

JOHNSON VILLAGE TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2019

Present:

Trustees: Scott Meyer, Brian Raulinaitis, Gordy Smith, Bob Sweetser (by phone), Phil Wilson

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. *Call to Order*

Gordy called the meeting to order at 6:04.

2. *Additions, Changes to Agenda*

An executive session for a personnel matter was added. Gordy noted that there were some orders to sign, and the board reviewed and signed them.

3. *Fire Services Contract with the Town of Johnson*

Gordy said he talked to Eric Osgood a week or ten days ago and Eric said that he was not going to call a special selectboard meeting during the holidays, so if the trustees approve this fire contract tonight, as of January 1st the town will not have a fire contract with the village until they have a work session meeting. Gordy told Eric he didn't think that would be a problem.

Phil asked if the selectboard has seen this contract. Gordy said Meredith said she was going to try to send the latest one to Eric and Brian Story today.

Gordy said the selectboard had looked at the proposed contract and made some suggested changes and Gordy asked Meredith to have our attorney look at it. The board reviewed the latest version with the attorney's comments.

The attorney's first comment had to do with the language "whereas the Town of Johnson desires a contract for fire protection services and the Village desires to provide such fire protection services." Phil said the attorney noted that under Vermont statute selectboards can enter into contracts. It appears the attorney is suggesting that we remove the statement about the village desiring to enter into an agreement and just leave the part referring to the town. He thinks the attorney is suggesting changing it to say that pursuant to the authority granted to the town under 24 VSA the town desires to enter into an agreement for fire protection services. Scott said he is reading it as a suggestion to reference the specific part of 24 VSA that is applicable. After some discussion the board decided not to change the language for now. Phil suggested that we can consider fixing it next year.

Phil said he thinks the attorney's next suggestion is saying that agreements for non emergency services need to be defined and spelled out. He suggested we could talk to the lawyer and attempt to add language in the next contract.

The next suggestion was to insert "fire protection and emergency" for clarification in front of "services" in language about the fee for services. The board agreed that that suggestion makes sense.

Phil read an email from Meredith. She said that this version of the contract to a large degree includes the changes suggested by the town's attorney.

The board discussed the change from quarterly billing to having bills due on three different dates. The first bill is due July 31st for the first six months of service. That is so the first payment doesn't come before town meeting. The other two bills are due at the end of September and the end of December.

The attorney also had a comment that a minimum amount of insurance coverage is not specified. Gordy said he isn't too concerned about that since the contract is with another local government entity and both are covered under VLCT. Phil suggested we could try to get a minimum threshold in the contract for 2021.

The board agreed that none of the changes suggested by the attorney that are not already in the contract need to be added at this point.

Scott moved to authorize Gordy to sign the fire services contract with the Town of Johnson as presented and the motion was seconded and passed.

4. *Reallocation of 2019 General Department Funds to Johnson Works*

Phil read an email from Meredith. She said the 2019 village general department budget included \$1,300 for event insurance for the Holiday Jubilee but she forgot to purchase the insurance, which means those funds were not expended. Johnson Works has developed a proposal to use the funds on other items which Meredith thinks would be beneficial to the village community. Their proposal is to use the money for a tent which would cost around \$500 to \$600, Jubilee lawn signs which Meredith has not yet priced out, and a Johnson Works banner. Whatever is left over would go towards the late spring advertising campaign corresponding with the NVU commencement. As for the tent, Meredith thinks we should make it clear that Johnson Works will need to find its own storage for it.

Gordy said he had asked Meredith if she could find out where we were for general fund spending for the end of the year but she and Rosemary were not able to coordinate on that.

Gordy said that Johnson Works didn't want to have liability insurance for the Jubilee but he pushed for it. Phil said the reason they would need to buy separate insurance is that they are not a village entity. If the village put on that event it would be covered. Why doesn't the town or the village just sponsor the event? Gordy said there are a lot of events where the people involved have to do their own fundraising.

Scott said he thinks the price suggested for the tent is really cheap. He wonders what kind of tent they are thinking about. Board members discussed the advantages of renting a tent. Then we would not have to store it. Gordy said if we do not spend this money as suggested, the money would be rolled over as cash on hand that could be reallocated in next year's budget. Gordy said he doesn't think our village personnel should have to set up a tent or take it down or put up signs. He thinks that should be volunteer work. Phil checked prices of some tents online. He found prices ranging from \$520 for a 10x20 foot tent to \$740 for a 20x30 foot tent. Brian noted that the tent doesn't have to be the highest quality if it is going to be set up only for one night. Gordy asked, if they got a tent could it be used for Green Up Day? Phil

said another possibility is that the village or town could buy the tent and then it could be used for things like that. Gordy said we don't need Meredith keeping track of where the tent goes. Bob said if a tent is going to be purchased we need to know who will be responsible for it and where it will be stored and village employees should not have to store it or put it up. He said it's not as if we will lose the money if we don't spend it now. We can roll it over and have it to use for next year. Brian asked what the hurry is about spending the money before the end of the year. Gordy said our budget year ends December 31 but he doesn't see why we can't address this in next year's budget. If we budgeted \$1,300 this year we could potentially budget more than that next year and have a better plan for how it will be spent rather than hurrying up and spending it now.

The board agreed to take no action on authorizing these purchases tonight. Meredith can work with Johnson Works on a better proposal. **Scott moved to direct Meredith to work with Johnson Works to come up with a more detailed plan for purchases they wish to make, Bob seconded and the motion was passed.**

5. ***VPPSA Additional Staff Proposal***

Phil said he went to the last VPPSA meeting and sent an email to Meredith about it. VPPSA would like to hire two additional staff people. The budget that was passed for this fiscal year does not include those positions so the towns would need to approve them. Under the budget that was passed our dues went down 1.9%. Next year VPPSA is accepting proposals for smart meters. The idea is that member towns would not have to do their own contracts. VPPSA would coordinate and manage the smart meters. It is the opinion of Ken Nolan that having a GIS person on the VPPSA staff would enhance the quality of the data that we got from smart meters. If we are going to spend the money on smart meters this would be a small additional investment that would make them much more usable. It seems like this position probably is going to pass.

The other position VPPSA management is hoping to hire is something between an electrical engineer and a project manager. The idea is that that person could do some engineering and help with some permit work that towns currently have to contract out. It would also be someone who could potentially step in and help a municipality if their manager left. There seemed to be less consensus about that position but Phil thinks it may pass. If both of those positions are hired our dues would increase by 4.1%, which is \$1,900. Our share of the cost is based on how much power we sell. Meredith's comment was that it takes very little work on the part of a GIS consultant or an engineer to equate to \$1,900. We would quickly get our money's worth out of the two positions

Scott asked who would install the smart meters. Would that be done by us? Phil said this year VPPSA is getting proposals from three companies for review. They would vote on which one they wanted to accept. They are talking about trying to centralize this through VPPSA. VPPSA would have a server. Gordy said when VEC changed to smart meters their meter people changed all the meters. They had to have big transformer banks and a lot of equipment in each sub. But that was for one particular type of smart meter. Phil said there are other types. VPPSA is going to review proposals and they haven't signed on to anything yet. Gordy said smart metering could help us with water and sewer meter reading also and save labor. Customers do want more information about their usage.

Phil said VPPSA is going to have a special meeting this month when they will vote on adding these positions.

Scott asked if the \$1,900 is per year, per month or per quarter. Phil said he doesn't know. He only had the percentage increase and Meredith calculated that that would be \$1,900.

The board agreed that these positions sound good but they will leave it up to Meredith's judgment how to vote.

6. *Executive Session – Personnel Matter*

It was moved and seconded to go into executive session to discuss a personnel matter pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(3), the motion was passed and the board entered executive session at 6:45. The board came out of executive session at 7:14.

7. *Adjourn*

It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 7:14 and the motion was passed.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths