

JOHNSON VILLAGE TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2018

**Present:**

Trustees: Gordon Smith, Walter Pomroy, Scott Meyer, David Goddette, Bob Sweetser (by phone)

Others: Meredith Birkett, Rosemary Audibert, Troy Dolan, Tom Elwood, Bobbi Rooney, Ellis O'Hear, Duncan Hastings

**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***

Walter suggested moving minutes approval until after discussion of the first item on the manager's report and the board agreed. Gordy added discussion related to Pomerleau.

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

Rosemary showed the board mockups of the annual report done with the new machine.

Rosemary said she we are probably 97% done with this fiscal year's accounting. She booked the JSC fire payment as a receivable. Meredith said she has sent multiple notices about the payment and they have not responded. Rosemary said she put \$15K in the sidewalk reserve fund but hasn't yet done anything with the capital equipment fund.

Walter noted that power costs were 97% of budget and electric department sales were also about 97% of budget.

Walter asked how we can be \$370K ahead of budget for the electric department. Meredith said we didn't put in the switch that was budgeted for. We got revenue from unanticipated projects like Alan Lehouillier's. Walter noted that we didn't spend as much as budgeted for tree trimming. Troy said that was related to other work that took precedence.

Walter noted that water and sewer together are under budget, but one was over budget and one was under. He asked if Tom is happy with the allocation for each department. Tom said yes. Meredith said she can double check the allocation based on actuals. (*Bobbie Rooney arrived at 6:22. Ellis O'Hear arrived at 6:23.*)

**Walter moved to authorize Gordy to sign the engagement letter from Pace & Hawley for the audit, Dave seconded and the motion was passed.**

Rosemary handed out the list of overdue taxes that went to the tax attorney for collection. The total overdue is \$1,641.98.

**4. *Sterling Snow Riders Club Lease Renewal***

Bobbi Rooney said she is secretary of Sterling Snow Riders. In some of their recent meetings there have been discussions about improving the groomer shack. She thought she should review the lease agreement with the village before spending money on the building, but

found that the lease had expired. Sterling Snow Riders wants to renew the lease. They have invested quite a bit of money in the building, which had become unsafe and started to collapse due to rot before they rebuilt it. In May 2007 the village gave them a 5 year lease which could then be renewed for 3 years. They would like to continue to lease the property and they are hoping they can rewrite the lease for a longer period than year to year since they are looking at putting more money into the building to make improvements.

Walter said he feels Sterling Snow Riders are providing a fantastic service to the community. He is happy to continue the lease as long as they have proper insurance. Bobbi said the village had asked for coverage of \$1 million and they have \$2 million. The Landowner Liability Act also protects the village. Walter asked how long a lease they would like. Bobbi said 10 years.

**Walter moved to authorize Meredith to finalize and sign a 10-year lease with Sterling Snow Riders, seconded by Scott.**

Walter said at some point there was an old water pipe going through the property. He would like to make sure the village doesn't give up our water rights. Ellis said there appears to be a leak near the foundation. It may be a cap leaking. They may be able to figure out what the problem is by digging around the foundation. Bobbi said the May 2007 lease says the village reserves the sole right to maintain water piping to the property.

Bobbi asked about renewal of the lease after the initial 10-year period. Meredith suggested making the lease renewable for a 5-year period with agreement of both parties.

**The motion was passed.**

Walter asked how the rail trail is doing. Bobbi said there have been a few issues with late night riders. Fish and Game has been helping with enforcement. The snowmobile club wishes the sheriff's department would get involved. It would be outstanding to get support from the town and village for that.

Walter asked if use of the rail trail is mostly by locals or if people from outside are coming in. Ellis said people are using the Old Mill Park parking area. More people are coming from elsewhere. Bobbi said the issue going on now is caused by locals.

Bobbi said another thing that would be fantastic would be getting a trail into the village for snowmobiles. Snowmobiles could run down the road for that distance. The question has been where they would go once they hit Route 15. She has talked to property owners about a one lane wide feeder trail to the Village Green where people could park. That is a possibility.

Scott said recent interactions between skiers and snowmobilers where backcountry ski trials intersect with VAST trails have been positive.

Meredith said she will start with the existing lease and develop a new one. She will probably run it by the village's attorney. (*Bobbi and Ellis left at 6:45.*)

##### **5. WWTF Chief Operator Report and Action Items**

Tom said all samples continue to meet high standards. The WR-43 was submitted for review.

Walter asked if we saw a dip because of the flood. Tom said no; we have met high standards the whole time. However, he didn't sample during the flood.

There was a callout for the flood and a callout for an electrical issue that arose from the flood (burned wire in a conduit.)

Flood damage was minimal. The two plant water pumps were submerged and needed to be rebuilt. The sludge grinder was submerged. Tom had a spare on the shelf. We have placed an order for a new one that will come with a control panel that is not attached to the motor and can be placed up out of reach of flood waters. We had to remove some liquid sludge from the holding tank. That cost about \$2400 for trucking and about \$3000 for disposal. If our belt press were broken down for a long period those are the kinds of expenses we would be looking at. The influent sampler stopped working but is now working again after Tom took it apart.

We had a state facility inspection on January 17. The overall rating was excellent. They brought a preliminary draft of our new WWTF permit. It looks like there will be a slight increase in sampling and reporting due to phosphorus. Our phosphorus load is low and will not be an issue for us.

On January 18 we sealed two more conduits that were identified during the flood to be leaking with water plug hydraulic cement. We also tightened all the conduit seals that were leaking.

On January 26 we had the plant water pumps repaired and up and running. Tom got the belt filter press running and then it broke down. Both gravity belt tensioners let loose. The manufacturer said the parts would be 8-10 weeks out and would cost \$1665 each plus shipping. Tom found a local metal worker to make two tensioners for \$1619 for both. They were done in 7 days. The belt press is now up and running.

Tom has updated quotes on all-weather samplers from Isco and Hach. The Isco costs about \$6500 and the Hach costs about \$6400. They both go to 20 below zero. Tom somewhat prefers the Isco as Isco makes only samplers while Hach makes a variety of products.

**Scott moved to authorize Tom to purchase an Isco all-weather sampler for a cost not to exceed \$7K, Bob seconded and the motion was passed.**

Tom said he has reached out to Dave Crawford of Champlain Associates for quotes on new immersible pumps to replace the plant water pumps. They are submersible pumps with exterior sacrificial fans. In the event they are submerged the fan can just be replaced with a kit that is on the shelf.

There was one callout for the Highland Heights pump station plugged pump. The siphon alarms had to be reset after the flooding.

We had Tatro Brothers help excavate a leak on Lamoille View Drive. They did not find it. After the excavation a boil order was issued to affected residents. After sampling results were received the boil order was lifted. All residences report normal water pressure. We are going to have a leak detection company try to pinpoint the leak as time permits. It is not a very big leak.

The touch pad for the water plant PLC had to be replaced. The part cost was \$977.73. The installation invoice is wrong and Tom has requested an adjusted one.

The Studio Center's meter at the old fire house froze for the second time this season. We issued a new meter and meter horn assembly for the newly refurbished VSC Church Studio.

Water loss is at 17%.

Walter asked what we can do better in the future with regard to flooding. Tom said water can rise very fast when there are ice jams. The flood gates are still set at the wastewater treatment plant. They take the main one out during the day but the rest stay. Dave asked if the flood gates are tall enough. Tom said if they were any taller water would be coming in the windows. He is not sure what to do about the constant flooding. In the past the river was dredged to reduce the risk of flooding but nowadays we are not allowed to do that. He plans to keep working on flood resilience – getting a quote on different pumps, for instance. He thinks we need to work on an SOP and maybe a new alarm to give us a little more time. Maybe there could be an alarm float by the fence. He will get a quote on it.

Walter and Dave agreed that we need to make the plant as resilient as we can. Walter said he will tend to approve expenditures that will make us more resilient. Where we are looking at replacing equipment, resiliency will be important. Tom should let the board know if there is something he feels is critical to prepare for floods to keep from overflowing into the river.

There was discussion about being prepared in case the pipe on the bridge is lost. Walter brought up the previous effort to make sure a pump would be available if we needed it. Tom said Johnson Farm & Garden has pumps and will open the store for us if we need one. Walter said previously we had arranged to have first dibs on a pump so it would be ready to go if we needed it. Tom and Meredith said they will look up any information they have on that arrangement.

Meredith said Dufresne brought back revised proposals based on the funding options available. Their proposal for water is to do a water system asset management plan using a \$150K loan that is not competitive and has 100% forgiveness. For wastewater they are proposing a preliminary engineering report that will be needed to do further work on the system. We won't do any work with Dufresne unless we get grant and loan funds. They will assist us in preparing the applications.

Walter asked about the likelihood of getting funding. Meredith said the grant for the wastewater work would be a planning grant through Rural Development with a cap of \$30K. She thinks it is pretty competitive. The total cost of the plan would be \$75K. We would try to get a planning loan for the balance. She thinks it would not be difficult to get the planning loan. We will probably tackle the water asset management plan first because money is available, then send in applications for the wastewater work. They will look at the water system as a whole and collect information about the condition of infrastructure. Tom said this has to be done in order to apply for funding to replace water lines.

Walter asked about the other group that was going to give us free services. Meredith said they were helping with asset management for the treatment facility. They gave us a preliminary report and they are supposed to do training with us this winter. They haven't reached out to schedule the training yet. Tom said there are a couple of minor areas that are not quite right that we need to talk to them about. The belt press is at the top of the list. They gave us a 5-year plan for replacement of some equipment. Meredith said Dufresne is looking at the entire system and the other group was just dealing with the wastewater plant.

**Dave moved to authorize Meredith to seek funding for a water system asset management plan and a wastewater preliminary engineering report, Walter seconded and the motion was passed.**

**6. *Foreman Report and Action Items***

Troy said a new service was installed to service the new double wide at 99 Bouchards Lane. An existing service at 30 Lower Main was retired. A secondary underground service was installed at Johnson Farm and Garden to feed a new storage building. We energized Lot 15 on Park Street to serve a new tiny house. Monthly meter reading, high/low reads and disconnect notices were completed.

All insulating sticks, grounds, rubber line hose and miscellaneous hot line tools were tested at the end of January. This is a new service offered by Irby Tool. Their testing procedures are the most thorough in the industry. Two extendable long sticks failed and needed to be replaced and multiple grounds were repaired. This type of testing will now be done annually.

Troy arranged for all village employees to attend CPR/first aid training provided by NEPPA.

The digger truck and bucket are scheduled this month for annual di-electric testing.

Troy's crew worked with Tom to replace the two pumps at the wastewater plant that were damaged in the flooding. The water and light crew completed the inventory count for all departments during January. The crew has stayed busy during the last month with snow removal and cleanup.

Troy met with Ben Waterman and discussed installing 2500 feet of primary underground to serve his house and business. Troy completed an estimate for Dollar General. Their cost of installing 3 phase power to the new store will be close to \$75K. Meredith said she hasn't counted for that in the budget. They haven't indicated whether they will do the 3 phase extension. They just asked for an estimate.

All village backup generators were load tested and serviced except the WWTF generator. Service for that will have to be rescheduled for a time when Tom can be there.

True ups were completed for the Studio Center, Johnson Farm and Garden and Penny Bouchard.

Walter said from what he has seen and heard village employees did a wonderful job during the flood and deserve thanks. The rest of the board agreed.

**7. *Executive Session for Two Personnel Matters***

**Walter moved to enter executive session to discuss personnel matters, inviting Tom and Meredith to remain, Scott seconded, the motion was passed and the board entered executive session at 7:25.** During the executive session Tom left and Troy joined the board. The board came out of executive session at 8:04. (Duncan Hastings arrived at 8:04.)

**8. *Village Manager Report and Action Items***

Meredith said the village's attorney reviewed the Complaint of Alleged Open Meeting Law Violation Duncan had filed against the village. He provided a draft response addressing each issue. The board can discuss whether to make any changes to it, then get a copy to Duncan. We also have to provide a public response. That will probably go on our website.

Scott said he doesn't see a lot of difference between the way the trustee board does things and the way the selectboard does. He discussed this with Eric. They talked about the need for training and how it might benefit both boards. There are several bills before the legislature this session that deal with Open Meeting Law: H.135, H.235, H.700, and S.128. He would like to wait until the legislature is finished dealing with those before getting any training, in case there are changes to the rules. He thinks both boards could benefit. He doesn't think we are doing anything wrong now, but training could be beneficial. We might want to do an inventory of all the groups covered by Open Meeting Law and make sure all are doing things correctly.

Meredith said Brian told her the selectboard will be talking about this tonight and reviewing the issues and whether they need to tighten up their practices.

Gordy said Duncan referred to the number of executive sessions. Gordy looked at the number of executive sessions at selectboard meetings compared to trustee board meetings over several years. In 2016 the selectboard had 12 executive sessions and the trustees had 19. In 2017 the selectboard had 17 executive sessions and the trustees had 16. In 2018 so far the selectboard has had 3 and the trustees have had 2.

Gordy asked Duncan if he had filed any complaints against the selectboard. Duncan said no.

Gordy said when someone wants to make a motion to go into executive session they need to give a reason and it needs to be recorded properly. When minutes are posted we need to read them and see if they are written right and when we approve them we need to make sure the motions are worded properly. He wants to know for security how many people have access to village and town records and are able to get in and change things. Have passwords been

changed recently? Meredith said she doesn't believe they have been changed since she got here. Gordy said someone could change the minutes. It would be good to know how many people have access.

Meredith said she will work with Gordy to finalize the official response and get it to Duncan within the required timeline.

Gordy asked if Duncan had questions or comments. Duncan said he thinks it would be worthwhile for the board to take a look at recommendations of the Secretary of State's office and VLCT with regard to how motions should be made to be in compliance with the law.

Walter said it is possible the board has been a little remiss with documentation but he does not feel the board has ever gone into executive session for an invalid reason. He believes in transparency. He believes every time the board has gone into executive session for an employee issue there has been a valid reason. He thinks we could be clearer so the public understands there is a valid reason.

Duncan said the motion matters. The law is pretty clear. VLCT and the Secretary of State's office both say that boards should provide as much information as possible in the motion about the reason for the executive session. If the board can err on the side of including more information that will help eliminate concerns.

Walter said from his standpoint he can say Duncan's point has been heard and the law will be followed.

Scott suggested saying in the letter that we will take a full inventory of all boards and groups in the village and town that fall under Open Meeting Law and get training for them after this legislative session is over and the 4 matters being considered have been resolved. Dave agreed. Walter said the letter currently just says the board will get training on Open Meeting Law.

Gordy said he read minutes from both trustee and selectboard meetings and found that motions were all over the place. The same issues could be pointed out for the selectboard.

Meredith suggested adding a sentence to the letter saying that training will be provided for all boards and groups. The board agreed.

Duncan said the board may want to pay attention to the proposed legislation and be proactive in making concerns known to legislators. Some of the proposed changes won't make it easier for local boards. (*Duncan left at 8:23.*)

**Walter moved to authorize Gordy to sign the letter to Duncan Hastings regarding the alleged Open Meeting Law violation as amended, Scott seconded and the motion was passed.**

Meredith said LCPC plans to submit a grant application for funds to assist with implementation of the Railroad Street Area Wide Plan. The village has been asked to submit a letter of support. She provided a draft letter. She reminded the board that we talked about our priorities and identified the old mill house and the Manchester Lumber property. Those priorities were incorporated into the application. George Pearlman talked to Lea about turning the metal structure on the old talc mill property into art studio space. Troy mentioned that both town and village store equipment there. If we don't have access to that structure we will have to find other storage space so there might be some expense.

Walter said he thinks we need to start thinking about getting our equipment out of that area. Troy said we need to buy a piece of property somewhere then. Scott said we have to be careful about potential relocation of the town and village garages. Other towns replacing their garage space have seen costs between \$1.7 million and \$2.8 million.

Troy said he is amazed that people want to move forward with development of the old talc mill site since the site is contaminated. Scott said there are state restrictions that would have to be looked at. Meredith said the latest monitoring report shows there is still enough contamination that it cannot be closed. Lea has reached out to the state about resources that might be available for mitigation efforts and cleanup. There is quite a bit of work to be done to figure out the environmental side of redevelopment efforts.

Walter asked if there is a required match for this grant. Meredith said no.

**Walter moved to authorize Gordy to sign the letter of support for LCPC's application for a USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant.**

Gordy asked if the grant work is for all the buildings on the talc mill site. Meredith said it is for the building George Pearlman is interested in and the old mill house.

Troy said he thinks we should consider how close we want people from public to come to our facilities and property for liability reasons. Walter said that is something to be addressed as part of the process.

Scott said a sentence in the letter says trustees were very pleased with the ideas in the Railroad Street Area Wide Plan. He had concerns with the delivery of the plan because it didn't talk about cost. And he doesn't agree with the idea of putting priority on the former talc mill building. He feels the former lumber mill, which is ready to go, should be a priority. Gordy said the former lumber mill site was his priority too. Meredith said we identified the old mill house and the Manchester Lumber property as the top 2 priorities. This effort is just spending money to look into potential, relocation costs, etc.

Walter said the best thing we will get out of this is promotion and public awareness. The hope is that it will catch the attention of someone who will bring money into the town. We will throw lots of darts at lots of walls and most will miss. We have to keep firing.

Meredith said the Manchester Lumber site is one of the key sites that will be looked at, along with the old mill house and George Pearlman's idea. Gordy and Scott reiterated that they think the Manchester Lumber site should be the priority.

**The motion was passed.**

Meredith said the LCPC Brownfields Committee approved the village's funding request for a Phase 2 assessment of the powerhouse building in the amount of \$32,540. The EPA and the Department of Environmental Conservation have approved the scope of work. The last step is for the trustees to approve the scope of work. The Phase 2 assessment will include testing for several potential Recognized Environmental Conditions that were identified as potentially present during the Phase 1 assessment based on past use.

Walter said because the building is right on 100C there could be contamination by oil washed from the road. Will we be on the hook for that? He also asked if it is safe for people to walk around the building to do the assessment. Meredith said they acknowledge that the assessment will be done to the extent that it is safe to enter. She doesn't think they will put themselves in danger. Walter asked if their insurance covers them if they get hurt. Meredith said yes. The cost for the assessment is completely covered by EPA funds.

**Walter moved to approve the scope of work for the Phase 2 assessment of the powerhouse building, Dave seconded and the motion was passed.**

Meredith shared a letter from Michael Scott regarding his excess water bill adjustment request. He stated that the water did not go into the sewer and Tom agreed. Policy calls for his water bill to be adjusted to 3 times the average of the last 3 months and for his sewer bill to be adjusted to the highest bill amount for the last 12 months. **Walter moved to adjust Michael Scott's January bill for 162 Katy Win Road to an amount of \$69.93 for water and an amount of \$37.46 for sewer and the motion was seconded and passed.**

Meredith said for Johnson to be added to the Green Mountain Byway it needs to participate in the update of the Byway Plan. Johnson's share of the plan update cost will be \$450, which is proposed to be split between the town and the village. **Walter moved to authorize payment of \$225 as the Village of Johnson share of the cost to update the Green Mountain Byway Plan, Scott seconded and the motion was passed.**

Meredith said she is working with Arjay on adding an article to the village meeting warning regarding Fire Department rescue truck borrowing authority. Lea has requested that the trustees consider waiving the petition requirement for the merger study item that was put on the town meeting warning and place the question on the village meeting warning. The village meeting warning has to be done before the town vote.

Walter said his feeling is that the town can decide whether to do the study. If they do it we want a seat at the table. If the town voters approve the article on the town meeting warning he feels the village should freely participate and assist with the study.

Gordy said his suggestion would be that if the town and village both vote to participate then we will participate. He feels the article needs a “not to exceed” cost.

Walter said he doesn’t think we need an article.

Gordy said he feels if we don’t have money in the game we will be left out.

Scott said he and Eric had talked about this. He explained to Eric that he would like to see any study done by a neutral third party and if anyone in the study group has any affiliation with the town or village he feels they should make note of that and potentially be recused. It seemed as if Eric agreed.

Dave said his question is who chooses the third party. Scott said he thinks it should be a joint decision between the village and town. Gordy said he doesn’t think we should go through LCPC because there are conflicts of interest. Bob and Dave agreed.

Gordy suggested constructing an article for the village meeting warning. Walter said if both town and village have articles, the town could vote no and the village could vote yes or vice versa. Then what do we do? Scott said he thinks the village article should mirror the selectboard’s as closely as possible. Meredith asked if the article should say that both town and village have to approve the study. Walter said he is worried about what happens if one body approves it and one doesn’t. How do we control the neutrality if only one entity is involved?

Scott suggested seeing how Essex dealt with it. Meredith said they are still dealing with it. She reached out to several towns that have looked at mergers and none of them used an external party. She hasn’t been able to get a good cost estimate for a merger study. She budgeted \$5K for the village’s share.

Dave asked who does studies like this. Scott said a lot of consultants use a “lean” event system. What we need done would be like that.

Gordy asked if the board should have Meredith send Lea an email saying we will treat this the same as the selectboard and requesting a petition. He asked, if we receive a petition does the article have to be worded exactly the same as the wording on the petition? Meredith said yes. She said if we want to craft an article we can tell Lea what we are interested in and if she wants different wording she can submit a petition with different wording.

Walter said he is in favor of agreeing that we will participate in a study if the town voters vote for it. Meredith said Lea or someone else could still submit a petition. Walter said the hard part for him is the question of what happens if one body of voters defeats the article and the other side has approval to go ahead. Dave said in that case the entity whose voters approved it has authority to go through with it.

Walter said he wants to follow what the town does. Scott said he doesn’t see why anyone wouldn’t want to have a study.

Dave said his concern is the cost of the study. Voters are being asked to approve it without knowing the cost.

Gordy said Eric told him the selectboard didn't know what it would cost but they would take it out of one of their reserve funds.

Walter said the motion he is considering indirectly says the village will contribute no money to the study; the town pays for it. Meredith said she thinks in that case our direct line of communication to the consultants could be limited. That would be her concern if we were not paying.

Walter said he just wants a motion saying we will participate in whatever the town voters decide.

Dave said he doesn't have a problem with a study. But he is concerned about the cost. Scott said we would have to put out an RFP to find out the cost. Shouldn't we find out the cost before asking the voters to vote? Someone could ask for an amendment during town meeting calling for an RFP to be developed and sent out and a special meeting to be held to vote on a study once we have costs. If the voters knew how much a study would cost they would be better informed before voting yes or no. Dave said we keep being asked for money as taxpayers. It bothers him when someone wants to do something and there is no price attached.

Scott said it is probably too late to come up with different wording asking the voters to approve putting out an RFP for a study because the town already has the other wording on its warning, but during town meeting we could propose rephrasing it. Maybe we should word the article on the village warning that way and let the selectboard know we think that might be a better idea. Dave agreed.

The board agreed to let Lea know the trustees intend to put an article on the village meeting warning that uses similar wording to the article on the town meeting warning except that it asks the voters to approve issuing an RFP for a study rather than conducting a study. Walter said he can live with that. Meredith said someone can still petition to have the same article on the ballot as on the town warning. We will have to clarify that the difference between the articles is that we are asking to voters to approve just doing an RFP rather than committing to doing a study, because of the cost. Dave said the board is not trying to sidestep this, just figure out the cost. Walter agreed.

Meredith said we had talked about having an item on the warning related to the village charter. Do we still want that? Legally she doesn't think working on the charter needs to be voted on, just adopting it.

Walter said he doesn't see why it has to be an article but he wants it prominently discussed in the annual report. He wants to solicit people to join a committee to work on a charter. It is not realistic to think we would have something ready for the voters to vote on by October so

we are talking about a 1 ½ to 2 year process, but he would like to get it started. He is willing to be the trustee board's lead person on this.

Gordy said he thinks a committee with the manager, two trustees and two community members would be good.

Meredith said she will put in the annual report that we are looking for letters of interest from those who wish to be on the charter committee. Walter said he will talk about it at the meeting.

The board agreed to dedicate the annual report to Tony Pomerleau, who just passed away, and his family and company.

Meredith and the board reviewed the draft general department budget. Meredith budgeted for renovating the welcome signs. Board members said that should be a shared expense with the town. Meredith said she was under the impression they were owned by the village. Scott suggested that Meredith look into getting money from the college to have their name on the signs. They gave us money previously for that.

Walter recommended combining some line items under the heading of Economic Development/Beautification and increasing the amount budgeted for such projects.

Meredith said she budgeted \$1000 to help Johnson Works with liability insurance as VLCT said they are not covered under our insurance. But they may not take us up on the offer. When she discussed the idea of Johnson Works getting liability insurance at their last meeting it wasn't well received.

Printing/publishing costs in the budget are down significantly because we bought the binder unit.

Meredith said next year we may want to budget more for computer support because Larry may be retiring. Dave said we should be thinking about making sure security is good in the future.

Meredith put \$35K in the budget for the village's share of work on another portion of the outside of the municipal building and \$25K for our share of painting the old mill house.

At Walter's suggestion, Meredith added \$200 to mowing and changed the name of the line item to Mowing and Gardens.

Meredith said the budget has all the pay wish list items that had been requested. Allocations were based on this year's actuals.

The board agreed to increase the amount budgeted for heat to \$10K as heating costs are going up.

Meredith budgeted for another \$15K contribution to the sidewalk reserve fund. The board has discussed work on the Pearl Street sidewalk.

The budget includes the cost of salt. Troy said the town will no longer provide salt to the village. We were trading labor and machinery for salt.

Scott asked if the root of the tree removed from Pearl Street is still under the sidewalk. Troy said it is. Scott asked if that will pose an issue if it rots out. Troy said one concern is that it goes under the road as well as the sidewalk. He doesn't know if it is better to leave it in or tear it out. Scott said it could affect the longevity of the sidewalk if it rots out.

The budget includes \$13,180 for the general department's share of the binding machine, saving for a future Bobcat purchase, Bobcat tires and tools and equipment.

Revenues less expense for the general department are \$524.95.

The board reviewed the wastewater budget. Meredith said she is anticipating no major changes in revenue from customers. There are increases for salaries and benefits. She is budgeting for a new printer/copier. Tom would like Dig Safe training for him and Steve. Meredith level funded for professional development even though we didn't spend much of the budgeted amount last year.

We are anticipating getting funding to do the preliminary engineering report but Meredith put in some money in case we need something in addition to grant/loan funds. She could lower that amount. Meredith removed the \$500 she had budgeted for a merger study. The board agreed to increase the amount budgeted for heat to \$7K. Liability insurance rates have gone down. Meredith increased the amount budgeted for sludge disposal expense by a lot. We have twice had to truck sludge to Montpelier. We will do what we can to try to get that cost covered by insurance.

Meredith budgeted \$17K for insurance proceeds related to the flood. She increased the amount budgeted for outside testing because we think the new WWTF permit will have increased testing requirements. She increased the amount budgeted for outside contracted services to pay for system upgrades and repairs. She increased the amount budgeted for chemicals because of the new testing requirements. Cupola removal is still in the budget. There is money budgeted for some equipment replacement.

Revenues less expenses for wastewater are \$4863.20.

Meredith said one thing not in the wastewater budget is a belt press. A new one could cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. In future years we will have to start building up savings to pay for it or plan to bond for it.

The board reviewed the water and light department budget. Meredith kept merchandising/jobbing revenue from major projects at \$40K. Transco principal is up. Meredith said she needs to get a better explanation of drivers of that number.

Walter said he would like to be able to show REC/RES costs as a separate line item if we can get that information from VPPSA. Meredith made a note of that.

Meredith said she removed the cost for the new switch because she doesn't think it is realistic to get it done in 2018. The board agreed we should still plan to put in the new switch in the future.

Meredith said she increased the amount budgeted for labor and maintenance assuming Chan would be working full time. She increased the amount budgeted for tree trimming, hoping we can do more. She increased snow removal expenses. She budgeted for more staff time towards meter reading. She included \$50K for a system study. She would like to get that done before putting in the new switch. Some costs are going up because we will have an additional person.

She budgeted for a smaller bucket truck. Troy said he would like to get a used 2-ton bucket truck. We would be able to reach most of our poles with it. If we had two trucks then once we had a qualified apprentice the apprentice could go up and work with the linemen. Both trucks could be working the same pole. If we had a broken 3 phase pole we could cut repair time in half with two trucks and we would be able to send out two crews.

Meredith budgeted for a new underground locator, a spotlight for illuminating work areas at night, a generator for night work and the water and light department share of Bobcat replacement, Bobcat tires and tools and equipment.

The water and light department budget shows a \$94,509.64 deficit. Of that, \$65K is for the small bucket truck and \$50K is for the system study.

Dave asked about cash on hand. Meredith looked it up and found that the amount of cash on hand is good.

The board reviewed the water department budget. Meredith said she is assuming level sales. She budgeted about the same as last year in terms of revenue. Labor costs are going up. This budget includes a part time water and wastewater employee working 2 days a week and every third weekend starting in July. That doesn't mean we have to hire that person. Meredith budgeted \$5K for painting the booster station and water plant. Insurance costs have gone down. She included \$10K for hiring a contractor to fix curb stops and leaks. She included funds to replace a few meters.

Revenue minus expenses for the water department is a deficit of \$22,794.57.

Dave said we have had surpluses totaling about \$60K over the last 2 years in the water department. Meredith said the balance on hand as of the end of December was \$88K. Dave said we will have about \$110K in reserve then.

Gordy asked how much was added for the part time person. Meredith said \$10K for salary and a little for social security. Gordy said it doesn't see it working to try to fill that position.

Walter asked if Meredith decreased Tom's and Steve's overtime. Meredith said yes. Walter said a part time person is cheaper than Tom or Steve.

Scott suggested maybe college students in the environmental program at JSC could work at the wastewater plant under Tom's supervision to get college credits. Walter said often those things require a great deal of supervision.

Meredith said she will talk to Rosemary to see if it would make sense to change the time allocation between departments.

Dave asked if the board should have further discussion of Troy's request. Walter asked if Meredith decreased any overtime because of hiring another employee. Meredith said no. Walter asked if we will see savings on overtime. Troy said it is hard to say. Most of his crew's overtime is weather dependent. There may be some decrease.

Gordy asked if some labor costs for part timers have been taken out of the budget. Meredith said we have never budgeted for part time help. Gordy asked, there is not a big cost for extra help brought in during big snow events? Troy said no.

Walter asked if having an extra person would help morale. Troy said yes. Dave said he thinks hiring another person is something we have to strongly consider. It will be a help to the team. Troy said in the winter having another person to be on the sidewalk rotation really helps. Dave asked, having Chan would allow Troy to have two crews? Troy said yes. It could increase the amount of work done.

**Dave moved to hire Chan Bullard at a pay rate comparable to our other apprentice lineman, seconded by Scott.**

Gordy asked how hiring him affects the 3 budgets. Meredith said it only affects general and electric. Gordy asked, we were able to use cash on hand to cover the cost? Meredith said yes. Walter said we were able to absorb the cost of the additional employee in both departments but it means we won't have any cash on hand to carry over after next year so we will have a harder time in the future.

**The motion was passed.**

The board agreed to schedule a special meeting on Monday, February 26 at 6:00.

**9. Adjourn**

**It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 10:55 and the motion was passed.**

*Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths*