

JOHNSON VILLAGE TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
MONDAY, AUGUST 11, 2014

**Present:**

Trustees: Gordon Smith, Ellis O'Hear, David Goddette, Walter Pomroy

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

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

**1. *Call to Order***

Gordy called the meeting to order at 6:30.

**2. *Executive Session – Personnel Issues***

There was a brief discussion about the reason for the executive session. Cliff Hill wanted to address the trustees about a personnel matter.

Walter moved and David seconded to go into executive session for a personnel matter, with Steve Towne, Cliff Hill, and Duncan included, the motion was passed and the board entered executive session at 6:34. Walter moved and David seconded to come out of executive session at 7:05 and the motion was passed. No action was taken.

Walter moved to continue the meeting on Monday, August 18 at 6:00 pm to continue the executive session on the personnel matter, Ellis seconded, and the motion was passed.

**3. *Changes and Additions to Proposed Agenda***

Ellis asked to add discussion about the compost facility. Duncan requested that discussion of Lamoille View Cemetery water service be added. Those items were added to the agenda by consent.

**4. *Review and Approve Minutes of Meetings Past***

Walter moved to approve the minutes of July 14, 2014, Ellis seconded, and the motion was passed.

**5. *Review and Approve Bills and Warrants / Budget Status***

The board reviewed and approved bills and warrants. Duncan said for the rest of the year we are predicted to exceed our power supply budget expectations and by the end of year the power supply net position is predicted to be positive. Part of that is higher revenue stream from Project 10.

David asked about snow removal expense. Steve predicts snow removal will go over budget for the year.

Rosemary said Michael and Kelly Ford have paid off the water and sewer lien for their property on 100C. Walter moved to authorize Gordy to sign a release of the \$841.05 water and sewer lien on Michael and Kelly Ford's property at 75 Route 100C, Ellis seconded, and the motion was passed.

Ellis moved to authorize Gordy to sign the management representation letter from Gene Besaw's office for the regular audit for 2013, Walter seconded, and the motion was passed.

Duncan said it was a finding of Gene Besaw's single audit that we owe \$4528 to VTrans as a result of the Main St. project. Lea has done a lot of research on it and he thinks she has found we don't owe it. The auditor found one pay req that was \$4528 different than the reimbursement we received. She has been unable to find that in some subsequent adjustment. But if we look at the total amount the state reimbursed the village and the total amount the village spent, there is a difference of only one cent, so Duncan feels the \$4528 has been accounted for. He doesn't know if the auditor will still have an issue. VTrans emailed Duncan saying that we presented a convincing argument but they will rely on our auditor to rule on whether or not we owe the money. Duncan thinks it should be up to VTrans to decide whether we owe them. If they don't request payment, he will assume we don't owe them.

AOT will be coming here to do a compliance audit check on several grants. They will be checking paperwork.

**6. *Wastewater Treatment Facility Chief Operator Report***

Tom said we lost a variable frequency drive in the last electrical storm. It cost about \$1900 to replace. We have about 2 of those left. Lightning protection is being put on the new ones.

Steve asked about putting a whole-house lightning surge protector in the panel for the municipal building. He said it will probably cost a couple of hundred dollars and he feels it would be well worth the investment. We have a lot of equipment in here. The cost would be split with the town. By consent, the board authorized purchase of a whole-house surge protector, with the cost to be split with the town.

Tom said the last two manholes on Clay Hill can't be found. He thinks they are quite deep. Steve Towne has a quote for ground penetrating radar. He thinks that is the only way we will find them without digging a big hole. Steve said our camera isn't long enough. He wants to find the other two and bring them up to the surface. It makes no sense not to do this before the road is paved. Walter moved to authorize spending \$475 to hire the Verterre Group to find the two buried manholes, seconded by Ellis, and the motion was passed.

Ellis asked about the storm drains. Steve said we need to get the vactor trailer first to clean the sand out before we can use the camera to check the storm drains.

Water loss was at 23%, but Tom said that figure is due to a meter reading error. The real figure is probably about 16%.

Lamoille View Cemetery has no meter in the ground and we haven't been charging them for water. They keep having leaks and want to redo their water system. Duncan said they should have backflow prevention and a meter. Whether or not to charge them for water is up to the board. We don't provide water to any other non-profits at no charge. Their biggest use of water is for pressure washing stones for perhaps two weeks out of the summer. It is a private cemetery, not a municipal one.

Ellis said he would like to see us put in a meter and backflow preventer. David agreed. Steve said there will be a cost. A meter vault would probably cost \$1000-1500. Duncan said we didn't charge anyone for meters we put in as part of the water project so he feels it would be appropriate to

provide the meter and backflow preventer at no charge. The vault is another question. (*Arjay arrived at 7:50.*) Steve mentioned an alternative to a vault. The board agreed that Lamoille View Cemetery should be told that we plan to charge them for water and that we will provide a meter assembly and make sure it is connected correctly.

Ellis said he was approached by Willie Noyes, chair of the solid waste board. He met with Willie and solid waste board member Dana Sweet. They told him the solid waste district would like to start using the compost facility. They are going to have to start taking food waste. They also talked about sludge removal. Walter said the reason we are not using the compost facility is that it was more expensive than just throwing the sludge away. Ellis said now more people are aware of uses for compost. No one knew about it back then and people didn't want it. Steve said it can't be used on food because it has metals in it. Ellis said things have changed and he thinks it is time to look at using the facility. We could save money. Gordy said he thinks it is a good idea to pursue. Duncan said we spend \$20K a year to dispose of sludge.

Duncan said he asked Hartigan to send us a copy of the invoice for the work they did for Steve Engel, but they didn't. The bill was \$525. The board needs to decide whether to pay it. The damage was done during the state stormwater project, not the Main St. project. Duncan tried to follow up with the state. He told them it seems they might be on the hook but they said we can't be sure whose responsibility it was and that we oversaw the job. They think we should go after the contractor. Walter moved not to reimburse Steve Engel for his Hartigan bill because the project that caused the damage to his line was a state project, not a village project, Ellis seconded, and the motion was passed. The board agreed that Steve should be encouraged to contact the state about reimbursement.

Duncan said Eric Osgood got Duncan appointed to the total maximum daily loading committee Commissioner Mears is promoting through VLCT. Eric's main interest was highways but it also has potential impact on the sewer plant. (*Tom left at 8:08.*)

**7. *Arjay West to Discuss Tanker Replacement***

Arjay said landowner permission has been granted for the grant-funded dry hydrant project. The fire department hopes to have a design within a week or so and then put numbers to it.

The tanker replacement project order is in progress. It looks like the tanker will be received between the middle and end of October. The fire department needs funds in the amount of the full purchase price available no later than the middle of October. Previously there was discussion about possibly taking out a short term loan and then refinancing after the first of the year, because of the way the article was written. Or the board may have the authority to secure a loan without making payments until after the first of the year. Duncan said he thinks a lease purchase doesn't even need voter approval. Walter said he thinks Duncan, Rosemary, and Arjay should figure out the best approach and come to the board with a proposal. Arjay said he will work with Duncan and bring something back next month. (*Arjay left at 8:18.*)

**8. *Public Works Superintendent Report***

There will be a workplace safety meeting on Wednesday. Nate and Cliff will be on vacation; other employees will attend the meeting. All employees attended a chainsaw safety class and found it excellent.

The Morrisville B-22 metering structure is built. There is an issue with the communication link from the meter. The metering sends data every 15 minutes to MV90 and VPPSA. We thought we could use an existing phone line, but it was destroyed and is not repairable. Fairpoint gave a price of \$20K to bring another phone line into the sub. VELCO fiber is an option, but it is expensive. Duncan said probably a cellular connection will be the best choice for the short term or even the long term. Steve said that would probably cost \$3-4K. The board agreed to proceed with a cellular connection.

The village has been doing tree trimming.

We got new computer boards to address the R2 breaker issues, but one was the wrong board. ABB sent the wrong firmware version and will send us a new one.

Steve will have the crew work on crack filling with crosswalk sand.

The JSC solar CPG was approved for a 150 KW solar array. Steve is waiting for the construction deposit.

The new VELCO mobile radios work great but the portables have limited connectivity.

The Fairpoint IOP agreement has been signed.

Tim Sullivan sent documentation for the primary underground extension he wants. Steve will work up a cost estimate and Tim will give the village a check.

We need to update our arc flash analysis as we are changing power suppliers. It will cost \$5775.00. The board agreed it should be done.

The village digger truck needs work to pass inspection. One estimate we received was about \$10K. Another vendor may be able to do the work for less. There is money in the budget to pay for the work. The board agreed it would be all right to pay to have the work done.

#### **9. Manager's Report**

Duncan said he has been asked to serve on the NEPPA Executive Committee. He would be interested in serving. It would require a few additional meetings. Most members attend either by phone conference or video link. Walter said he would hate to start redirecting Duncan's attention in another direction when he has only a short time left and other things to focus on. Gordy asked if he could step down if it starts taking too much time. Duncan said he could. Walter said he can live with that. The board agreed it would be all right for Duncan to serve on the NEPPA Executive Committee.

Duncan has not gotten a response to his letter of two months ago regarding the Master License Agreement for the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail.

Duncan has a quote from SD Ireland to replace the failed crosswalks with standard pavement. The price is a lot less than even the Tatro bid - \$10K for paving and \$1,500 per day for an excavator and operator. We would do traffic control, trucking away of bricks and waste and general labor associated with removing the bricks. Duncan included the crosswalk work in the invitation to bid.

for the town paving work. He will have firm bid pricing by next Monday. Walter said he thinks Duncan should contact the other parties and say that if they will agree to pick up the expense of replacing the crosswalks we will contribute the labor. The board will probably have a quick work session meeting after the selectboard meeting when bids are opened to make a decision.

Duncan said there are three potential planning grant applications. One is for a town/village plan. Another is from the Conservation Commission for a natural resources inventory. The third is for an infrastructure and need evaluation to be used as the basis for a capital budget and plan. The town and village could apply for a consortium grant for both the town/village plan and a village capital needs inventory. The board supported that idea. Gordy asked Duncan to come back with cost figures.

Duncan did not get anything further done on the policy on cost responsibility for sewer connections.

Eric, Gordy, Steve Towne, Steve Smith, Rosemary, and Duncan met Friday to have initial discussion on opportunities, needs, changes, and challenges surrounding multiple future retirements. They would like to prepare a working document and then get both boards together to discuss their ideas. One thing that came out of the discussion was the idea of taking a much harder look at the benefits of smart metering and outsourced utility billing. One of the benefits of this would be to free up existing staff time to assist Rosemary with financial and accounting work. Another thing discussed was planning for the eventual subcontracting of linework of the electrical department. Northfield Electric Department has done this for years and Gordy suggested inviting Steve Fitzhugh from Northfield to visit the board and discuss how it has worked for them. Duncan thinks that is a good idea. Board members agreed.

Walter said he doesn't see how smart metering saves time. Steve said billing is done by a third party. Now Susan has to enter information into the computer and print the bills. Smart metering can handle meter reading. David asked how much it costs to go to smart metering. Duncan said one attractive way to do it is with a lease purchase agreement. We would pay a per-meter charge on a monthly basis to do the conversion. To free up staff time, we would need to implement third party billing. There is a cost for that. Steve said Susan spends a lot of time every day doing billing. Duncan said the business case for labor savings is at best break even. But we can save money through voltage conservation and transformer consolidation. We can analyze the load on each transformer. Walter said he has yet to hear an argument that says it will save us money. Duncan said estimates are that we can save 5-7% on transmission costs. Walter said that would be good. But if Susan does different work, that doesn't save money.

The VPPSSA standard offer solar project was denied by the PSB. It was the only submission for the provider block. The provider block is set at .5 mW, but it had been assumed that you could apply for a larger block which would take up future years' allocations. The PSB said no; the .5 mW is the maximum application in a year. That makes it impractical to apply. It may not even work for a small utility like ours.

We were asked to offer letters of support for Sterling Market's application for a liquor outlet license. Gordy and Eric drafted a letter and Duncan wrote one.

Walter said Bob Selby had asked him to be on the committee looking at form-based zoning. He didn't get a clear answer from Bob as to whether he would be serving as a citizen or as a trustee. He thought if he were representing the trustees he should run it by the board. The other board members agreed it would be fine for Walter to be on the committee as a trustee.

Duncan and the board reviewed for David's benefit the history of the agenda item about a policy on lawn signs. Walter said someone had asked to put a sign on the municipal building lawn and the board decided there should be a policy on who could put signs on the lawn. The board came up with a proposed policy but the selectboard shot it down. David said he feels there should be a policy. Duncan said we could allow no signs other than those posted by the village and town until there is a policy. David said he recommends that the policy be no displays of any kind other than for village and town official business.

**10. Adjourn**

**By consent, at 9:32 the meeting was recessed until 6:00 pm on August 18.**

*Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths*