should do a joint Front Porch Forum post about the forum. Maybe they can include information on where people can submit written comments. Kent, Brian and Meredith will meet Friday evening to plan for the forum.

Gordy suggested maybe office staff should meet with Kent. Meredith said she can suggest that to Brian.

**6. *Executive Session for a Personnel Matter***

**Scott moved to enter executive session to discuss a personnel matter pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(3), Bob seconded, the motion was passed and the board entered executive session at 6:25.** The board came out of executive session at 6:50.

**Scott moved to make an offer of employment for the assistant town/village clerk position at a pay rate of \$23.50, to increase to \$24.00 after 6 months with a positive performance review, and to waive the pre-employment background check, Phil seconded and the motion was passed.**

Gordy asked if there is another executive session matter. Meredith said no; she had already mentioned the item she wanted the board to be aware of.

**7. *Adjourn***

**It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 6:51 and the motion was passed.**

*Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths*