

TOWN OF HIGHGATE

Selectboard Mtg.

August 6, 2015 @ 7pm

Approved Minutes

NOTE: All actions taken are unanimous unless otherwise stated.

A. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order by Jeff Towle, Chair @ 7:00pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Highgate Selectboard Members- Jeff Towle, Chair; Diana O'Hara; Randy Connelly *absent* – Paulette Tatro & Chris Yates

Highgate Office Staff – Wendi Dusablon - Town Clerk; Heidi Britch-Valenta – Town Admin; Shelley Laroche – Town Treasurer

Public / Other – Phillip Foy – Encore Redevelopment; Andy King – Public Works Director; Dick Harper – All Arts Council; Tim Vachereau – Vermont Gas

B. Public Comments

Dick Harper was present for a quick update and to ask for some guidance. 2015 is the 25th anniversary of the Summer Sounds Concert Series, which began in Highgate and still continues here today. They are planning an end of summer concert on September 20th from approximately 2pm-9pm. The location is not determined at this time. The field days site at the airport is available, but requires a \$500 fee and proof of insurance. Dick asked if the town could write a rider to their policy to cover the event, if in fact it is held at the field days site. Jeff and Heidi believe that this would be possible. We would need to come up with donations to cover the \$500, otherwise it would have to come right off the top of the fundraising effort. Dick prefers to have it in a location that also has a rain location, which the field days site would provide. Dick anticipates the attendance to be much like the Highgate 250 celebration a few years ago, and the take at the gate might be a few thousand dollars. The board will get back to Dick about the \$500 and the insurance coverage. The board supports the field days site as the location, which Dick will firm up.

C. Town Treasurer – Shelley Laroche

1. Pay bills

In the past, Highgate has waived the penalty fee for those that file their HS-122 (homestead declaration) late. Motion by Jeff Towle to waive the penalty for town residents of Highgate who file their HS-122 late. Motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**. It was noted that we have done this the last several years and that dozens of Highgate residents have historically filed late each year, so this is to their benefit.

2. Misc.

- Shelley's desk will be delivered and set up tomorrow. Andy is interested in taking her current desk for the highway office.
- Randy will look into a micro cell through Verizon and get back to Shelley. We already have the pricing through AT&T - \$150 with a \$75 rebate.
- Tax bills are being printed tomorrow and will be mailed out next Friday, August 14th with a due date of October 27th.

D. Encore Redevelopment – Phillip Foy

Heidi gave some background on this project. The town has inherited the Jedware property through a bankruptcy settlement. Tim Smith with Franklin County Economic Development thought having us pursue solar on that property would be a good opportunity. Phil Foy does see opportunities on this parcel. They are exploring the property and doing their due diligence with regard to the potential project. He had a template lease for the board to look at. This would involve 8 rows of solar panels, approximately 30-40 yards wide. They also work on screening to make sure the project won't be an eye sore. This particular site is removed from view, so it isn't likely to annoy anyone aesthetically. We have the

bankruptcy order which is proof of ownership in our application to the State of VT, and that is what we would be identifying in the land records also. We have two board members absent tonight, so the board will look at the lease template together. The tax credits will expire at the end of 2016, so the project will need to start relatively soon to finish by then. Phil noted that during the feasibility study they will be looking at things like contamination, wetlands, ledge, topography, exposure to sun, neighbors and proximity to inner connections. They will then come back to the board with some options for consideration. They would prefer to see what is financially beneficial to the town and would need to know how much property the town wants to use and what works within the demand of the facilities allocated to the project. They have recently completed a 500kw project in Middlebury and a 3.2mw project in Williston. There might be some lag time at the public service board, but there shouldn't be any factors that hold up the project. The permit is completed in 3-4 months and then forwarded to the PSB. The lease agreement needs to be signed in order to move forward. There are no upfront costs to the town, Encore Redevelopment takes on all the risk and costs. Phil emailed some images to Heidi which Heidi will forward to the board.

E. Public Works Director – Andy King

1. Paving decisions & RFP

The RFP is posted and the list of potential paving locations has been seen by the board.

2. Public Works Laborer hiring deadline and committee meeting – Aug. 12th

The committee will be meeting on August 12th to look over the applications.

3. AOT emergency funds request – approved

The funds have been approved for the culvert work on Morey Road. The RFP will be going out soon for that as well.

4. Misc.

- This was Andy's first week with us and the focus has been looking at our equipment. A few repairs have been made and a few plans put in place. The 2006 Chevy and 2006 Mack were steam cleaned so Andy could see what was underneath. There are some issues with the Chevy. The Mack was at Charlebois and we have a checklist to go through to get us through the winter, work is estimated at \$5,000.00 - \$6,000.00. We have discussed downsizing that truck back to a single axle to use on some of the smaller roads.
- Butch helped Terry at the school today spreading wood chips with the loader.
- The roof at the sand and salt shed leaks. Andy will get with Henry Rainville and have him take a look.
- The large stone pile at the transfer station is close to the edge of the bank and the trees behind it are not doing well. We may want to relocate the pile and get some of that weight off the bank.
- Andy is looking at fleet management software. There is one site called *Fleetio* that does lots of great things. Jeff and Randy agreed that for \$29.50 per month it would be an excellent tool to have. Andy will make sure it is what we need and move forward.
- Andy's focus next week will be on the monitoring wells at the landfill and continue working on vehicles. He and Butch had an enjoyable week and got a lot of work done.
- The culvert at the end of Tanglewood Drive is 80' wide. This is an aesthetically designed intersection and Andy thinks other options for culverts could work. He would like to approach the homeowners association to see if they want to participate in the process. Wendi believes that Vern Brosky III is involved in that association and he would be a good contact. This needs to be addressed before the snow flies.

F. Town Administrator – Heidi Britch-Valenta

1. Sidewalk update

Summer schedules have made it difficult for the committee to get together. Heidi did mention that she has been made aware that the day care facilities in town are no longer allowed to walk the children around in the village because we do not have crosswalks. This is a very clear piece of evidence that it is hard to function as a village when we don't have appropriate pedestrian facilities. The Selectboard would like a recommendation from the sidewalk committee on the Route 78 alternatives project.

2. Misc.

- Heidi has a contract for the removal of the Riverview Lane homes by Gosselin Construction. This is a standard template from the grant administrator and the numbers were plugged in. The work must be completed within 45 days once it is signed, and the entire project has to be wrapped up in a year. Motion by Jeff Towle to approve the contract for acquisition and demolition of the homes located at 38 & 70 Riverview Lane in Highgate at a cost of \$31,315.00 with Gosselin Construction. Motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**. Jeff clarified the homes are being demolished, and not moved. Diana asked if Mr. Gosselin could sell anything. Heidi said yes, but he has to deduct anything he sells from what the town pays him. Jeff noted that Mr. Gosselin is not interested in anyone going to the site because they will not be covered by insurance. Mr. Gosselin is working with Chevalier drilling to close the wells. Heidi added that the reason we are able to cut the wells at the transfer station is because those are monitoring wells, not home / residential wells. Speaking of wells, the engineer for the well at the arena was in today, and that well is going to be placed along the edge of the Beyor field. The state has to approve this location and then approve a construction permit. We are working with Justin Holmes from Pinnacle Engineering on the arena well project.

G. Town Clerk – Wendi Dusablon

1. Minutes

Motion by Jeff Towle to approve the minutes from July 23, 2015 as written. Motion was seconded by Diana O'Hara – **APPROVED**.

2. Misc.

- The municipal offices will be closed on Thursday, August 13th during regular business hours. We will be preparing tax bills, which will go out on Friday, August 14th. The DRB meeting @ 6pm on Aug. 13th will go on as warned.
- Wrapping up dog licensing for 2015, Vonnie is working on ticketing the last 10 dog owners or so. To date we have licensed 820+ dogs in the town of Highgate for 2015. Wendi will follow up with Vonnie to get this wrapped up soon now that tax bills are going out.
- John Martin has been working weekends painting the interior of the offices. He should have it finished by the end of August. Everything is looking great and we are getting a lot of good comments.

H. Selectboard Items

1. Street lights replacement program agreement

Chris has been working on this. There is a list in their packets of what we currently have for street lights. We will wait for Chris before we continue this discussion.

2. Tax bill inserts – correspondence to residents

Paulette has prepared an insert letter regarding the formation of a finance committee and the Selectboard has one regarding staff changes and other updates. Heidi would like to include some info on the GMTA schedule and new bus stop at the Highgate Park & Ride.

3. Vermont Gas implementation maps

Tim Vachereau from Vermont Gas was present to discuss the upcoming large project, primarily on the Lamkin Street corridor. The project is 22,000 feet of main line, which is offering gas to approximately 217 new customers in Highgate. It is a combination of a state road (Route 78), private roads and town roads. Tim had maps to share with the board regarding the project. They have the state permit for Route 78, so that could start as early as next week. It is estimated the entire project will take 55 working days, depending on weather and soil conditions. All the work happens within the right of way, with the exception of private roads. Gas is only being put right up to homes of customers who have signed up. There was an open house at Highgate Elementary School on July 28th that was very well attended. People can still sign up after the project starts, the first 100' will be free from the main line to your foundation wall. That does not include the cost of conversation associated with equipment. There will be no anticipated disruption to the asphalt, only if soil conditions prevent from boring underneath. Boring underneath is always their first attempt. The project will be coming up the south side of Route 78 and also the south side of Lamkin Street. VT Gas is aware of our upcoming

Lamkin Street sidewalk project. Anything that VT Gas disrupts is restored within 7 days, which includes top soil, seed and mulch. Randy asked about longer term plans for VT Gas in Highgate, Tim noted they are looking at the airport area right now also, but nothing else that he is aware of. Wendi asked Tim how they deal with people who are not embracing the project, or don't want VT Gas going by their house. Tim understands this, and they have noted people that have contacted them along this new route. Some don't understand the right of way, and what that means. Those who have signed up already should be heating with gas this fall / winter season. Motion by Diana O'Hara to accept the proposed plans from VT Gas to begin construction for natural gas on the Lamkin Street project. Motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**. Randy asked about flaggers and traffic issues during the project, Tim said yes, on the main spines of the project flaggers will be used. Tim will work with Andy and Chris Yates to identify staging spots for their equipment.

4. MVR contract

There was a very slight increase over the previous contract, beginning date 7/1/15 \$126,000.00 for a one year contract. Motion by Diana O'Hara to enter into an agreement with a service contract with Missisquoi Valley Rescue. Motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**. The first payment has already been made. Jeff has put a strike through the word "instant" and initialed it, it now reads "*for the instant contract year, the town shall pay \$126,000.00 subject to the town meeting approval contingency more particularly described below*".

5. Standards for zoning fees exemptions

Heidi is looking for guidance on exemptions to zoning fees. She has not been charging for ramps, but has been asking that a permit be submitted when a ramp is added to a property to comply with setbacks. The question has come up about churches being exempt. Randy feels if we exempt churches, we need to do it for all non-profit organizations. Heidi asked the question of other zoning administrators and only got one response. That town does it on a case by case basis, and it is put before the Selectboard. Jeff wants us to be consistent and exempt all non-profits from zoning fees. Heidi found an example where the Methodist Church had been charged before she was our zoning administrator. Jeff could like the church to be refunded if that is the case, and move forward not charging all non-profits. The question has been raised, because the Catholic Church would like to put a sign at the cemetery on Lamkin Street, they have submitted a permit and asked about the fee. Motion by Jeff Towle that it be our policy for all non-profits that their zoning permits be exempt from fees. Motion was seconded by Diana O'Hara – **APPROVED**.

6. Misc.

- Diana was approached by a farmer regarding a power pole at the exit of the Highgate School. The pole is very close to the road and their equipment hits it. Heidi will contact Swanton Village.

I. Upcoming Events

Aug. 13	6pm	DRB Mtg.
Aug. 18	6pm	Planning Commission Mtg.
Aug. 20	7pm	Selectboard Mtg.
Sept. 15	6pm	Planning Comm. & Selectboard – Capital Budget Discussion
Sept. 20		Summer Sounds 25 th Anniversary Concert
Oct. 1	7pm	Selectboard & Planning Comm. – Capital Budget Presentation

J. Executive Session

None

K. Adjournment

Motion by Jeff Towle to adjourn the meeting @ 8:17pm. Motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**.

Respectfully submitted by,

Wendi Dusablon, Highgate Town Clerk

Minutes approved by,

Jeff Towle, Chair – Highgate Selectboard