

TOWN OF HIGHGATE

Selectboard

Approved Minutes

- **Site Visit to Highgate School / St. Armand Rd. Re: Drainage Issue**
 - **250th Anniversary Celebration Planning Committee Meeting**
 - **Regular Highgate Selectboard Meeting**

April 18, 2013 @ 5:30pm, 6:30pm & 7:00pm

NOTE: All actions taken are unanimous unless otherwise stated.

- At 5:30pm Henry Rainville and Jeff Towle met with Highgate School Board members and homeowners along St. Armand Road to further discuss the drainage issue. Please see more notes under the Hwy. Dept. section of these minutes with regard to this site visit.

A. Call to Order & Roll Call – 250th Anniversary Committee Mtg.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm. Present for the 250 Anniversary Meeting were: Charlie Nye, Dennis Nolan, Karen Gagne-Fortin, Mary Laroche, Jeff Towle, Henry Rainville, Heidi Britch-Valenta, Tom Racine, Wendi Dusablon (Luke Choiniere arrived late).

B. Discussion regarding 250th Anniversary Celebration

The date is firm as July 27, 2013. Heidi had prepared a tentative schedule of events and an approximate budget (attached to these minutes). The food committee will be Wendi, Mary Laroche and Jeff. We will plan for 500 people. It was mentioned that maybe the local churches can help with food. Wendi will ask Shirley Fecteau about the Methodist Church and Karen's aunt Ramone Choiniere is active at St. Louis Church. Individual desert cups from Ben & Jerry's would work well if we can get them. Motion by Jeff Towle to budget not more than \$6,500.00 to include food and other activities, seconded by Luke Choiniere – **APPROVED**. This will be coming out of the Community Development Fund. Other activities mentioned were a Pie Baking Contest, Dunking Booth, Antique Car Show, Bon Fire, Storyteller, Hot Air Balloon Walk Through, Mike & The Big Blue Trunk, Historical Sites Tour, BBQ, and a Concert. Karen Gagne-Fortin added that during the BBQ from 3-6pm time frame, we could add some more musical acts. Karen will try to contact Michelle Choiniere and Wendi will ask her son about the MVU Jazz Band performing in the afternoon. Luke Choiniere stated that the fee for the bus (for the tour) would be to cover the fuel. Wendi will check pricing on banners to advertise. We will meet again @ 6:30 prior to the next Selectboard Meeting on May 2nd.

C. Adjournment

The 250th celebration meeting was adjourned @ 7:00pm.

D. Call to Order & Roll call – Regular Selectboard Meeting 4/18/2013

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Henry Rainville, Chair. Those present were:

Highgate Selectboard Members: Henry Rainville, Chair; Jeff Towle; Luke Choiniere

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

Public: please refer to sign in sheet.

E. Public Comment

None

Henry Rainville mentioned on camera that we had held another committee meeting at 6:30pm regarding the 250 celebration and he went through the list of

activities we have planned. The motion was made on camera as follows: Motion by Jeff Towle to budget not more than \$6,500.00 to include food and other activities for the 250 celebration, which will come from the Community Development Fund, seconded by Luke Choiniere – **APPROVED**.

F. Approval of minutes

Minutes from the April 4, 2013 regular Selectboard meeting – motion by Henry Rainville to accept them with corrections, seconded by Luke Choiniere - **APPROVED**.

G. Town Treasurer – Tom Racine

1. Pay bills as presented

Henry asked about the arena alarm system and Tom responded that it is billable to MAHA. It was to replace some batteries. Henry also asked about Prescott Inc. Steve Ploof responded that it was for a culvert on Cassidy Road. Luke asked Steve about how they were doing on stone. Steve has a report for them during the Hwy. section.

2. Misc. from Tom

Tom did not have anything else, but Ron Nye, Town Auditor, was present. He stated they are working on contacting different towns to get perspective on various bids they have received for the audit. They are also working on policies and procedures. They hope to have something for the Selectboard next week. Henry asked Ron what the goal was and when the audit will start. Tom pointed out that there are two pieces; 1) the compilation and 2) the audit. The audit would start in May 2014 and would not be finalized until the close of the fiscal period, August or September 2014. Jeff Towle asked how many proposals they had. There are three; Sullivan/Powers, AM Peisch, and Kittell, Branagan & Sargent. Jeff also asked Tom about the website. We have a web training on Thursday, April 25 @ 3pm. We will be closing the office early on this day. Ron Nye asked the Selectboard if there were any specific questions they wanted him to ask. Henry stated this needs to be done. Henry would need to see the proposals to generate questions. Heidi asked why is the compilation hinging on the arena vote? It really is not, it is more of a timing thing, per Ron Nye. Henry said he is not casting any doubt on anything, but we need to get this audit done and move on.

H. Highway Department – Steve Ploof

1. Truck repair estimate

This winter there was some damage done to Steve's truck when the wing came in on a soft shoulder and caused damage to the door. The estimate includes paint, glass & installation. Jeff asked why the estimate stated "zero" deductible. Tom is not sure, but will look into that. Motion by Henry Rainville to have Charbonneau's Body Shop fix the door on Steve's truck, seconded by Jeff Towle – **APPROVED**.

2. Request to work on Rheaume Rd.

Pete Paquette has requested to bore under the Rheaume Rd. This is for utilities and will not cause any harm to the road itself. He is looking for the right of way to do it. Motion by Jeff Towle to authorize Pete Paquette to tunnel under the Rheaume Rd. as per the diagram and to work with Steve Ploof, seconded by Luke Choiniere – **APPROVED**.

3. Site visit to brush depot

Steve Ploof will meet all three Selectboard members on Saturday, April 19th @ 8:30am to do a site visit at the brush depot location.

4. Miscellaneous

- Steve presented a report to the Selectboard with regard to the stone being put down. The list was by road with tonnage for each location.
- Last fall the Selectboard had asked Steve about extending the guard rail on Mill Hill. Steve has a proposal which includes installation. This would extend the guard rail from where it currently ends down to where it levels out by The Holimans house. Henry asked what was budgeted, and Tom referred to the town report, \$3,150.00. Henry asked Heidi to talk to

Friends of Northern Lake Champlain regarding this area on Mill Hill. Heidi will put this on the agenda for the next meeting and ask them to join us for the discussion.

- Jeff asked Steve about the corner of Carter Hill Rd. and Hempyard Rd. There is a big tree that came down, and there is still a lot of wood left to be cleaned up. Steve said it was left there because Pierre Ferland wanted it. Steve will check with Pierre and if he doesn't want it, the road crew will clean it up.
- Henry added that the town has purchased a truck – a Western Star. Steve asked for a tentative date, but we don't have one yet. If we don't hear back from J&B in the next few days, Heidi will call them.
- Earlier tonight@ 5:30pm, Jeff and Henry did a site visit starting at the white building at Highgate Elementary and finishing at The Frog Pond. They crossed over five land owners property. Also present were: Andy King, Chad Larivee, Keith Ploof, David Desorcie, and Chad Larivee's sister. Luke Choiniere was not at this site visit. Henry Rainville does not want to set precedence. This should be able to be accomplished with the cooperation of the town, school and the land owners. An excavator would be needed for a day, and the town can supply the operator. Steve stated that Mike Menard from Swanton would treat us well as far as the price to flush that pipe using their equipment. Henry feels the land owners have a role in this. Jeff pointed out that no engineering study has been done yet. Henry feels that the school can move forward with what they need to do, and it does not hinge on what the town decides to do going towards The Frog Pond.

I. Law Enforcement – Sheriff Norris

Sheriff Bob Norris was present. As of April 1st, Sheldon is now sharing a contract with Highgate, so we are back on 7-day a week coverage with FCSO at no additional expense to Highgate residents. He had a quarterly report to share, keeping in mind it was for the months of January, February and March and at that time we were not on 7-day coverage. The FCSO responded to 59 complaints for the first quarter of 2013, which resulted in 3 arrests (burglary, DUI, domestic assault). There were a total of 23 tickets issues for about \$4,500.00. The weather is now cooperating and the roads are clear. His plea to people is to SLOW DOWN or get ticketed. He has received emails from a Highgate resident regarding the speed limit on Route 78 heading towards East Highgate, past McCuins. There is a push to possibly reduce the speed in that area, it is currently 50mph through there. AOT and DMV have also been contacted. The residents in that area are quite serious about this petition. They plan to come to the second meeting in May to approach the board about this. The FCSO will be more than happy to assist. Henry Rainville feels it is hard to bend the state to reduce speed limits, but Sheriff Norris added that it can be done through persistence and community involvement. A section of Route 7 in Swanton near Chase Auto has recently been reduced. Henry hears from residents that a huge concern is that the road is so rough that it rattles the houses. We had previously requested use of the speed cart and Sheriff Norris stated that their speed cart is currently being repaired. He also wanted to discuss the issue of syringes being found in areas of town (Mill Hill, Hempyard Road, Fortin Road and Carter Hill Road). Sheriff Norris did drive down Hempyard Road. He asked Steve Ploof if this is a town road. Steve stated it is a class 4 road all the way to the airport property line. Steve said the town has tried to block access but the four wheeler riders complained that they could not get by. Sheriff Norris asked why we open our roads up to four wheelers in the first place. Steve stated that on class 4 roads, they are open to the four wheelers. Sheriff Norris commented on the amount of tires, couches and miscellaneous items that are dumped on Hempyard Road. He added that we can't stop the four wheelers from the airport end, but we can stop them on our end. April St. Francis is a Carter Hill resident. She said that the block was removed for the snowmobilers. She and her boys cleaned up Hemyard Road last year. She drove down there the other day and thought it looked pretty good compared to last year. Luke Choiniere,

health officer, has walked this road. He has picked up syringes on Hempyard Road. Luke displayed how to properly dispose of syringes if you find them. He had an empty laundry detergent bottle (solid color, not transparent). You must deposit the syringes carefully while wearing gloves, screw on the cap tightly and secure with duct tape. You need to then mark the bottle in permanent marker DO NOT RECYCLE. Brian Spears will be present when the kids rake the parks this weekend. He will have containers available, just in case people need them for this purpose. Luke Choiniere stated that the syringes on Hempyard were found before you get to that one house. Sheriff Norris asked residents to be vigilant and call if they see suspicious behavior or unwelcome or unexpected traffic, especially on a road like Hempyard that only has one residence. Heidi asked Sheriff Norris if he had heard from the school board chair at Highgate Elementary with regard to a shot gun shell found on the school property. No, he has not heard from them, but would be happy to sit down and hear their concerns. Henry asked Sheriff Norris to keep The Frog Pond park and ride on their radar. There is a lot of activity over there and a lot of garbage being dumped there as well. There is a business owner on one side that has voiced concerns. Sheriff Norris stated that you would need an ordinance to give the FCSO some bite to enforce the issues taking place at The Frog Pond.

J. Green Up Day Info – May 4th

1. Safety recommendations

These safety recommendations for the collection of syringes if found during Green Up Day, and are mentioned above under law enforcement.

2. Tire disposal

April St. Francis stated that she has researched the costs associated with tire disposal. Casella charges \$5.00 per tire to dispose of them, which is why people are just ditching them on the sides of the roads, or down a bank. She has found a company out of Maine, BDS Waste Disposal, that will pick them up for \$2.00 per tire for tires up to 22.5". They require a minimum of 50 tires to do the pick up. April thinks it would be worth doing a tire collection event next weekend in conjunction with Hazardous Waste Day to give people an affordable way to get rid of their tires. She has 12 at her house to get rid of. She would like to do this event now before the mosquitos are breeding in the water that accumulates in tires. Jeff Towle asked Heidi Britch-Valenta if she knows if the NWSWD has a program for tires. Heidi is not sure. BDS would supply a box trailer for collection which would need to be managed so people don't just leave their tires there. April will contact BDS to see if April 27th will work for them. If it works, we will add the information to our newspaper ad going in next week to promote the event.

3. Green Up bags

Bags are available at the Highgate Town Clerks office now. Please pick some up and leave your pick up information with Wendi.

K. Town Clerk – Wendi Dusablon

1. My-T-Fine liquor license

Motion by Henry Rainville to enter into the local control board @ 8:15pm, seconded by Luke Choiniere – **APPROVED.**

Motion by Henry Rainville to enter back into the regular Selectboard meeting @ 8:18pm, seconded by Luke Choiniere – **APPROVED.**

2. Dog license update

As of today, we have licensed 593 dogs. Reminder "late" notices went out on April 10th, and we had a good response to that. The last notice, which will also have the warrant with it, will go out on April 26th.

3. Special Election – June 18th – warning to be signed

Wendi had prepared the warning for the June 18th special election to add two additional selectboard members. Henry read the election warning aloud on camera. Wendi needs to post this by May 1st and run it in the paper also.

Motion by Henry Rainville to sign off on the election warning, seconded by Luke Choiniere – **APPROVED.**

4. Special Election – June 18th – update

We have had 8 people pick up petitions so far, and as of today, we have had 4 petitions returned. Deadline to return them is Monday, May 13th @ 5pm.

5. Green Up Day – May 4th

Posters are up around town, it is advertised on the board in the park, and also on the towns FaceBook page. Bags are available now at the Highgate Town Clerks Office.

6. Hazardous Waste Collection Day – April 27th 8am – noon

This is also posted around town, on the board in the park and on the FaceBook page. Henry Laroche, Deputy Health Officer, will be working at Hazardous Waste Day for us from 8am – noon at the sandshed near the Transfer Station. April will be there collecting tires, and Jon LaShure from VT Shred will be there to shred documents for \$6.00 per bankers box. No paperclips or plastic, staples are ok.

7. Voter registration drive @ MVU – May 1st 9:30am – 1:00pm

Vermont Secretary of State, Jim Condos, will be at MVU on Wednesday, May 1st for a voter registration drive. This is a community registration drive and is open to anyone from any Vermont town that would like to register to vote. This will take place in the MVU lobby from 9:30am – 1:00pm.

8. Website training – April 25th

Our office will be closing at 3:00pm on April 25th so we can all have our webinar training on our new website! The office closure has been posted and Wendi has emailed all our regular researchers of this early closing on April 25th.

9. Conference Table & chairs

Jeff Towle asked Wendi what the status is on the conference table and chairs. It is fully expected that they will be here around May 1st. Wendi will contact WB Mason for more details.

L. Town Administrator – Heidi Britch-Valenta

1. Survey bids

We have received bids from Button, Dubois & King and TDH. These are to survey the 4 acre parcel known as the Dalcourt property on the north side of Route 78 between VELCO & Joey's Jct. Bakery. Henry Rainville noted that two of them appear to be estimates and one is a quote. Motion by Jeff Towle that we use TDH based on the contract agreement of \$3,800.00 that they have presented, seconded by Luke Choiniere – **APPROVED**. Discussion: 2 Yes / 1 No - Henry Rainville added that he was going to go with Button.

2. Sidewalk committee – need one Selectboard member (?)

Heidi noted that it is prudent to form a sidewalk committee with representatives from the Planning Commission, landowners and community members. She is hopeful that a Selectboard member would be interested in participating also. Henry would like to be a point person, but would not attend many meetings. Luke Choiniere asked if the meetings would be early. Heidi is not sure yet, as the committee is not formed. A Selectboard member is not necessary, Heidi would keep them in the loop. Luke said he would try to attend when he could. Heidi would also like Steve Ploof involved, and a representative from the public library. Heidi feels that 4-5 people on the committee is a good number, and if land owners want to be involved she would support that also. Jeff and Henry are comfortable with Heidi reporting to the Selectboard.

3. Department update schedule

Heidi is looking for perspective on how often the Selectboard wants to hear updates from different departments and subcontractors. She left MVR off the list, but knows that they meet once per year. Jeff would like to come back to the next meeting with this list and their recommendations.

4. Site visit to State Park

Heidi will set up a time that will work for as many as possible to attend. This is located in Highgate Springs near Country Club Rd. Fridays are best for

Henry and noon works best for Luke. Jeff is also interested in going. Henry is not familiar with that area at all.

M. Selectboard items

1. HVAC

Henry has not heard back. Bruce Kilbury picked up the plans on Monday, April 15th.

2. Electrical work

We have a quote for the electrical work. We are eligible to put work in the equipment grant, because we can include anything that improves safety. The last line item is bringing two garage bays up to code. The town would pay for 50% and the grant 50% of the additional \$2,800.00, if we are approved. This was signed previously, and with the Selectboards blessing, can now be sent in. Motion by Henry Rainville to authorize the VLCT PACIF Equipment Grant application, in the amount of \$9,547.25, to be sent in, seconded by Luke Choiniere – **APPROVED.**

3. Personnel policy amendments

The only changes were:

On page 6 – we changed the date for all vacation to be taken by to **December 31st** (instead of April).

On page 6 – we changed the allowed OT to be carried over to **80 hours** (instead of 40 hours).

On page 7 – we changed the date that comp time has to be used by to **December 31st** (instead of April).

There were no other changes. Motion by Luke Choiniere to sign off on the personnel policy amendments, seconded by Henry Rainville – **APPROVED.** Discussion: Jeff Towle asked that Heidi make sure that everyone receives a copy of the amendments. Heidi forgot to change Brian Rowell's name to Jeff Towle's name on the amendments for signature. She will fix this. Her letterhead also needs to be updated.

4. Miscellaneous

- Henry Rainville mentioned that it was asked of him, with regard to the reconsideration vote in Swanton, after this re-vote on May 14th, can there be another reconsideration vote? We are not sure of the answer, but Wendi will see what she can find out.
- Eric Chevalier asked about the State Park site visit. Jeff Towle gave him some background and where the property is located in Highgate Springs.

N. Upcoming Events

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|------------|------------|--|
| • April 27 | 8am – noon | Hazardous Waste Day / Tire Collection / Document Shredding |
| • May 2 | 6:30pm | 250 Committee Mtg. |
| • May 2 | 7:00pm | Regular Selectboard Mtg. |
| • May 4 | | Green Up Day |
| • May 6 | 6:00pm | Planning Comm. & Zoning Board of Adj. combined meeting |
| • May 6 | | Tri-Town Public Info Session in Swanton |
| • May 13 | 5:00pm | Deadline for Selectboard petitions to be handed in |
| • May 14 | 7am – 7pm | Re-vote in Swanton (arena bond vote) |
| • June 18 | 7am – 7pm | Highgate Selectboard Special Election |

O. Executive Session

Motion by Henry Rainville to enter into executive session to discuss legal matters and contracts @ 8:43pm, seconded by Luke Choiniere – **APPROVED.**

Motion by Henry Rainville to exit executive session @ 9:55pm, seconded by Jeff Towle – **APPROVED.**

P. Adjournment

Motion by Henry Rainville to adjourn the meeting at 10:00pm, seconded by Luke Choiniere – **APPROVED.**

Respectfully submitted by:

_____ Wendi Dusablon, Town Clerk

Minutes approved by:

_____ Henry Rainville, Selectboard Chair