

JOHNSON VILLAGE TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MONDAY, JUNE 17, 2026

Present:

Trustees: Ellis O'Hear, BJ Putvain, Ken Tourangeau, Darrell Wescom

Others: Erik Bailey, Rosemary Audibert, Eric Osgood, Ashley Isabell, George Pearlman, Steve Hatfield, Diane Lehouiller, Steve Smith, Patrick Persico, Laurel Persico, Cindy Hennard, GiGi Beach, Lydia Putvain, Gordy Smith, Marla Emery, 3 other people

Absent: Will Jennison

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. *Call to Order*

Ken called the meeting to order at 6:03.

2. *Pledge of Allegiance*

The Pledge was recited.

3. *Special Village Meeting*

Ken recessed the trustee meeting for the special village meeting. Eric Osgood called to order the special village meeting and read the warning. He said if there were no objections he would allow the village manager and village clerk, who are not residents of the village, to speak. There were no objections.

Article 1. Shall the Village borrow a sum not to exceed two hundred ninety-one thousand five hundred (\$291,500.00) by the issuance of notes for a term not to exceed five years to support capital purchases and operating funding for the Electric Department?

Gordy Smith moved the article as printed and Steve Smith seconded.

Diane Lehouiller asked if the interest rate for the loan is known and whether the loan would be through VPPSA or a bank. Erik Bailey said the village would go to local banks. Right now interest rates are between 5% and 6%.

Laurel Persico said Erik had indicated at one point that VPPSA would do a loan. Do they have a standard policy on loans? Erik said they would do the same thing the village is doing as far as backing the note. They would go to a bank. Ken said their board of directors would have to vote on it.

A voter asked if we would get a better interest rate with VPPSA backing the loan. Erik said no.

Laurel asked if borrowing through VPPSA would indicate to the state that regulations need to change. Erik said no. He said using VPPSA adds one more step of uncertainty. Their board of directors has to approve the loan, which delays it, and the village needs the money now. VPPSA is a backup plan if things don't go well tonight.

Cindy Hennard asked how much it would delay the loan if it went through VPPSA. Erik said their next board of directors meeting is not until early July. That is when the process would start.

George Pearlman asked if the village can apply for municipal loans. The village used to get good rates on municipal loans. Rosemary said the rates we can get from banks are good.

George asked what the term of the loan would be. Erik said no more than 5 years.

The motion was passed by a voice vote.

Article 2. To do such other business as may properly be brought before the meeting.

Ken said on behalf of the trustees and the taxpayers he would like to thank Rosemary for her service. She went beyond what was expected for many years. He presented her with an envelope. There was a standing ovation.

Ken introduced Ashley Isabell, the new village treasurer.

Steve Smith moved to adjourn, Steve Hatfield seconded and the motion was passed by a voice vote at 6:10.

Ken called the trustee meeting back to order at 6:12.

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

Ken said the minutes of the previous meeting were not included in the packet, so the board will approve them at the next meeting.

5. Treasurer's Report

Ashley said she has been working as treasurer for 3 weeks. Everyone has been very kind and helpful. Rosemary said the windows in the office have been rearranged. Ashley said the public is getting used to different windows for town and village. Darrell asked if we have a separate drop box yet. Ashley said everything for town and village is still going into the same drop box, but it is not an issue.

Rosemary said we just gave the town the fire contract. They will pay their first bill in July. Erik said we are ahead so far on power supply costs. Rosemary said Alec Jones of LCPC is working on reimbursements for the sidewalk project.

Ken asked Ashley how things going. She said they are going well. She has been watching training videos on software the village uses. She is considering a couple of options for municipal training. There is a Payroll Association conference she would like to attend at the end of the summer. She will have training cost figures put together in the next couple of weeks.

6. Village Manager's Report and Any Action Items

Erik gave his report. The new Water & Light garage is all but finished. There are a few very small items left to install. A second blower test needs to be done before we can begin the close out process. The crew has already moved all the stock from the rental Conex boxes and they have been returned.

Matt will be taking a job with GMP that is closer to his house. Erik included a proposed ad and pay scale for the position in the meeting packet. Ken said two people fresh out of lineman school have applied and we have not even advertised yet.

Darrell moved to approve the ad and pay scale for the lineworker position and the motion was seconded and passed.

FEMA has us in the EHR or Environmental & Health Review process, which is an initial step in the construction phase. We are the first of the badly hit WWTFs to make it to this step of the process.

The Mach-E goes in for repairs on the 24th. Originally it was scheduled for the 16th, however some of the parts got delayed from the original estimated arrival.

The Johnson Heroes Veteran Banners are here, installed, and they look great!

Ken thanked the board and Erik for their willingness to honor people who served. He thanked Alan and Lynn Lehouiller, who made the initial donation.

Darrell said one of the banners is somewhat lost in the trees. Maybe we could find another pole for it where it could be seen better. Ken said he thinks it would be a good idea to get some brackets that could be used on telephone poles and put some banners on visible telephone poles. Others agreed.

The crew helped the sculptor install the new sculptures on Main St. It went very fast and they look very good.

Ashley Isabell, our new Treasurer is settling in well, picking up the nuances of municipal accounting very quickly and is showing all indications that we chose well.

The Water Treatment Facility generator project is nearing completion. We got a grant of about \$119K to pay for 100% of the project. The crew dug yesterday for the propane lines and Corse installed them. Brookfield Service is coming next Monday to begin the generator install and believe they will be complete by lunch on Wednesday. Village and H2O staff are going to remove the diesel from the old generator and put it in trucks.

The Village will all be off on Friday in remembrance of Juneteenth.

7. *Water/Wastewater Report and Any Action Items*

Erik read the report submitted by Dan Copp:

Operational Status of Wastewater Plant and Callouts

- E-DMR's and Wr-43's were submitted to the State
- We hauled 48 thousand gallons of sludge to Morrisville for processing in May
- Monthly Composite testing completed
- Manosh completed scheduled Grit channel cleaning, we're having to do this twice as often this spring due to infiltration in the system, we are working with the village crew weekly to narrow down the cause and location
- Began summer yard care on all plants and buildings, mowing trimming etc.
- Tim and Luke have been taking Continuing Ed classes for ongoing water and wastewater credits.

- Attended VT rural water show in Fairlee.
- Cleaned UV lights and the channels. We have a large amount of bulbs and sockets that are burned out and are beyond repair. Many more than when we last cleaned them in early winter. Parts for this system are also an issue due to its age. I have concerns whether we can make it to the facility rehab as is. I have discussed with Erik and will try to replace a ballast to see if that will help as we have 3 racks out of 16 that no bulbs are working on at all. The entire UV system was “hot wired” bypassing all controls and is on at 100% power 24 hours a day, which it was not intended for. (Erik noted that the “hot wiring” was due to losing controls in the flooding.)

Operational status of Water Plant and Callouts

- Monthly reports were submitted to the state.
- Coliform samples were negative
- Had large amount of water pumped for 2 days. Turns out the College was filling their reservoir.
- Added coolant to water plant generator as needed. Contacted Corse fuels about new propane tank installations for new generator. Both new tanks are installed at water plant.
- Contacted Brookfield, new generator install is scheduled for June 22nd.
- Continually having to shop-vac Asian lady beetles at water plant, due to large infiltration inside of plant.
- Sold 1 load of water -5000 gallons to Wright Farm via tanker truck.
- Collected 2 water samples in Katy Winn Park for boil water due to contractors digging and hitting main water line. Both samples were negative for e-coli and coliform. Handed out boil water lifts.

Ellis asked if the UV lights being on 24 hours a day is costing us more money. Erik said yes. Ellis asked if FEMA is covering the extra cost. Rosemary said no.

8. ***Electric/General Report and Any Action Items***

Erik read the report submitted by Nate Brigham:

Electric Dept. –

The elevation of vault is fixed at the new Library Site

Panel for the solar array stopped working again. Sending panel in for warranty work

Attended solar meeting for shop

Installed cover up at 13 Prospect Rock Rd

Installed/removed cover up at 96 West Settlement Rd

Changed transformer out at 369 Railroad St, 4 customers out for 1hr

Installed new Service on Little Barn Rd

Disco/reco at 46 Lamoille View Drive

Reinstalled service at 355 Rocky Rd

Installed temp pole and service at 110 Pearl St for building remodel

Met at 1299 Clay Hill for new service, sent out estimate

233 Railroad St fixed loose tap wire to transformer 2 customers out for 1hr

Removed electric service at 399 LMW for FEMA buy-out

Attended bi-weekly meetings for Shop

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

Water/Sewer -

Removed water meter at 399 LMW for FEMA buy-out

Did fire flow test for the engineering of the McClelland Hall

Replaced dual check valve at 153 Clark St

Customer had a water leak at 53 Katy-Win East causing a boil water notice, Boil water notice was lifted the following day

Tring to find infiltration into the sewer line system

General Dept. –

Started the move back into the new shop

Iron Box picked up all rented Connex boxes

Installed American Flags on Main St, 100C, School St, Pearl St, and Railroad St

Swept sidewalk and streets

Started Crosswalk painting

Safety –

Attended NEPPA safety meetings: 6/8 pole top/ bucket trk rescue

Nate attended Leadership Training through VLR

Jeff is starting CDL classes soon

9. Fire Department Report and Any Action Items

Erik read the report submitted by Chief Arjay West:

May 1 – May 28, 2026

Calls:

JFD responded to 10 calls.

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

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

The average duration was: 37 minutes

Nature:

Those calls were: 6 – automatic alarms, 1 – medical assist, 2 – vehicle crashes, and 1 – odor investigation

Staff:

The average number of firefighters that responded was: 9

Total hours of service were: 61

Other:

The new ground monitor and supply hose purchased with the Fred's Energy donation has arrived. We anticipate this new equipment will be put into service next month.

Through successful coordination with Johnson Woolen Mills, Johnson, Cambridge, Hyde Park, and North Hyde Park/Eden Fire Departments completed a facilities tour and discussion to improve emergency response and potential multi-agency operations at the property. Thank you to Johnson Woolen Mills for opening their buildings and providing staff for the orientation.

Approximately 50 Lamoille County firefighter increased their knowledge and awareness of the site.

10. Tax Attorney Engagement Letter

Ellis moved and Darrell seconded to authorize Ken to sign the engagement letter for the tax attorney. The motion was passed.

11. New Office Position

Ken asked Rosemary and Ashley if they thought the new office position could be part-time. Rosemary asked what the duties are. Ashley said she and Marla have been working on a list. She thinks it could be part-time, but having another person on the village staff would be beneficial.

Erik said there is room in the budget. BJ said at the last meeting he asked Erik to get all the salaries from last year and this year. Did he do that? Erik said no. BJ said if we have that information we can see if there is a surplus of money we could put toward a new person or if we are going to have to ask the taxpayers for more money. Ken said the position would be spread among all departments.

Ken said his thought was that the board would not act on this tonight but would just start the discussion. We have to get input from employees and then crunch more numbers.

Rosemary said if the position is 24 hours a week or more, we have to pay for benefits. Erik said he thinks it would fit as a 4 day position.

Ken suggested that Rosemary, Marla and Ashley give Erik their thoughts and he will share them with the board.

Darrell said he could see us being short-handed if Marla is out if we don't add another person. BJ said we have the same amount of employee hours as before. We are talking about adding a person to help people with what they were doing before. Now that Marla is not working for the town, she can work an additional 20% of her time for the village. Ken said the town-village split in hours that was on paper was not reality, and the jobs are evolving. BJ said he feels like we are adding a position we don't need.

Marla said she would not ask for it if she did not feel it was necessary. She often doesn't even have time to go on break or to lunch. She is working hard all day. There is a lot more reporting required now and it is very hard to do when she has multiple interruptions. There are more requirements from the state.

BJ said he is thinking about money. He suggests waiting until there is an issue instead of addressing issues that may or may not come up.

Marla said we have a huge software update coming up. She doesn't know how that will happen if she has to frequently stop and start. BJ said he prefers to pay for extra help for a short period rather than filling a permanent position.

Darrell said we could be without staff if someone is away at training, on vacation or sick. BJ said there will always be a scenario where there is no backup for someone.

Darrell said he thinks it would be helpful to know the cost of hiring a full-time or a part-time person.

12. Discuss Potential Joint Meeting Topics for June 24

Board members agreed that the town and village should discuss joint property. Darrell said he doesn't want to talk about a merger. Ken said he will not allow that on the agenda. There will be a joint executive session to discuss the Manchester catch basins.

Ken said the town has been talking about the trees on Main St. The village owns them. There are problems with pillars around them that didn't go in as we required. Darrell said if they are ours and the barriers around them are a safety hazard and Nate doesn't like plowing around them, he thinks we should remove them. Ken said they were supposed to be put in concrete with a curb but that didn't happen. Erik said curbs would help with plowing.

Darrell said a selectboard meeting attendee mentioned a handicapped spot the village refused to plow. Ken said it was addressed the day it was brought to our attention. It was cleaned out right away and for the rest of the winter.

13. Other Business

BJ said he thought Erik had agreed to work from home less during the summer. Erik said he had a few appointments recently. Ken said Erik has not worked from home without notifying him. Erik said when he has an appointment during the workday, it is more efficient not to add in 2 hours of commute time to go to it. Ken said the board asked him to watch Erik's working from

home and he has had no issues with it. Erik said he has been including notes about why he worked from home. Darrell said if the work is getting done and Erik is not working from home 3-4 days a week, he is okay with it. Ellis said he does not have an issue with it.

14. Adjourn

Ellis moved to go into executive session under 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1) to discuss pending or probable civil litigation or a prosecution, to which the village is or may be a party, because premature general public knowledge would clearly place the village at a substantial disadvantage, Darrell seconded and the motion was passed at 7:03. Ken said the executive session would be attended by the trustees and Erik. The board came out of executive session at 8:05 with no action taken.

15. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths