

JOHNSON VILLAGE TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES
ELECTRONIC MEETING VIA ZOOM AND PHONE CALL-IN
MONDAY, MAY 10, 2021

Present:

Trustees: Steve Hatfield, Diane Lehouiller, Will Jennison, BJ Putvain

Others: Meredith Dolan, Rosemary Audibert, Dan Copp, Troy Dolan, Mike Dunham, Ken Tourangeau, Raven Pfaff, Sophia Berard, Kim Dunkley, Scott Meyer, Charles Gallanter, Barbara Backus, Jackie Stanton, Peter Danforth, Joie Lehouillier, Jasmine Yuris, Beth Foy, Lynda Hill, Margo Warden, Kyle Nuse, Lotty Roozekrans, mhs, Rick Aupperlee, Susan Tinker, Cheryl, Marla Emery, Shayne Spence

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. *Call to Order*

Will called the meeting to order at 6:00.

2. *Changes, Additions to Proposed Agenda*

Meredith said item #3 under her report can be removed from the agenda.

3. *Review and Approve Minutes of Trustee Meetings*

Diane moved to approve the minutes of April 12, 2021, Steve seconded and the motion was passed

Steve moved to approve the minutes of April 26, 2021, Diane seconded and the motion was passed.

Steve moved to approve the minutes of May 3, 2021, Diane seconded and the motion was passed.

4. *Treasurer's Report / Review and Approve Bills and Warrants / Budget Status / Action Items*

Meredith noted that legal expenses for the general department are already very close to budget. We had some expenses related to Open Meeting Law questions and some final work on easements for the village green. Will asked if there is anything we know we will need legal advice on this year. Meredith said hopefully there will be nothing major. Legal questions that come up as part of a construction project will be billed to that project.

Rosemary asked if we are going to borrow money for the new truck. Meredith said yes. The cost will be split between the electric department (60%) and the general department (40%). The general department is going to take out a 5-year loan for its share of the cost.

Meredith said Troy has been getting a lot of calls from people interested in projects. That will contribute to our electric department revenue.

Steve asked what the deferred revenue line is. Meredith said that is money we have had for many years designated for work on 100C to replace poles and wires. The amount used to be \$45K and last year we did some of that work. Now there is some money left to continue that project. We are limited in what we can use that money on.

Meredith said so far our load is up compared to 2019. Diane asked if we know what NVU is doing in the fall. Meredith said she has not heard an update on their fall plans. She can reach out for one.

Meredith noted that the disconnection moratorium is set to expire at the end of this month and we have not heard that it will be extended. Today the COVID team discussed reopening the office after July 4.

Diane asked if we know who the people are who haven't paid on their accounts. It is possible for them to get COVID relief, right? Meredith said the program available right now is for renters. There is money available to help them with utility bills and rent. The legislature is in the process of allocating more for utility arrearages and she thinks that would be available to homeowners too. We know which customers haven't paid their bills and what their balances are. We try to be proactive about telling them about programs available for assistance.

Diane asked if some of those people need assistance to apply for assistance. Meredith said when there was a round of funding last fall we were not allowed to actively help people fill out the applications. We directed people to a social service services agency that was able to help them. She thinks Marla and Susan called every person who is behind on their bills to make sure they knew about the programs.

5. *Presentation of the Stormwater Master Plan*

Peter Danforth, executive director of the Lamoille County Conservation District, said he has been helping Johnson work on a stormwater master plan. He has been working with Watershed Consulting, the state DEC and other parties, including LCPC. Watershed Consulting is an engineering company hired to help with this assessment. The goal is to try to determine where we can work to limit phosphorus and sediment loading into the Lamoille River and thus into the Lake Champlain basin. The stormwater master plan is meant to determine the best places to address stormwater issues. Three places were identified in Johnson. The Clean Water Act, Act 76, states that we need to decrease the amount of phosphorus and sediment loading in the Lake Champlain basin. We have to decrease by a certain amount in the next 5 years to keep in line with the goals. The stormwater master plan helps with reaching that goal. The plan was written by Watershed Consulting. LCPC helped them with outreach. They came up with 10 places where stormwater issues could potentially be addressed and the top 3 were brought to 30% design. The top 3 locations were Railroad Street by the library, college apartments on a steep hillside at NVU and Sterling Market.

Will asked, if the intent is to mitigate phosphorus running into Lake Champlain, where is the source? Peter said it is a cycle. There is plenty in Vermont. The state has identified farms as being the primary place where there is phosphorus and sediment runoff. When he works with farms, he works under a different grant from the Agency of Agriculture. The DEC tends to work with him in terms of metropolitan areas, townships and private landowners. Phosphorus and sediment also run off from those areas. Phosphorus goes through a cycle with stormwater runoff. In places such as Johnson, Hyde Park and Morrisville, water runs off of roofs and impermeable surfaces.

Will said the areas identified as the top three areas are not high maintenance landscaped areas. His understanding is that is where phosphorus is higher, where lawns are being taken care of and chemicals are being put down. He is wondering why those areas are being targeted. Peter said NVU has flooding issues as well as runoff issues. Private landowners around them have been complaining. They could do more to prevent water and sediment from running off impermeable surfaces into the landscape. There is a lot of phosphorus in runoff no matter where it is coming

from. Will asked, is it naturally occurring phosphorus or from fertilizer? Peter said it is both naturally and artificially occurring.

Meredith said she and Brian Story, as well as representatives from NVU, met with the team and suggested places where they knew there were stormwater issues. She was not thinking about phosphorus loading but about things like water backing up. The consultants took the list and thought about the more scientific aspects. Railroad Street near the library was the area the village had the most interest in. We know the infrastructure along Railroad Street is old and in poor condition. Catch basins have settled, creating divots in the road that make it difficult for bikes to travel. We are interested in identifying a project that could get work on Railroad Street stormwater infrastructure underway. This targets infrastructure that could be put near the library for water to flow into and be treated. That is about half of our solution. Now we need to figure out how to address the pipes that lead up to it.

Peter said flooding is a huge issue in Johnson but what would need to be done to mitigate that is very extreme. But at least we can put in something that would mitigate pollution and collect water and keep it from backing up in basements. That is why they addressed the area near the library and Sterling Market.

Meredith said when we apply for state or federal funding they want to see that we have a stormwater master plan. We now have three sites that have gone through a 30% design. They would still need final engineering. She thinks the next step for the village is to get design work done for pipes that would lead up to the structures in the library area and then try to seek funding for construction. We wouldn't want to do the library work separate from the infrastructure that ties into it.

Peter said this is all voluntary. What is implemented has to be in line with what works for the village. Whatever the village needs to do comes first and the hope is that this can be added to it.

6. Water/Wastewater Report and Action Items

Dan gave his report. The E-DMR and Wr-43 were submitted for review. There was one callout for Highland Heights pump station. The floats were not operating properly. Staff cleaned grease off the float balls that had accumulated and it is now operating properly. The riding mower was serviced. Staff started cutting back some brush and small trees that are falling onto the mowed lawn area. They installed new Dissolved Oxygen sensors in both SBR's. They were not operating properly and were too old to source parts to repair them. Now the blowers are cycling properly whereas one was running constantly. Staff have already noticed a reduction in KW readings at the plant.

Coliform results were negative. The reservoir was inspected by M&K Divers. The tank needed to be cleaned. Originally he quoted \$1550 for the inspection and \$4300 if it needed to be cleaned. He had a dive team working in the area that week and if we could schedule it he would only charge us \$2800 for the inspection and cleaning together. After talking with Meredith we went ahead and scheduled them to clean the tank. We received a good inspection report and video of the cleaning. No deficiencies were found.

The contractor who was going to do the cupola removal has backed out. Dan tried to contact another contractor who hasn't responded yet.

Dan said we need to think about what to do with the old reservoir that is on site. His understanding is that it was basically condemned because it was structurally unsound. It is a danger to anyone that should decide to walk on top of the roof, which is only 3 feet above ground. Dan thinks we should come up with a plan to demolish it, fill it in or construct a chain link fence around it before it becomes a liability to the village. Staff replaced the sensor membrane on the chlorine analyzer at the plant.

Meredith said she thinks the old reservoir is next up on the list of old infrastructure we should deal with. Steve asked how big it is and what it is made of. Dan said it is about 25-30 ft. x 25-30 ft. It is concrete. He doesn't know how deep it is. Will said he would like to meet with Dan about the old reservoir.

7. *Foreman Report and Action Items*

The crew installed a new 200 amp secondary service to serve Travis Smith's property on Plot Road. They also installed a new 100 amp service that will feed Lamoille Valley Bike Tour's building off Creamery Road. A large danger tree on Rocky Road that came down over the electric lines was removed. This required an outage that affected one customer for one hour. The crew repaired numerous street lights throughout the village and completed monthly meter reading, high/low checks, and Dig Safes.

The crew completed a water service connection at Legion Field that will be used for watering plants. The crew has been working on sidewalk sweeping and spring clean-up throughout the village. At this point it is about 70% complete. All village fire extinguishers passed their 6-month inspection. In-person training for first aid/CPR/pole top rescue has been scheduled for early July.

The purchase of the replacement pick-up truck has been completed. We bought a 2021 Ram 2500 4x4 outfitted with a new plow and utility-style body. Through negotiations and the municipal discount, we were able to save \$9,000 off MSRP. We received a trade-in value of \$25,000 for the truck being replaced. When the truck is fully outfitted with lights, radio, and logo, we believe the total cost will be approximately \$5,000 less than budgeted.

Troy met with Gary Nolan to discuss water, sewer, and upgraded electric for Greg Tatro's property on Railroad Street and planning for future development. There was also discussion about water, sewer, and electric for an expansion of two lots at Ken Harvey's mobile home park on Park Street. Troy created a true-up for the electric work performed at Greg Tatro's new storage buildings on Railroad Street. He created estimates for electric services at Travis Smith's property and Lamoille Valley Bike Tours. He met with a group on the village green to discuss food truck placement and electrical connections. We ordered a new meter socket that will serve both food trucks and it will be installed very soon. Troy has been working with a customer who is planning on installing two level-2 EV charging stations at the Jolley parking lot that will require a new 3-phase service. He has been in contact with another customer who is interested in a 3-pole line extension and possible primary underground tap that will serve multiple properties on Clay Hill Road. The summer work schedule is filling up quickly.

8. *Ken Harvey Water & Wastewater Permits Preliminary Approval*

Meredith said Ken Harvey submitted an application for water and wastewater permits for two additional mobile home lots on Park Street. He has paid the fees for both. Each is proposed to be a 3-bedroom single family home so there will be 2 wastewater permits for 201 gallons per day and 2 water permits for 405 gallons per day. Generally for new connections we get applications and then

give preliminary approval, which is saying we have the capacity and ability to connect the building to the system. Then the owner does a more formal design of the connections, usually hiring an engineer. With preliminary approval and a design they can get a state permit and then they can get final approval from us.

Diane moved to give preliminary approval for water and wastewater permits for two additional mobile homes on Park Street as requested by Ken Harvey, seconded by Steve.

Lynda Hill asked if there is an issue with sewer capacity and how many more dwellings can be added. Meredith said we have significant capacity available. There is no concern about being able to accommodate these.

Lynda asked if these permits expire. Meredith said the owner has a year to complete the project after he gets approval. If it is not completed in that time he can extend it for two additional years, repaying the allocation fee every time it is extended. After 3 years he has to start the process over again.

Dan said the wastewater plant is roughly at 45% capacity and at about 55% of capacity for loading of solids.

The motion was passed.

9. ***Greg Tatro Water & Wastewater Permits Preliminary and Final Approval – Coffee Roasting***
Meredith said there is an existing wastewater connection to the building where Greg plans to do coffee roasting, so he is just requesting a change of use. The allocation is very small. There will be no wastewater discharge. The allocation is just for having an employee on site. She suggests issuing preliminary and final approval at once because it is an existing connection and there will be no changes to infrastructure in the ground. **Steve moved to give preliminary and final approval for Greg Tatro's water and wastewater permit applications for the coffee roasting operation, Diane seconded and the motion was passed.**

10. ***Mail-In Ballots for Special Meeting/Election on June 8, 2021***

Meredith said we need to decide whether to send ballots to all active village voters for the upcoming election. Rosemary estimates that will cost between \$600 and \$800, on top of about \$300 to hold the election itself. We have to hold an in-person election at the municipal building.

Will said the budget has no fat. But we have mailed out ballots due to COVID and people's right to vote without being concerned about their health. He thinks we need to mail out ballots and hope for a shortfall on some other expense. If everything else continues as forecast this could leave us over budget by about \$200 at the end of the year.

BJ moved to mail ballots to all village voters for the upcoming election, seconded by Steve.

Diane said she thinks we need to do this because of COVID. **The motion was passed.**

11. ***Update on Pearl Street Sidewalk Project***

Meredith said she and Troy had a conference call with our engineer and the low bidder for the sidewalk project about places where we might be able to shave cost off the project. We might be able to save \$2K by the village crew doing some work, but those are hours we didn't budget for our crew to be working on that so we would bill their time to the project. Then we heard that Capitol Earthmoving has not been able to get a firm commitment from a concrete subcontractor. So they

are not willing to sign the contract. They have agreed to keep the bid price for a few more weeks. We told them we are willing to keep it open in hopes they will be able to get a commitment from a subcontractor.

Lynda said construction and material costs are very high now. She suggested the possibility of putting the project off for a year. It is pretty late in the season to be trying to get someone. Even if he finds a subcontractor he will be paying a premium. Meredith said we have a grant from the state that has a deadline at the end of the calendar year. If it looks like we can't get someone this year she can ask if an extension is possible.

12. Electric Bucket Truck Grant Agreement

Meredith got the draft grant agreement for the bucket truck purchase last week and before she signs it she wants to make sure everyone understands it. She went through highlights of the agreement. It is a reimbursement grant. We pay 100% of the cost, then submit for reimbursement. We can be reimbursed 85% up to a maximum of \$522K. We will have to get a loan for the rest. VPPSA may be able to advance us money using their line of credit and we would pay them back after we get the grant. We are required to scrap and dispose of the bucket truck being replaced because this is an emissions reduction project. They want the diesel truck taken off the road. It goes to a state approved scrap yard and the state has to have the opportunity to view it being scrapped. We can get the scrap value for it but any income we get comes off the top before we calculate the 85%. We have to keep the new truck at least 5 years and we have to file quarterly progress reports and annual reports for those 5 years. Our purchase includes a fast charger as well as the truck. We need to keep in mind when thinking about work on the village garage that the charger will be installed in the garage.

Steve moved and BJ seconded to authorize Meredith to sign the grant agreement for the village electric bucket truck purchase. Diane asked what the total cost is for the truck and the infrastructure. Meredith said she thinks we estimated a cost of about \$650K. We will get reimbursed for up to 85%, capped at \$522K so we will have to put in about \$130K of our own money. That is less than half the cost of a new diesel bucket truck.

Diane asked if Meredith thinks this truck will last as long as the previous one. Meredith said it is relatively new technology. Her expectation is that it would last 10 years.

BJ asked if Troy has the same schedule for turnaround when equity is still high with bucket trucks as with other vehicles. Meredith said she doesn't think he does to the same degree. These larger, heavier duty vehicles have a longer useful life.

Shayne Spence asked if there are any estimates of how much we stand to save in fuel costs over the lifespan of the vehicle. Meredith said we have such a small service area that fuel usage is not a huge issue. From an emissions standpoint it is more that the vehicle is idling while working on the job.

Greg Tatro asked how long the charge will last. He also suggested maybe the village could sell the bucket and crane from the existing truck. He said he worries about the charge lasting if there is a long storm. Meredith said she believes the charge will last in the range of 8 to 10 hours. She and Troy have had this conversation. We have a smaller bucket truck in addition to this large one. In a big storm if it looks like work will last multiple days we will have to think about where we can use

the smaller one and where we absolutely need to use the bigger one. Charging will be something to think about. Greg asked how long it takes to charge the truck. Meredith said it takes 10 hours from nothing to full charge. But there are a few instances where the truck would go down to zero charge.

Diane asked if we are going to try to sell parts of the bucket truck. Meredith said she will have to ask Troy if he thinks it is worthwhile. If we can make money from doing that we will.

The motion was passed.

13. Update from Racial Justice Committee & Request for Village Funding of Essay Contest

Raven Pfaff said there were concerns about the proposal to put Black Lives Matter and pride flags on the municipal building. The Racial Justice Committee wants to convince the town that this messaging is still a priority. She asked if board members have any thoughts about how we can do this in a way that gets everyone on board.

Will said he doesn't think we will get everyone on board with everything. He doesn't know if there is an answer to that. Diane said she thinks we are doing some of that through the proposals to put up a banner and have an essay contest. That kind of outreach is important. Keeping the discussion going at selectboard and trustee board meetings is important.

Raven said the Racial Justice Committee got some suggestions from Nat Kinney, such as posting the inclusivity and anti-racism statements on kiosks in town and possibly on the Johnson Works website. She asked if trustee board members have ideas about how the committee can carry out the mission it was charged with by the board.

Raven said the trustees are requesting \$200, and they are going to request the same amount from the selectboard, to be used as prize money for a racial justice and equity essay contest to be held for students, probably in the summer. This idea was proposed by Shayne Spence. It is a way to engage the community and help students build resumes and portfolios.

Will said management of money is the trustee board's job and we heard that we are currently going to be over budget because of the election. He doesn't know what the committee is thinking about, coming and asking the trustees for money, especially in a year like this. Taxpayers of the village are also taxpayers of the town, so asking for the village to match the amount contributed by the selectboard is asking village taxpayers to pay more than their fair share. He won't support the trustees paying the same amount paid by the selectboard. Personally he feels that it would be wrong for this board to take taxpayers' money and redistribute it to someone else. The purpose of this board is to manage the business of the village, not to take taxpayer money and give it to someone else. Giving money to high school students is not the position of the board. If anyone on the board votes for this proposal he hopes all the taxpayers that have concerns reach out to those board members.

Diane moved and Steve seconded to give the Racial Justice Committee \$200 toward an essay contest about racial justice for Lamoille Union High School students.

BJ said he thinks the Racial Justice Committee could do a fundraiser. He agrees with Will on fiscal responsibility.

Diane said it is the trustees who asked for the Racial Justice committee to be formed and they stated five points that they wanted the committee to address. One of them was education. This is educational. Another of the five points was engaging with the community to continue the conversation on issues of racial and social justice. This is an important part of getting the community on board so that we are learning more about racial and social injustice happening everywhere and in our county. She thinks it is important to have this money go towards students who are going to be working hard and putting information out to the community. She thinks a lot of discussion will happen. She thinks essays will go into the newspaper and on Front Porch Forum and students will discuss this with their parents. We want people to come set up businesses in our area. She thinks when people see this kind of thing it will help with businesses and families moving into the community. She will welcome comments from community members about this. She thinks it is \$200 well placed.

Will said the committee is also asking the town for money and all village taxpayers are also town taxpayers. Why should they pay more than their fair share? Diane said if he wants to keep bringing that up, maybe we should have only one board. If the selectboard and the village trustees formed this committee the committee has to go to the selectboard and the trustees to get money, so that is what they are doing.

Will asked why the committee is so adamant about village taxpayers paying more than town taxpayers. Why not ask the town for \$400? Diane said because this committee was formed by the trustees and the selectboard. Will said if the committee got \$400 from the town then everyone would be paying equally. If they get \$200 from the village and \$200 from the town then village taxpayers are contributing to the \$200 from the village and to the \$200 from the town. They are paying more than their fair share.

Diane said it's \$200. Will said he doesn't care how much it is. Why are we being punished for authorizing the village committee? Diane said if there was only one board village residents would be paying for utilities and not for other items like this. Will said if Diane is recommending that we dissolve the village involvement in the Racial Justice Committee, we can talk about that. Diane said she is not talking about that. Will said the trustees wanted village representation on this board. Just because it is a joint committee doesn't mean the committee can ask the people they are representing to pay more than their fair share. Diane said she thinks it would probably benefit the village more than the town because it would help with businesses downtown.

Will said we know we are currently over budget due to the election. Why is the committee recommending that we go over budget for this \$200 contribution? He doesn't think the committee should be asking to put the village that much more over budget. How is that being fiscally responsible?

Diane said she thinks it will pay for itself in the end. It will benefit the village and the town by helping with families moving in and businesses starting up. It is important that we do this kind of work. She thinks most people would agree that it is not a loss of money to contribute the \$200. There was no money given to the Racial Justice Committee. The trustees and the selectboard should have given the committee some money to work with. It should have been put in as a line item but that was not done so now the committee will ask for money so they can do this kind of

education and make our village and town a place where all feel welcome. This is such an educational opportunity.

Will said it doesn't pay the bills. Diane said it will help pay the bills in the end. Will asked, by the end of 2021, we will see financial gain from a high school student writing an essay? Steve said it is an investment in our future.

Will asked if the committee has even tried fundraising for it. Diane said she thinks it is part of our job to have a vision for our village and town for the future, not just for the end of 2021. Will said to spend money we don't have is fiscally irresponsible.

Sophia Berard thanked Diane for speaking up for the Racial Justice Committee and thanked Steve for expressing that this is an investment for the future. She is on the Racial Justice Committee. It was brought to the committee's attention that Hardwick has a racial justice committee and budgeted \$6K for it. That is taxpayer dollars that go to education, speakers, banners – all the efforts the committee is tasked with. She agrees with Diane that the Racial Justice Committee should have a budget. She also wants to bring up that it made her uncomfortable that Will as the chair pretty much threatened the other trustees by saying he hopes anyone who votes for this hears from community members. She thinks it is inappropriate for him as board chair to essentially silence his fellow trustees right off the bat. Rutland did an essay contest like this. She echoes everything Diane said. She thanked Raven for her pertinent questions to the trustees. If the committee can't do what it is suggesting, it is asking for suggestions from the trustees. A lot of community members are showing up and coming up with these proposals with a lot of thought and intention and the committee wants to make sure their time is not for nothing. These are essential ideas. Will said he hopes the committee members don't feel their time is not valuable. It is.

Shayne Spence said he brought this idea to the Racial Justice Committee, though maybe in a slightly different form than what is proposed here. His original suggestion was focusing primarily on Johnson Elementary, rather than Lamoille Union. With a contest at Lamoille Union, village taxpayer money is going to people who do not necessarily live in the village. But he thought with Eric Hutchins at the high school there could also be a high school element. And when he brought the idea forward his suggestion was that the committee looked to fundraise to avoid this type of situation. He does think this is a valuable project. A lot of what was said about it being an investment in our future is very true. He thinks it would be worthwhile for the trustees to fund it, but if they say no there is another way to go about it.

Kim Dunkley said she was hearing that a couple of people were feeling like the committee's ideas were not welcome or exciting, when for her the issue is just the funding. The village is paying both town and village taxes so village residents are double taxed. She would love to have fundraisers to get funds for this so there is not the issue of double taxation. Her concern is not about what is being funded. That is awesome.

Rick Aupperlee thanked the board for considering this proposal. He asked how much it adds to taxes to raise \$200. Rosemary said she thinks one cent raises about \$600. Rick said he wants to be fiscally responsible but also keep things in proportion. He thinks one cent is reasonable. Regarding the concept of double taxation, the town is very generous to the village with the 10 cents on the grand list. Town taxpayers who live in the village are recipients of close to \$60K of town taxpayer

money, is that right? Rosemary said yes, but it is a required payment, not voluntary. Rick said he understands that but we are already being double taxed and the village is being rewarded by the town. The charter requires the town to pay 10 cents on the grand list.

Meredith said the way the charter is written, the 10 cents on the grand list was supposed to cover the cost of maintaining sidewalks and storm drains, but that amount is currently less than half the cost of that maintenance. The village is required to do that work but is not compensated for the entire cost.

Rick said there is a significant amount of money, \$60K, that we as village residents pay in our town taxes that comes back to offset costs in the village. The concept that the village is being punished was expressed, as well as the idea that village residents are being taxed twice unfairly. He likes the idea of paying a penny to promote this awareness raising. We are trying to build a welcome and inclusive community. This kind of outreach helps with publicity and engagement.

The motion failed in a roll call vote with Diane and Steve voting in favor and Will and BJ opposed.

Raven said despite how hard these conversations have been she still likes to hear everyone's comments. She appreciated hearing from everyone.

Scott Meyer said he was a little concerned that what Shayne really wanted was represented somewhat incorrectly. When the town and village are both asked to contribute to a project, it is double taxation. It is frustrating regardless of the amount. When we started talking about equality in our community, Greg Tattro mentioned economic disparities as a concern. Community members are facing economic disparities now. We have a disparity between the village and town. According to the last figures he saw, median income for the village was \$23,846 and for the town it was \$31,343. We are looking at ability to pay. Of the population in the village, 23.6% are below the poverty line and in the town 18.9% are below the poverty line. It seems odd that a struggling community would be asked to pay twice, regardless of the topic. He hopes that is taken into account whenever a request comes in for a 50/50 split in funding. He did not think Will cut anyone off with his comments. He is confused sometimes about whether Diane is representing the Racial Justice Committee or village residents. Maybe there could be a strong voice in the Racial Justice Committee instead of her taking that role. The Racial Justice Committee is not really what he was hoping for. He doesn't understand what is happening. We had talked about fundraising. He is willing to write a check to the committee to help fund the \$200 share. As far as village and town representation on this committee, budget was never talked about. He didn't really think about it. None of the other boards get a pot of money. It is something we should discuss. Maybe there can be a joint meeting between the town and village to figure out how to get things paid for.

Lynda Hill said this double taxation issue sounds like a promotion for merging the village and town. That is why the whole merger study was brought up in the first place, because of all the complaining about double taxation. It drives her crazy to hear that brought up over and over again when no one wants to talk about merging the two. It sounded like Will and Scott were giving a lecture to Raven about double taxation. The tone was not very welcoming. If people are concerned about double taxation maybe they should support the merger.

Will said double taxation is for special interest requests. It has nothing to do with management and operations of the village. The consultant report says there is no true overlap regarding those expenses and no financial benefit to the town to merge. These are minor issues that can be taken care of by just having the town pay for the special interest groups.

Raven said this was a good learning experience for her. Maybe it would be a good idea for the committee to take a look at Shayne's original proposal. She thanked board members for their time. These conversations sometimes feel divisive but she doesn't want that to happen in our community. She is hoping everyone looks forward to positive and productive conversations with each other from all viewpoints.

BJ said to be fiscally responsible he can't vote for the village making a contribution but he can donate some money to the cause. He asked the committee to get information to Meredith about how to do that and he will do so. Steve said he also would be happy to donate.

14. Process & Cost for BLM Banner Across Route 15

Meredith said Troy put together an estimate for the work that would be needed to accommodate the banner on the poles. He heard back from Consolidated that they are okay with the banner on the jointly owned pole. Two guy wires would need to be added and as well as hardware to attach the banner. Troy's estimate is \$1,119. That includes materials, construction, labor and staff time and the charge for the use of the electric department bucket truck. It doesn't include the restocking fee we would normally charge an outside entity. He estimated 5 hours of time would be needed from each crew member (not including him) plus an hour of his time to do the estimate and coordinate the crew and 4 hours for the bucket truck.

Steve asked, once these wires are installed can they stay up and be used for other purposes? Meredith said she believes so. She knows we have guy wires like this in other locations. Will said he thinks what the state will allow is the biggest issue. Meredith said a couple of years ago there was a change and now the state allows banners like this with a 21 day limit. Steve said he could see this being useful to the village in the future for a number of different things.

Diane asked, don't we have the ability to waive the fees? They are village workers doing village work. Meredith said this work was not built into the general department budget. The board can choose to say that the electric department will eat the labor cost but she tries to have the department that generates the expense pay for it. She has tried to be careful about that so the electric department is not subsidizing other departments or vice versa.

Steve said he would propose that we try to get private donations for this and for the essay contest rather than using village money. He proposes that the board approve this and then the committee will figure out the funding. Will said he likes that idea.

Diane said she knows banners have been hung in the past. How much do we charge the Red Cross or Johnson State, or did we charge them? Meredith said she has no idea. Will said he thinks that was before his time. Meredith said all she can speak about is the way that she has tried to allocate costs. That is her recommendation but the trustees are free to do something else.

Will said he likes the idea of moving forward with the project once the money has been fundraised. BJ said he likes the idea of being fiscally responsible but moving it forward. Diane agreed.

Jackie Stanton asked, what about the option of hanging it over Pearl Street? Would that cost less? Will said he thinks the infrastructure is there. Meredith agreed. Will said approving that would require another meeting because it would need to be warned.

Lynda asked if the wires are put in place and in the future other banners are put up there, will the village lease the wire? Will the village make the money back if other people want to put banners up? Would they be charged for use of the infrastructure? Meredith said she thinks our approach would be just to make sure our labor time was recouped. She doesn't think we have historically charged the college for putting up their banners. It is something we do every year. But if we are going to expand banners we probably should come up with a policy so everyone is treated fairly. Lynda said if the Racial Justice Committee is going to pay \$1,100 to put up a banner it seems like they should be reimbursed to some extent because others are going to want to use that wire. Will said if others want to put up banners we can formulate a policy.

Rick said he has seen poles with wires going across in several places in the village. Is it necessary to spend \$1,100 when there are already cables on Main Street? Would it be possible at a much lower cost to hang the banner from a wire already existing on Main Street? Will said Troy was tasked with finding the safest and best way to hang the banner and he came back with this. He is sure he if there was a cheaper way to do it Troy would have come up with it. Meredith said the wires that are there now are not ones we could hang a banner from.

Sophia read a comment from Margo Warden, whose mike was not working. Margo said the budget is a list of priorities. Where do Racial Justice Committee recommendations fit into the priorities of the board? It frustrates her to think that Racial Justice Committee efforts need to be supported by fundraising, bake sales, etc.

15. 2021 Food Trucks on the Village Green

Meredith said last week she, Will, Diane, Pam Mudgett, her son and the chef that works with them, and Tobin Porter-Brown all met at the village green and looked at different scenarios. They came up with a plan for placement of the trucks at the edge of the green by Walter Pomroy's building. Meredith got an email from someone who lives in Walter's building voicing her displeasure about having the food trucks there. The same person was opposed to the food truck last year.

16. Update on AMI (Smart Meter) Project

Meredith said the consultant working with VPPSA is working with each VPPSA member on a business case (cost-benefit analysis.) Meredith is collecting data to give the consultant. She is hoping there will be a presentation on the business case at the June meeting. VPPSA will be looking to see if we can get federal funding to help with the cost of smart meters.

17. Adjourn

Steve moved to adjourn at 8:54, BJ seconded and the motion was passed.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths