

# TOWN OF HIGHGATE

## Selectboard

### Approved Minutes

**Regular Meeting**  
**February 7, 2013 @ 7:00pm**

**NOTE: All actions taken are unanimous unless otherwise stated.**

#### **A. Call to Order & Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order at 7:03pm by Henry Rainville, Chair.

**Highgate Selectboard Members:** Henry Rainville, Chair; Brian Rowell, Vice Chair; Luke Choiniere - arrived late at 7:22pm

**Highgate Staff:** Heidi Britch-Valenta, Town Administrator; Tom Racine, Town Treasurer; Wendi Dusablon, Town Clerk

**Public:** see sign in sheet

#### **B. Public Comment**

None

#### **C. Minutes**

Motion by Henry Rainville to accept the minutes from the January 17, 2013 regular meeting – with corrections, seconded by Brian Rowell – **APPROVED.**

Motion by Henry Rainville to accept the minutes from the January 28, 2013 special meeting – as written, seconded by Brian Rowell – **APPROVED.**

#### **D. Town Treasurer – Tom Racine**

##### **1. Pay bills as presented**

Brian Rowell asked about the batteries, which are for the thermal imager for the fire department. Henry Rainville inquired about the pump service, also for the fire department. Tom Racine stated that Dan Desorcie was here for a few days servicing trucks, but is not sure how often they do this. Henry believes this may be the third year in a row they have had issues with the pump. Brian Rowell had questions about Reynolds & Sons and the turn out gear. This is also for the fire department. Henry asked if we had gotten a bill for pumping the septic at the library, yes we did \$220.00.

##### **2. Miscellaneous**

- Henry has reviewed the rough draft of the town report for 2012. He did not find anything, but did not go through it with a fine toothed comb.
- Tom is looking into a possible federal tax refund on fuel. He has requested three years of history. He spoke to the tax manager at Suburban, and he does not have the data from Pyrofax. There is an IRS form to send in for the refund. Tom will also check with Berger, as that is where the fire department gets their fuel. Henry asked Tom if he remembered the price of the fuel, as it is not stated on the slip. The per gallon price is over \$4.00 on the most recent shipment. Tom said when he spoke to the tax manager there is a form that we should be filling out to be federally exempt. Annually they are going to be applying for this refund. Brian Rowell added that for his business they apply at the end of every year.
- We are all set with the printers (Repro) for the town report.
- There appears to be a leak in the water line between the town office and the public library. Steve had turned off the water, and Liza called to say they had no water. Brian Rowell asked where else that line goes. It crosses into flat iron park and it T's off and crosses over towards Steinhours and to the library. It used to feed over to Malaney's but that has been taken care of. If the weather warms up the road crew can try to find where the line is. Tom Racine and Steve Ploof went to check the

pump and turn the switch back on because there are people over at the library tonight.

*Luke Choiniere arrived @ 7:22pm*

## **E. Highway Department updates – Steve Ploof**

### **1. Miscellaneous**

- Steve Ploof updated the board that things are going well overall. Steve's truck has had the lines freeze up. Charlebois has looked at it, and a sensor has been ordered for it. The differential light kept coming on. Sharon Bousquet thought there might be a small air leak or a faulty switch. Turns out, it was the air dryer that gave out. There was water in the lines that was freezing. Steve has drained the tank by itself and a little came out, but no real moisture in it. The International's don't have the air dryer like the Mack's do.
- Steve added they are waiting for it to snow again. They are down to about half of their sand supply.
- The road crew has been going out to deal with culverts and ditches full of ice and have dug a few out. They have thawed out four culverts.
- Motion by Henry Rainville at 7:35pm to enter into executive session with Steve Ploof to discuss contracts, seconded by Brian Rowell – **APPROVED.**

Motion by Henry Rainville to enter back into the regular meeting at 7:51pm, seconded by Luke Choiniere – **APPROVED.**

## **F. Animal Control Officer – Ray Dixon**

### **1. Updates**

Ray was present to talk about the Humane Society contract. The highlighted sections are things they do not do. Ray wants to know if when he has an injured animal what does he do with it? If a dog has been struck by a car and has a broken leg, for example, where does he bring it? Henry Rainville asked if the dollar amounts have changed in the contract – no, they have not. The highlighted areas are different from the last contract, though. Heidi Britch-Valenta clarified that if you bring a dog to the Humane Society because of an abuse case, you would have to enter into a contract with them to board the animal(s), or bring the animal(s) elsewhere. Ray Dixon stated that at night is the problem, during the day you can find people to help you. Heidi brought up the issue of people wanting to get rid of animals and they can't. They end up abandoning the animal(s) and they become "strays". Last week we had this very situation in Highgate. A dog was brought to the Humane Society last week as a "stray" and as it turned out, the person that brought the dog in was the actual owner of the dog. But how do you call someone a liar? The dog, a pitbull, is now spayed and going up for adoption. Ray also added that we have over 50 dogs that we know of that were not licensed last year. We have sent postcards already to remind about licensing by April 1<sup>st</sup>. Plenty of people have multiple dogs, but only license one or two. Luke Choiniere feels the penalty is not strict enough. Henry Rainville feels we need to start pursuing these people now and not wait until April 1<sup>st</sup>. A lot of people feel it is not necessary to register smaller dogs. It is not fair to those who do license their dogs, all of their dogs. Henry Rainville asked Ray for suggestions with regard to the highlighted areas on the contract. Ray's biggest concern is an injured animal. Brian Rowell stated that we know what is best, but who makes that decision? The question is not asked if it is a deer. A dog is a different issue, an emotional issue. Brian Rowell asked about the game warden. They will not come for dogs. The only place that Ray knows of at night is the Milton Animal Hospital, and it is \$90.00 to walk through the door. The Selectboard will need to discuss this. Henry gives his blessing to pursue unlicensed dog issues now and not wait. Ray will get with Wendi and Heidi to format a letter in the next few weeks. Luke Choiniere asked what is a good time frame to give these dog owners?

Two weeks time will be adequate for those that did not license last year was the consensus from the board.

### **G. Town Clerk – Wendi Dusablon**

- Update on deadlines that have passed or fast approaching:  
January 24        deadline for petitions for warning  
January 28        deadline for petitions for elected offices on ballot  
January 30        deadline for consent of candidate forms for ballot  
February 27        deadline is 5pm to register to vote at the March 5<sup>th</sup>  
Town Meeting Day election
- The ballots have arrived for the town side (copy in front of each of the Selectboard members). We should have the MVU ballots next week and Wendi will begin sending out absentees, as several have been requested already. We will be using the tabulator for Town Meeting this year, there will be no hand counting, other than looking for write-ins after the polls close.
- As of today, we have licensed 73 dogs. We have quite a lot more to do, as we have purchased 800 tags for this year. A reminder that the rabies clinic in Highgate will be at the fire station on Saturday, March 23 from 10am – noon.
- Liquor & tobacco license for 2013 – Desorcies Market  
Motion by Henry Rainville to adjourn the regular Selectboard meeting and enter into the board of local control at 7:26pm.  
Motion by Henry Rainville to enter back into the regular Selectboard meeting at 7:29pm.
- Wendi has received an email request from Angela Carr with the Highgate School Parent/School Connection (PSC). They would like to have a flea market in the town park on Saturday, June 8<sup>th</sup>. A back up date would be Saturday, June 15<sup>th</sup>. The Selectboard was fine with this request. Wendi will let Angela Carr know.
- Wendi attended the ACS / Xerox (land records) Vermont users group meeting in Milton on February 6<sup>th</sup>. There are currently 38 municipalities in Vermont using this system.
- Wendi will be attending the Franklin County Clerks meeting in Sheldon on February 13<sup>th</sup>.
- Town Meeting Tune-Up in Montpelier is February 28<sup>th</sup>. Pat McGovern will be attending on behalf of Highgate and will be traveling down with Yvon Dandurand from Franklin.

### **H. Town Administrator – Heidi Britch-Valenta**

#### **1. Draft solid waste management plan**

Heidi had a copy of the plan in their packets (documents attached to these minutes). The discussion can take place over several meetings. We will be required to separate five categories of waste. The town, as its own waste management entity, will be responsible for going into schools to inform and assist them in the management of each category. We will also be required to work with five businesses each year (new ones each year). Infrastructure will need to be set up to manage and document the difference in waste stream and report back to ANR. We will need to implement a SWIP and dedicate a web page. A town wide survey will be needed and public meetings for input. Heidi commented that this will ultimately be a lot of work, and that is why more municipalities are joining the district. These are all mandates, due to Act 48. Your SWIP plan is good for five years and by the end you are supposed to be compliant. Brian Rowell asked about funding. SWIP is mandatory, even as an independent, you need a SWIP (**Solid Waste Implementation Plan**). Henry Rainville thinks a lot of these are good ideas. He wants to go to the MURF and see how it really works. Brian feels its all hogwash until they police it. The household hazardous waste requirement is to have year round access by the end of the five year management plan. The least appealing task would be working on septic / sludge and waste water residuals. Potentially one of the most

cumbersome tasks will be the documentation of all this. Tom Racine asked if a pilot program had been done. Heidi responded that we are the pilot. Henry added that he has seen shows where the food scrap does not go to the landfill, it goes to animals. Heidi commented that MVU participates in composting. This all could result in a fair amount of work, meaning additional personnel down the road. Henry would like to involve the public in further discussions.

**2. Landfill post closure draft procedure**

Heidi had hoped to have more information by this meeting, but she does not. Emily Hackett, engineer from Dubois & King, did not have any major objections to what the state is proposing. We will continue to test until an engineer can put together a packet of information and submit it to the State of Vermont explaining that we are no longer presenting any risk to the community. Our numbers, although they have elevated, are not scary or critical. Emily thought that, at a minimum, she could get a quote for the board to let them know what it would cost to put information together for the state. This information would include data so the Highgate landfill could be tested far less frequently. If we can make a case, they are willing to listen. Hopefully Dubois & King will be able to do that for us. Henry felt the meeting with Buzz Surwillow from ANR was positive, but its up to us to make a case to our engineers in saying we can temper this down so it is not costing us so much going forward.

**3. Bridge 25 work options**

Info is in their packets, and Henry would like to talk about the numbers later in executive session.

**4. Bridge 25 fact sheet for Town Meeting Day**

Heidi would like more of an inkling from the board on how they would like this to work. Heidi noted that our next meeting on Feb. 21<sup>st</sup> is our information session.

**5. Miscellaneous**

- Heidi has received information from the state regarding proposed town highway projects. We made the short list for engineering and design in the proposed draft budget. If this goes through as it is, we should be assigned a project manager in July to start working with us on Bridge 25. This is great news, and historically they said the budgets have always passed. Heidi sent a note to our senators and reps to pass the budget for us.
- Heidi also noted that Sheriff Norris will be at our next meeting on Feb. 21<sup>st</sup>. He made a suggestion that we adopt an ordinance that would mirror the state speed limit so that ticket money would come to the town. Henry remembers all the roads being posted years ago, before his time on the board. Brian asked for some clarification. Heidi understands that if the town has an ordinance of its own that mirrors the state, for any tickets issued in that area the funds would come to the town. Sheriff Norris used Route 78 as an example. Sheriff Norris also had some suggestions for the park and ride (Frog Pond). It could be posted that it is open all night for carpooling, but not for loitering. Sheriff Norris had some suggestions for the wording of this also.

**I. Selectboard items**

**1. Humane Society contract – MVR contract – Tri Town contract**

Copies of these contracts are in the packet. These contracts as well as management bylaws were forwarded to Dave Barra and his comments are included also. It was suggested that instead of transferring the building (arena) to the towns of Franklin, Swanton & Highgate that instead the three boards establish the Tri-Town as its own entity and transfer ownership to the entity. This would be helpful if any town would opt out after the bond is up. He also suggested taking the extra step now to avoid problems in the future. Dave Barra had several changes for the bylaws. He felt the interlocal contract was polished and

ready to move. Heidi can forward information from Dave Barra to the other towns also.

**2. Personnel policy**

This has been through many edits. The last edit incorporated Dave Barra's final suggestions. He did have a suggestion on better ways to state the fact that library employees ultimately answer to a different governing board. Dave Barra had comments on the overtime, changing that clause. Those were the bulk of his comments. When the Selectboard is comfortable with these edits, we will then have a personnel policy. Henry Rainville suggested the board take the policy home and read it, so they can sign off at the next meeting. Henry would like this to be part of the next meeting on Feb. 21<sup>st</sup> and to be approved at that time. This will also be the night of our budget review. Feb. 21<sup>st</sup> will be YAY or NAY on the personnel policy.

**J. Upcoming events and announcements**

- February 14 6pm Zoning Board Mtg – CANCELLED
- February 21 7pm Selectboard Mtg & Budget Review @ Highgate Elementary
- March 4 6pm Planning Commission Mtg
- March 5 10am Town Meeting @ Highgate Elementary (polls open 7am-7pm)

**Notice of vacancies: Zoning Board – 1 open seat Planning Comm. – 1 open seat**

**K. Executive Session**

Motion by Henry Rainville to enter into executive session at 8:39pm to discuss contracts, seconded by Brian Rowell – **APPROVED.**

Motion by Henry Rainville to exit executive session at 9:30pm, seconded by Luke Choiniere – **APPROVED.**

Motion by Henry Rainville to sign the Humane Society contract, seconded by Brian Rowell – **APPROVED.**

Motion by Henry Rainville to sign the Missisquoi Valley Rescue contract, seconded by Luke Choiniere – **APPROVED.**

**L. Adjournment**

Motion by Henry Rainville to adjourn the meeting at 9:30pm, seconded by Luke Choiniere – **APPROVED.**

Respectfully submitted by:

\_\_\_\_\_Wendi Dusablon, Town Clerk

Minutes approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_Henry Rainville, Selectboard Chair