

JOHNSON VILLAGE TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2026

Present:

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

Others: Erik Bailey, Ashley Isabell, Tasha Wallis, Seth Jensen

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. *Call to Order*

BJ called the meeting to order at 6:00.

2. *Pledge of Allegiance*

The pledge was recited.

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

It was agreed to add review of information from a realtor and discussion of office closures.

4. *Review and Approve Minutes of Trustee Meetings*

Will moved to approve the minutes of August 10 and August 19, 2026, Darrell seconded and the motion was passed.

5. *Members of the Public*

No members of the public were present.

6. *Treasurer's Report and Any Action Items*

Ashley said electric department sales were 63.02% of budget, water sales were 62.75% of budget and wastewater sales were 59.92% of budget

Ashley said the auditors had some final questions for the 2024 audit about construction in progress. She didn't know the answers because she was not here in 2024, so she asked Rosemary to come in and help. That audit is wrapped up now. She doesn't know when we will get the final audit report. All information has been submitted for the 2025 audit and it is in the final stages of financial draft review. A state audit of FEMA projects related to the 2023 and 2024 floods was completed. Rosemary helped Ashley with that. Follow-up information needs to be submitted by October 9 on a couple of items.

Per 2023 auditors' recommendations, all bank accounts will be reconciled within NEMRC software and not just in Excel. Ashley has done most of the accounts.

Documents for the fire department loan are ready for signature. The fire truck purchase falls into a special category, so we will get another set of paperwork that also needs to be signed. Board members can come to the office to sign those documents. Ashley noted that she had to cut the check for the fire truck early so the fire department could get the truck. The warrant for that expenditure is included in the documents to be signed.

Ashley said at the last meeting she was asked to come up with a plan for when to set the village tax rate so the process would be less cumbersome next year. Her recommendation is to hold a special meeting the first Wednesday of July. The trustees all agreed to that and Ken asked Erik to add it to his calendar.

Ashley said village property taxes are due tomorrow at 4:00 p.m. As of this morning we had already received 70% and a lot more payments came in throughout the day. Ken said we should make sure that reminders of the due date are posted in all available places, including the village website

Ashley said we are currently in the midst of the AMI smart meter upgrade for billing software. It has been a huge lift for Marla and the office. Our electric billing cycle transferred on September 8 from NEMRC to El Dorado. We will bill from El Dorado in October. Next we will transfer water, then solar customers. Ashley and Marla are going to visit with Barton on September 25, because Barton has the same setup, using El Dorado for billing but NEMRC for financials. They are going to shadow people in Barton to understand the process. Erik said we purposely were among the last to make the change. Ashley said we are definitely saving time because we are benefiting from things that have been learned by those who switched earlier.

Ashley said she will be attending accounting classes on 3 afternoons and there are a few days when she will be out of the office completely. She listed those on her report.

BJ asked if it is all squared away with the town that we will get the \$1500 they owe for taxes and then we will pay them back. Ashley said yes, we received the payment. Her understanding is that the money that will be received from the state to reimburse them goes to the town anyway.

BJ asked if we are doing Positive Pay with our checks. Ashley said no, because it is redundant to what she is already doing first thing in the morning every day. BJ said if someone turns a \$500 check into a \$5,000 check, without Positive Pay the bank will cash that and with Positive Pay they won't. It provides protection. Ashley said when she checks our bank account she can see pending checks and if she calls the bank before 10:00 am they will stop payment. BJ asked, what if she is on vacation? Ashley said we will still need to have someone checking pending payments every day even with Positive Pay. Positive Pay doesn't stop the bank from paying; it just notifies us that we should look at a payment. We can look again at Positive Pay. BJ recommended doing that. He said he knows the town is doing it. He feels we should look into it as a safety precaution.

7. *Village Manager's Report and Any Action Items*

Erik read his report:

Water & Light Garage Project Update:

The new Water & Light garage is over 99% complete. There are very few minor checklist items still being attended to. The prior water and humidity issues have been fixed, with no leaks at all in the past few storms. While we haven't gotten to close-out yet, it looks very much like we will finish with a small surplus of the funds allocated to the project! A bonus development is we are also adding a pair of the latest generation of Tesla Power walls, fully installed with 100% grant funding acquired by VPPSA. This will sufficiently cover the systems the current generator isn't large enough to handle. These newer Power Walls are using the latest Lithium Iron Phosphate battery technology that doesn't have the fire issues of some legacy lithium batteries.

DR4720 FEMA WWTF Project Update: FEMA still has us in the EHR or Environmental & Health Review process. There is finally some movement, as they just started asking questions of us today.

I nominated Rosemary for the Lifetime Achievement Award for the Vermont Municipal Clerks' and Treasurers' Association (VCTMA) and she was selected to be the 2026 recipient of that award! She received the award last week at the VCTMA Awards banquet. Congratulations Rosemary, well deserved!

The Town Administrator and I are sorting through the records boxes currently in the entry way tomorrow morning at 10am. We are going to take them outside, away from the flow of pedestrian traffic and wear cartridge filter masks, nitrile gloves, and work clothes that we will change out of after the job. The boxes found to be visibly clean will be brought into the safe to be sorted and either refiled or disposed of if not needed. The ones that appear moldy will be sorted by town or village, and each entity will store them offsite until a plan to sort the records that need to be somehow saved from those that may be destroyed. My plan for those village records is to store them covered in the corner of the old W&L office in the Old Mill building.

There is a new fleet electrification grant through Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation that MAY be applicable for replacing the large bucket truck, the grant pays 80% of the new vehicle cost but requires the recipient to destroy the diesel engine of the old truck. The old truck IS eligible for an application, however it is unclear if the grant will allow for a back-end hybrid bucket truck or if all electric is required. I will be attending the informational meeting tomorrow afternoon online. If such a hybrid is allowed, I will be filing an application if the board wishes.

Ken said Erik and Nate previously told the board that the current truck would last five or six more years. Erik said it might still make sense to get a new truck if the cost is 80% covered. Ken said we would still need to pay 20%. He feels this is not a plausible idea. Will questioned the lifespan of an electric truck. Ken said we would have to install a charging system for the truck. Erik said that is not part of the grant. Will said he is not seeing a benefit to this. Darrell said he is not in favor. The board agreed that it is worth Erik attending the meeting to get information.

The new Fire Engine arrived at JFD last Thursday, it looks really sharp!

Mark Tatro and Lauren Stoddard started last Tuesday, and both are doing very well in their first week.

The 100% grant-funded water system leak detection was done, and found our system to be tight.

I produced a new draft Village Purchasing Policy with guidance from VT Emergency Management to satisfy FEMA large project requirements. I also drafted an RFP for a project manager for the WWTF project with guidance from VT Emergency Management. Both are agenda items later in this meeting for review and the purchasing policy needs signature.

The October meeting is scheduled for Columbus Day, I suggest we adjust it to Wednesday October 21st

The board agreed to schedule the next meeting for October 21 at 7:00 pm. The board agreed that during October, November, and December meetings should start at 7:00 pm.

8. *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
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- Monthly Composite Sampling Completed
- We hauled 56,000 gallons of sludge to Morrisville for processing in August
- Mowed and trimmed all plants and pump stations
- Installed Flood Gates on 8/10 for flash flood warning
- Influent Pump failure on pump #2. Bearings were seized due to silt in the pump cooling system likely due to the flood.
- When reinstalling the discharge pipe started leaking from around a repair wrap. Had the pipe welded in place by Bill Allen.

Operational status of Water Plant and Callouts

- Monthly reports were submitted to the state.
- Coliform samples were negative
- Water main break on School St. on Sunday 8/9
- Collected 2 coliform samples on 8/10
- Re- sampled 8/11 – both came back clean and boil water was lifted on 8/12.
- Sampled for disinfection by-products
- Sold 34,000 gallons of water to wright farm in August
- Leak detection company came on 8/19 and went around village water mains.
- 2 check valves started leaking above the phase converter. Installed both and are operating properly
- Phase converter not working due to water damage from the leaking check valves, Pratt and Smith electrician confirmed failure from water exposure. This had been replaced less than a year ago and they are checking to see if just the mother board can be replaced or need to replace the whole unit
- New eye wash heater installed at water plant on 8/25
- Portable dehumidifier still running until phase converter replacement
- Water loss was 13.81% in August, due to leak at the bottom of College Hill Rd

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

Erik read the report submitted by Nate Brigham:

Electric Dept. –

Mark Started 9/8

Hyde Park mutual aid – 19 ½hrs and billed out

Service upgrade 14 Cabin Cove

Outage 54 Mack Mudgett Dr, tree took service down 1 customer out for 1 1/2 hrs

Tree on the line at 120 Sinclair Rd, no outages

Fixed dip loop at 54 100C

Raised transformer vault again at Library, billed out

Removed electric service at 198 Lower Main West for buyout, billed out

Removed electric service at 35 Railroad St for buyout, billed out

Removed electric meters at 35 Railroad St for buy out

Completed true-ups for the New Library site and 1299 Clay Hill Rd

Undercoating of the trucks has started

Altec looked at the air leak in the boom of the Big bucket waiting on quote and parts

Received and installed new regulator panel for Just Do It Solar seems to be working
131 Park St 4 gang meter socket falling off pedestal, fixed it no outages

Meeting with tec group and Hubbell to install MeterMate program on computer.
This is so the computer can talk to the new meters

Meeting with Allen Stamp to make sure all new meters are ordered

Attended meet for 2 new services at 100 College Hill Rd

Fixed street lights – Main St, Railroad St, Mack Mudgett Dr, and School St

Fixed Neutral and removed street light at 249 Gould Hill Rd

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

Water/Sewer -

Water leak at 54 Mack Mudgett Dr., water is off at this time

Water leak on the 8" main at the intersection of College Hill Rd and School St,
was a faulty repair sleeve installed 2 years ago, water was off for 7hrs. Dan and Luke
assisted with the boil water notices and testing

Sewer blockage at 118 Lower Main West, due to tree roots. Dug up sewer main and found a root ball 4' long 8" in diameter from the Maple tree that was planted by the State on top of the sewer main

Checked Syphon camber on Main St was plugged fixed it

Lowered curb stop in driveway of the new Library

Had water system check for leaks through a grant, no leaks

Skate Park installed new service we made final connection in meter house

Pulled sewer pump for the sewer plant to have rebuilt

AOT picking up water to wash bridges

General Dept. –

Continuing the move back into the new shop

Antenna wire installed at 665 Railroad St

Trimmed sidewalk at 43 Railroad St. and Cold Spring

Had tires changed on S595 Bobcat and front tires of the 5500 Dump Truck

Picked up garbage/checked Cold Spring/ checked catch basins

Safety –

Attended NEPPA safety meetings: none for September

Nate finished Leadership Training through VLR

Jeff is attending CDL class in Milton

BJ asked if the bulbs in the snowflake lights can be checked to see if some are not working before it is time to put them up. He asked when the Hometown Heroes banners will be swapped out. Ken said there is no set schedule for that.

10. Fire Department Report and Any Action Items

Erik read the report submitted by Chief Arjay West:

*Johnson Fire Department Report
July 31 – Aug. 27, 2026*

Calls:

JFD responded to 10 calls.

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

4 calls occurred during the nighttime (6 pm – 6 am)
The average duration was: 58 minutes

Nature:

Those calls were: 3 – fire alarms, 1 – co alarm, 1 – structure fire, 1 – smoke condition, 1 – medical assist, 1 – hazmat, and 2 – other (1 – mutual aid: water rescue, and 1 – mutual aid: structure fire)

Staff:

The average number of firefighters that responded was: 11
Total hours of service were: 81

Other:

We participated at Belvidere Old Home Day with apparatus in their community parade. A group of our firefighters participated in a Saturday training exercise at Lake Eden to review boat orientation & skills, and practice rescue boat operations & maneuvers.

11. *Electric/General Report and Any Action Items (continued)*

Darrell asked why new tires were needed for the 5500 dump truck with 18,000 miles on it. Erik said he will ask.

12. *Discussion Regarding CDBG Grant Opportunities for LCPC to Assist with FEMA Projects*

Tasha Wallis of the Lamoille County Planning Commission said she has been visiting with communities and checking to see how LCPC is doing on customer service. Are there projects the village is interested in that LCPC is not working on? Is the village happy with the assistance LCPC provides on projects?

Ken said he thinks LCPC is doing a great job for the village. Since he has been on the board there has been one hiccup with LCPC. That was when Rob Moore left and the village garage project never got passed to anyone else. But after Ken talked to Seth Jensen that was taken care of quickly.

Ken said the village would like help figuring out how to get water and wastewater infrastructure upgrades done on Railroad Street. We would like to coordinate with the town to get Railroad Street fixed. That is a big need for us right now. The town wants to pave it, but there is no point ripping the road up unless we can replace catch basins, water lines and sewer pipes at the same time. Erik said it is mostly the stormwater infrastructure that has issues.

Ken said another thing LCPC could help with is getting a power connection to Green Mountain Power so we can have another source when the B22 line from Morrisville goes down. We used to have a second feed where we could tap into GMP, but that went away. Erik said Green Mountain Power infrastructure is close to our substation. The cost of a connection is whatever GMP decides it will be. Ken said this is needed for resiliency. *(Seth Jensen arrived at 6:38.)*

Ken said we have done some flood mitigation for the fire department building. He doesn't know what else could be done. That is something else LCPC could possibly help with. He doesn't know if floodgates would help.

Ken said we could also use help with the sewer plant project. That is a big undertaking. Seth Jensen said LCPC might be doing that under different funding.

Tasha said LCPC recently learned that Sterling Market is moving forward into the buyout process. LCPC wants to work with the village and town on plans for that property. Ken said it is all town property. It has nothing to do with the village, other than village infrastructure that is under part of it. If the town is going to lower the elevation, some infrastructure will need to be lowered.

Tasha said her understanding is that the Sterling Market property is not one of the locations where lowering the elevation would have great benefit. Properties by the Union Bank and the health center are more appropriate for that because of the shape of the river. That is based on modeling. The Sterling Market parcel is not pinching the river.

Ken said the village just did a sidewalk scoping project. It would be great to find funding for construction of a sidewalk toward Jolley.

Tasha said the village is eligible for a Better Connections grant from the Agency of Transportation and the Agency of Commerce. LCPC can look into that funding.

Tasha said LCPC has a million dollars for grant-funded planning and technical assistance work. They are supposed to work with all municipalities in Lamoille County, but those that were worst hit during the flooding will be getting more attention and funding. Seth said the grant is for planning and technical assistance. The hope is that it will be used in a way that will set up communities for implementation funding. There is money available for engineering assistance and for LCPC staff time. The grant is related to flood mitigation and resiliency, but it is broader than just things damaged by floods. It can be used to find opportunities to make communities more resilient, such as making existing neighborhoods safer or looking at where there could be expansion outside of the floodplain. Categories covered by the grant include planning technical assistance and infrastructure. Railroad Street water and sewer is a prime example of something that would fit in the infrastructure category. Tasha brought up the connection to GMP, which would also be in that category.

Ken said he feels we should be able to build hydropower. That is something that is happening in other communities.

Seth said the grant can also support upgrades to infrastructure to support areas outside the floodplain. Has the village identified any needs in that area?

Ken said the trustees are in favor of extending water and sewer lines into new areas. Will said there is potential for development off Lendway Lane on a hillside out of the floodplain. Ken said development there would involve subdivision of the 180 acres of town and village land where the garages are. Will said the village is willing to subdivide the land and sell it so that a developer could buy it. The process of dividing it will be the biggest issue. Ken said the town wants to build trails there but the village wants to sell it for development. The question is whether the brownfield area where the garages are can be subdivided off from the rest of the land.

Seth said LCPC can look into eligibility. LCPC could potentially help outline the steps necessary to subdivide and sell.

Tasha said right now Johnson is not a Tier 1B community. Tier 1B allows for Act 250 exemption for some housing developments. Johnson is not currently eligible because zoning and subdivision regulations are required. Seth said form-based code counts as zoning, but subdivision regulations would be needed. Ken said he is not interested in zoning and he thinks no other board members are.

Tasha said another grant area is critical facilities. We have already discussed the fire department and the wastewater treatment facility. There is the municipal building. Are there other critical facilities? Ken brought up flood mitigation for the lower end of Wescom Road, which is how the village accesses the well.

Tasha asked if the board is interested in having LCPC look at more flood proofing for the municipal building. Ken said that was all on the town. They took care of that and the village did flood mitigation for the lower storage building.

Tasha asked about possible flood mitigation and flood restoration projects. Ken brought up Wescom Road access. When that was flooded in the past, we needed to access the well by going through Laraway property. Seth suggested there could be investigation of formalizing access through Laraway with a right of way.

Tasha said LCPC has congressionally directed spending funding for river gauges so communities can have more early warning from gauges upstream.

Ken brought up replacing sidewalk by the library and school. Seth said there is a pot of state money for sidewalks. There would probably need to be a joint effort with the town to go through the process to be eligible for the Downtown Transportation Fund, which is a valuable tool for fixing or upgrading small sections of sidewalk. Ken said we have talked about adding a short section of sidewalk by the old Parker and Stearns building on Railroad Street

Ken asked if rehabilitation of the clock tower and clock fall under any of the grant categories. Tasha said Buildings and General Services has a small grant program for community projects. LCPC could help the village apply. Applications are due September 30 and there is no match. The cap is \$25,000. Ken asked if the town and village could both apply for this funding. Tasha said no, because they would both be applying for the same building. *(Seth and Tasha left at 7:15. Ashley left at 7:16.)*

13. Review and Possible Adoption of Draft Updated Purchasing Policy

Erik said our current purchasing policy doesn't meet FEMA requirements, so he had to make some changes, mostly to do with federal money. He strengthened language about conflict of interest. He worked with Vermont Emergency Management on this.

Will move to accept the Purchasing Policy for the Village of Johnson, Vermont as presented in the meeting packet, Ellis seconded and the motion was passed.

14. Review and Possible Approval of Draft RFP for a Disaster Recovery Consultant (Project Manager) for the FEMA WWTF Rebuild Project

Erik presented a draft RFP for a project manager for the wastewater treatment facility construction project. Ken asked if LCPC could manage the project. Erik said we have to do a formal bid process. LCPC could do it if they are the winning bidder. Ken said Alec Jones did a good job managing the garage project. Erik said Seth Jensen would be the one to manage this project because he has relevant experience. The board agreed that Erik should go ahead with the RFP as presented.

15. Office Closures

Darrell said he doesn't think the office should close as much as it does. He doesn't think there is much need to close it except on holidays. His thought is that if we have employees in the building, the village window should stay open. He thinks we can maintain a functioning window during all work hours. Ellis said he does not agree. BJ, Will, and Ken said they agree with Darrell. Ken said he will put this topic on the next agenda and the board can make a motion once it is a warned item.

Ellis said now that the town and village office functions are separate, if the town window is closed, that puts more burden on the village because village employees still need to go to the window and explain that they can't help. If the town can't be there, he feels the village employees should not have to take care of their customers.

16. Information from Realtors

Erik said realtors reviewed the three village properties that were previously discussed. They think one on Reservoir Road is worth about \$80,000 and the others essentially have no value.

Ken asked about the property that has the snowmobile club building on it, which was not included. Erik said all the taxable properties were given to the realtor. Ashley gave him all the tax bills and that parcel was not included. Ken said we need to find out if that property should be taxable. He doesn't know if it is legitimate that we are not paying taxes because the snowmobile club is using it. We own the property and we owned a building there that was burnt down and rebuilt by the snowmobile club. He feels that means we own the building. He would like the snowmobile club to buy the property from the village.

Darrell said the small lot within Hooper's land off Reservoir Road does us no good, but what will it cost to get it surveyed? Ken said we could just convey it to Hooper or to anyone without surveying it.

Ken said he was told that the Long Trail goes through the village parcel off West Settlement Road and that the Green Mountain Club has first right of refusal. He does not know if that is true but maybe they would want to buy it.

Will said he would be in favor of conveying the two small lots to a new owner at no cost. The board agreed that if we are going to do that we should ask the new owner to pay any document fees. Will said he thinks the price suggested by the realtor for the 48.2 acre property on Reservoir Road is reasonable. He suggested seeing if any adjoining property owners are interested in purchasing the property. He suggested conveying it as is and not doing a survey as long as the buyer agrees. Ken said he thinks it would only cost about \$300 to \$400 to have the boundaries checked.

The board agreed that Erik should see if the Green Mountain Club is interested in us conveying the small property off West Settlement Road to them for no money other than them paying any fees. He should also check to see if Hooper is interested in the small property within the Hooper parcel being conveyed at no cost. And Erik should reach out to surrounding property owners of the 48 acre property to see if there is any interest in purchasing it.

17. Executive Session – Contract Discussion

BJ moved to find that premature general public knowledge regarding a contract renewal would clearly place the village at a substantial disadvantage because the board of trustees risks disclosing items that are negotiable prematurely, Will seconded and the motion was passed.

BJ moved to enter executive session to discuss a contract under the provision of 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1) and the motion was seconded and passed at 7:46.

The board came out of executive session at 8:27 with no action taken.

18. Executive Session – Employee Evaluation

BJ moved to enter executive session for evaluating an employee as allowed by 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3), Darrell seconded and the motion was passed at 8:27.

19. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths