

JOHNSON VILLAGE TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2026

Present:

Trustees: Will Jennison, Ellis O’Hear, BJ Putvain, Ken Tourangeau, Darrell Wescom

Others: Erik Bailey, Rosemary Audibert, Dan Copp, Kyle Nuse, Mary Lacy (remote)

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. Call to Order

Ken called the meeting to order at 6:01.

2. The Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge was recited.

3. Review of Agenda and Any Adjustments, Changes and Additions

No changes to the agenda were needed.

4. Review and Approve Minutes of Trustee Meetings

Will moved to approve the minutes of January 12, 2026, BJ seconded and the motion was passed.

5. Members of the Public

No members of the public were present.

6. Treasurer’s Report: Review/Approve Bills & Warrants, Budget Status Report, Action Items

Rosemary handed out a budget status report through the end of last year. Erik noted that we finished last year within 1% of budget. (*Dan Copp arrived at 6:07.*)

There was discussion about the boxes of documents returned from SecurShred. Rosemary said she can tell as soon as she opens a box if it contains documents we need to keep. It was agreed that Rosemary should check each box to see what needs to be kept and throw away the rest. Erik suggested waiting until spring and opening them outside. BJ said he likes that idea.

7. Water/Wastewater Report and Action Items

Dan noted that this is the last year of the 5-year contract with H2O Innovation. They will look for another multi-year contract that probably will have annual increases based on cost of living.

Dan read his report:

Operational Status of Wastewater Plant and Callouts

- E-DMR’s and Wr-43’s were submitted to the State
- We hauled 84 thousand gallons of sludge to Morrisville for processing in January
- Monthly Composite testing completed
- Manosh completed scheduled Grit channel cleaning
- Blowers were serviced and inspected
- Pump Controle solutions came in and calibrated both Influent and Effluent flow meters per our request to rule out what seems to be higher than normal Influent flows they were found to be Correct when warmer weather arrives, we will start checking manholes within the System to find if there might be an infiltration problem

Operational status of Water Plant and Callouts

- Monthly reports were submitted to the state.
- Coliform samples were negative
- Add a gallon of coolant to the water plant generator. Contacted Corse fuels about the propane installation for the new Generator relayed the info to Erik.
- Good news From Erik on the grant for money to have a new Generator installed at the Water Plant, we will move forward with that project when weather permits, Tim is working with Jack F Corse on install details
- Installed a new backup milk house heater in Katy Winn pump house #1. We have been closely monitoring all Meter houses with the much colder Temps this winter
- Water loss is 15 %

8. ***Presentation and Possible Adoption of 2026 Water & Wastewater Budget***

Erik said the proposed water department budget is a 4.9% increase. The change in water and sewer bills for a single family home will range from \$2.29 to \$3.51. He reviewed the proposed budget. Labor costs are up. There is an increase in what is budgeted for lab testing because the number of tests we are required to do will be higher this year. Some years we need to do more tests than in other years. Dan noted that the cost of testing has gone up also. (*Kyle Nuse arrived at 6:36.*)

Will moved and BJ seconded to approve a water budget for 2026 of \$424,303. Ken asked when the rate increase will take effect. Erik said the end of March billing. **The motion was passed.**

Erik said the proposed wastewater department budget is a 1.9% increase. Will asked if it takes into account the potential repairs that have been discussed. Erik said yes. Dan described the repairs that are needed.

Erik said the budget has a small increase for office personnel based on how they have been using their time. Outside testing expense is up. He budgeted to add money to the wastewater reserve fund. Even with that, he is forecasting that we will be \$18K in the black. The budget could be balanced with zero increase, but Erik has been asked by the chair to have smaller regular rate increases rather than waiting and then having a large increase. Board members noted that one unexpected repair could easily cost \$18K.

Will moved to approve a wastewater budget for 2026 of \$751,045, Darrell seconded and the motion was passed. (*Dan left at 6:52.*)

9. ***Beautification Committee – Approval to Apply for Grant and Install Mosaic Mural***

Kyle Nuse said the Beautification Committee would like to apply for an \$18K Vermont Arts Council grant to commission Mary Lacy to do a tile mosaic art piece at the Cold Spring. It would be on the interior of the retaining wall. They will apply for the grant through the town, but the village owns the Cold Spring so they need approval from the village. First they will write a letter of interest and then they could be invited to apply for the grant.

Ken asked if the mosaic will be applied to the concrete. Kyle said her understanding is that it will go directly on the concrete.

Will asked if there is a drawing of the proposed piece. Kyle said photos of Mary's work in other places were included in the packet. Kyle's understanding is that part of the community input process will include people bringing old plates or other pottery to be used as materials in the piece. Color scheme, etc. will depend on what people bring. She thinks the idea is for it to be abstract, maybe including elements like designs from plates.

Ken said he would have concerns about applying the tiles directly to the walls. He thinks it would be as easy for her to do it in a different location, apply the tiles to backer board and then apply that to the walls. That is his suggestion. If the tiles are on a backing, the piece can be removed for repairs or permanently.

Will said he will not vote to approve this unless he knows what it will depict. Kyle said part of this grant is community input. There will be 3 or 4 opportunities for the community to come together and help decide that, because it is a public mural.

Darrell said he wouldn't want anything political that would divide the community. He feels it would need to be neutral. Ken said the village has a policy that covers that.

BJ said some examples show glass sticking out. He would be more comfortable with a smoother surface for safety reasons.

Ellis said he agrees with BJ. He doesn't want kids to cut their hands on it. He also agrees with Darrell. His other concern is the size. He doesn't want anything huge and gaudy.

Kyle said the vision is that it will beautify that area, which is currently just drab concrete, and make it more attractive and more interesting. It would also put us on the public art map the Vermont Arts Council distributes. There are people who go to towns specifically to see public art works.

Ken asked, we are not on the map because of the downtown sculptures? Kyle said we will be when they are put up. Will asked, they will only put us on the map for things they fund? Kyle said yes.

Kyle said she thinks the mosaic will be a semi-circle that will not include the area around the spigot with the nice stone work, just the concrete areas. If there is enough money she thought it might be nice to do something on the concrete around the lamp post bases. That would be more street facing.

Mary showed a recent mosaic to illustrate her style. She will incorporate the community into the design process. There is a pretty obvious theme related to the Cold Spring – water and the natural environment. She imagines that will be a big part of the direction the art goes in.

Will asked if she decides on the image after taking input. Mary said yes. She takes objects from the community. People can give something that is sentimental to them. She incorporates ideas and themes from the public. She can use water and the natural environment as a starting theme and a prompt for community input if the board is more comfortable with that.

Will asked if Mary had a vision in mind initially for the example piece she showed or if it evolved as she worked. Mary said she built this piece off-site in her studio before installing it, with the pieces tacked down on an equivalent sized piece of plywood. She hasn't yet been to the Cold Spring site. She needs to assess it. She and the board can make the decision together about installation. She is open to installing the tiles on something before putting them up. She would want the mosaic to still feel like it was custom built for that space. She would want the dimensions to be appropriate. She wouldn't want to put up a 4x8 ft. sheet that looked like a painting on the wall. Ninety percent of the process will happen off-site in her studio. She would like to be able to put her eyes and hands on the wall before making a final call on how it will be installed. She and the Beautification Committee have imagined an additional workshop with the community where people could make plant holders, flower vases, etc. with excess mosaic items on them. Maybe one or two people, perhaps high school or college kids who want to get more deeply involved, can join her in installing the mosaic.

Will asked about the example piece Mary had shown. Did she have a sketch of what she wanted it to look like before the project was started, or did she create it as she went? Mary said her client said she loved mermaids, sea turtles, and waterfalls. That was her starting prompt. She did do some sketching. Some other projects have more sketching. One thing that is consistent across her mosaics is that the objects people bring influence the design significantly. She wants to be flexible to that influence from the objects. Her best work comes in response to the materials.

Ken said he thinks it is best to approve applying for the grant but not to give approval for putting up the mosaic until more is known about it.

Kyle said if the Beautification Committee is asked to apply based on their letter of interest, the Vermont Arts Council will want some schematics and an understanding of the basics of the design. Ken said he thinks that is basically what the board wants.

Will said he does not particularly like the idea of having the mosaic permanently attached to the Cold Spring wall.

There was consensus that the board is okay with the project on a conceptual level and is okay with the Beautification Committee applying for the grant, but the board wants control over the installation and wants to make sure the content is abstract.

10. Village Manager's Report and Any Action Items

Erik read his report:

Water & Light Garage Project Update:

The new Water & Light garage looks awesome. The overhead doors are on, the mezzanines are built, and the heaters are in. Fire retardant is being applied and then sheetrock will go in the office and breakroom areas.

The board agreed that Ken can make a decision with Erik's input on a possible change to the roof girder material that could potentially save money

DR4720 FEMA WWTF Project Update:

The FEMA CRC came back with a ridiculously low 428 offer. This was across the board with all of the damaged WWTFs. Looking at their results, it appears they failed to apply Current Codes and Standards. VEM met with them last Thursday and they are rehashing the results. Don't expect new numbers until April.

WTF Generator Update:

The Bond Bank and I finalized the paperwork for the SCRP Tier 2 grant today. We are all set to buy & install the WTF generator. Now we can move forward with getting the parts lined up for a Spring install date.

I will be working remote on Friday, and the office is closed on Monday for President's Day.

Erik said Tori Hellwig of the Lamoille County Planning Commission called him about a technical assistance grant that is available for water departments. If the board agrees, Erik's idea is to use the grant funds for a temporary extra person to help with the AMI conversion, maybe an LCPC staffer.

11. Village Manager's Report and Any Action Items

Erik read the report submitted by Nate Brigham:

Electric Dept. –

Outage at Railroad St Bridge Blown Fuse 37 customers out for 1 hr

Installed pole and electric service for DCU at the municipal building

Removed electric at 209 River Rd West

Removed pad mount transformer/ primary and secondary services for 295 and 289 Wescom Rd, returned transformer to stock

Did Transformer inventory

Looked over year end outage and underground reports for the State

Moved snow and cleaned out substations

Set up bucket truck/hot stick annual test

Attended bank stabilization meet for pole behind the Union Bank

Pulled electric meters 384 Lower Main West for buy out

Received information from Morrisville W&L on how to get insurance info for car pole accidents when the Sheriff's office doesn't supply it

Replaced 2 street light to LEDs on 100C

Attended bi-weekly meetings for Shop

Completed monthly meter reading, high/low checks, substation check, and dig safes

Water/Sewer -

Frozen water at 146 Railroad St, turned curb stop off

Pulled meter and shut off water at 384 Lower Main West for buy out

Turned water on to 665 Railroad St

Replaced float at the Syphon chamber. Manosh jetted the 6" side and unplugged it three times due to a root ball and a lot of flushable wipes

Fixed meters at 698 Clay Hill Rd, 679 100C, and 28 Katy Win Rd East

Frozen water at 198 Katywin Rd, before meter, turned curb stop off

Cleared snow from around fire hydrants

Opened up tank site driveway on Collins Hill Rd

Attended meeting at Homes Medow for cutting and capping water and sewer lines

General Dept. -

Picked up snow all over Village sidewalks

Replace 3500 battery

Changed oil and filters in Bobcats

Replaced cutting edges on Bobcat plows

Moved snow for Town on Clark St and River side of Railroad St

Propane Tank installed at 665 Railroad St

Plowed and Sanded as needed

Safety -

NEPPA safety training: 1-12 was OHSA 3, 2-3 was Arc Flash and hotstick safety

Changed out rubber gloves/sleeves/blankets

12. Fire Department Report and Any Action Items

Erik read the report submitted by fire chief Arjay West:

Dec. 26, 2025 – Jan. 29, 2026

Calls:

JFD responded to 25 calls.

17 calls occurred during the daytime (6 am – 6 pm)

8 calls occurred during the nighttime (6 pm – 6 am)

The average duration was: 95 minutes

Nature:

Those calls were: 6 – automatic alarms, 5 - vehicle crashes, 3 – CO alarms, 1 – odor investigation, 7 – mutual aid (4-structure fires, 2-wilderness rescues, 1-vehicle crash), and 3 – other (public assist, garbage can contents fire, outside debris fire)

Staff:

The average number of firefighters that responded was: 11

Total hours of service was: 379

Other:

We conducted a weekend work detail to install a new Gear Washer/Extractor at the station. This upgrade will directly improve firefighter safety by performing enhanced cleaning & extraction of contaminants during the washing cycle(s) of our turn-out gear, as well as coming into compliance with the NFPA standard for cleaning and reduced garment fatigue during the washing process.

We attended a Division of Fire Safety inspection at Fred's Energy Bulk Tank Plant and are participating in some additional upcoming site improvements.

13. Other Business

BJ asked how far we are with implementation of smart meters. Erik said our meter order is in and we are in discussions with El Dorado about software. A whole support team will be coming in to help install the equipment, set up the software and teach employees. He has discussed getting support from VPPSA as well. Installation will probably start in mid-summer.

BJ asked if we have put out the advertisement for the village treasurer position. Erik said he made changes as suggested and then sent it out to the board for feedback and got no comments.

Darrell asked if Jeff got his CDL yet. Erik said no. He is not pushing him right now because of other things he is dealing with. Ken said he has spoken to Jeff and he knows the board's wishes.

Will said he has heard that members of the public who asked about using the upstairs meeting room at the municipal building were told the tables set up for board meetings can't be moved. This is a joint space. He wants to know why our constituents can be told they can't use the space by only half the people who control it.

Erik said he can understand why the town would say they prefer not to have the tables and equipment moved unless really necessary.

Will said if the selectboard determines that 25% of the space can't be touched, he is not okay with that. He would prefer to find a solution where people can use the space.

Erik asked what kind of parameters the board would want to put on what can be moved. Depending on what is moved or disconnected, it could be time consuming to set it up again.

Will said the space is paid for by taxpayers. Ken said he will discuss this with selectboard chair Eben Patch.

Erik said he thinks there should be some parameters about what can be moved.

Will said this is the public's space.

14. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths