

# TOWN OF HIGHGATE

## Selectboard Mtg.

November 3, 2016 @ 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 Vice-Chair, Sharon Bousquet @ 7:02pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Highgate Selectboard Members** – Sharon Bousquet, Vice-Chair; Randy Connelly; Bruce Butler; Joshua LaRocque (arrived @ 7:05pm); *Absent – Chris Yates, Chair*

**Highgate Office Staff** – Wendi Dusablon, Town Clerk; Shelley Laroche, Town Treasurer (arrived @ 7:30pm); Heidi Britch-Valenta, Town Administrator

**Public / Other** – Richard Wilkens; Jean Chevalier; George Greenwood; John Patnode; Alice S. Cota; M. Lamothe – VSP; Steve Beyor; Chuck Pearce; Andy King; Andre & Linda Gagne; Ronald C. Nye; Sandra Stone; Richard J. Noel; Luc Dupuis; David Desorcie, Ty Choiniere; Kellie Uzell

#### **B. Public Comments**

- Sue Cota had asked a specific question to Walt Krul from AmCare if he covered the town of Georgia and if they have a contract with them. Walt answered yes, Sue said they do not have a legal contract with Georgia. Therefore, she wants AmCare to spend more time in Highgate, not in Georgia. She further commented that if this had been brought to a vote we would not be dealing with any of this, and she wants residents to know that she believes Walt lied.
- Sandra Stone asked about the E911 papers and if any members of the board have contacted the state. Sharon has not, neither have Randy or Bruce. Josh was not present yet and Chris is absent from this meeting. Sandy has confirmation from Barbara Neal that she had an email conversation with Chris Yates on 8/22/16. Barbara stated that they would accommodate people that want MVR. Sharon asked Sandy for something in writing, which Sandy had brought with her.
- Steve Beyor and Chuck Pearce were present, they are our representatives for Franklin-5 (towns of Highgate, Franklin, Berkshire & Richford). Steve noted it will be a tough year in Montpelier, there are many trains of thought on raising money and how much needs to be raised. Health care will be a big topic as well as marijuana legislation and ACT46. Chuck Pearce added that the carbon tax will be another big topic. If Steve and Chuck are reelected, they will be back in session on November 30<sup>th</sup>. Revenues appear to not be up to expected amounts, the deficit looks to be more like \$60-\$70 million, not the \$30-\$40 million predicted. Jean Chevalier asked where the state can “trim the fat”. It was noted that this session will bring in a new Legislature, new Governor, new Lieutenant Governor, new Speaker of the House and new President Pro-Tem.
- Officer Lamothe with VSP was present to introduce himself. He is the commander of the VSP St. Albans barracks. He is taking the time to introduce himself to Selectboards in the community. His contact information is on their webpage and email works great to communicate with him. He noted that people paying attention and tips are very important. The non-emergency number is 524-5993, and always call 911 in emergency situations.
- Richard Noel had a quick update from the Transportation Advisory Committee. Paving in Swanton is finishing up. Whether this will extend up Route 7 in Highgate we don't know. There was some discussion on the causeway in West Swanton and whether it should be removed. Bridge 25 on Machia Road is still on track for full replacement in 2018 approximately. He will keep us posted on any hurdles.

#### **C. North West Riders Club – Andre Gagne**

Andre and Linda Gagne were present, as they are annually for this request. They are here to get permission from the board to cross Highgate roads where they intersect with the snowmobile trails. This protects the town from lawsuits. VAST is responsible and they have their own insurance. Sharon read aloud from the



noting that everyone should get involved. Luc Dupuis was also present from the PC. Feel free to contact Rich or any PC member with questions or comments. They are also always looking for new members to get involved with the process.

**E. Treasurer Updates – Shelley Laroche**

**1. Check warrants / tax payments / tax sale / misc.**

A few large checks went out, including the educational portion of the taxes being paid out to the school district. The tax due date was Oct. 27<sup>th</sup> @ 5pm. Shelley was very pleased with the delinquency amount of \$169,055.00. It was lower than anticipated. Many people took advantage of monthly payment and are off the delinquent list for the first time in years. Most people on the list are on a plan with Shelley already. The tax sale has been pushed into January, after the holidays and budget season. There are just four parcels left on the list, so hopefully by January there are none. Sharon thanked everyone for their hard work collecting taxes, it is a very big job. Richard Noel asked Shelley about moving the tax due date for 2017. Shelley would like to move it to November 1<sup>st</sup> going forward, which works better from an auditor standpoint and will give people four more days to pay. The date of Oct. 27<sup>th</sup> is no longer necessary, which was put in place to coincide with milk checks on the 25<sup>th</sup>. This would be a warned article at town meeting day, as it always is, to set the tax due date and change it to Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> by 5pm.

**F. Town Clerk Updates – Wendi Dusablon**

**1. Minutes**

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to accept the minutes from October 20, 2016, as written. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED.**

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to accept the minutes from October 26, 2016 – Vicious Dog Hearing, as written. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED.**

**2. General Election Updates – November 8<sup>th</sup>**

Polls will be open Tuesday, November 8<sup>th</sup> 7am – 7pm at Highgate Elementary School. The municipal offices will be closed on this day. The deadline to register to vote was Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup> @ 5pm and our checklist is the largest it has ever been with 2,069 registered voters. We have had 337 people request absentee ballots, and as of today 257 of them have been returned. The next several days will be very busy. Ty Choineire asked how the election will be set up and the flow of traffic. The front lot of the school will be used for voting. Staff will be parking at the arena, as school will be in session. Because school is open, we will be using ONLY the front (main) doors of the school to enter and exit for voting. Voting will be in the gym and all our booths will be set up. Our poll workers are all signed up and we have a few on stand-by if needed. It will be a very long and busy day on November 8<sup>th</sup>.

**G. Administrator Items – Heidi Britch-Valenta**

**1. Park & Ride update**

Andy, Heidi and Chris met with AOT about the park and ride. It is looking promising to get grant funding for the bus stop, bike racks and curbing project. We will forego the electric charging stations for now until we do more research on them.

**H. Selectboard Items**

**1. Bleacher purchase recommendation**

The Arena Construction Committee has been working towards replacement of the bleachers at the Highgate Sports Arena. Heidi, Wendi, Ty and Josh are part of the committee and were all present. Ty gave some background on the project. There is \$135,000.00 in the fundraising account, as well as a \$15,000.00 grant we received towards new bleachers. We did our research and the decision was made to go with A+ Athletic Products. We have contacted the vendor with questions and it looks favorable for our schedule to start the project in April 2017, which will not affect programming. The total price, including the bond is \$75,050.00, which will come from the fundraising account. John Patnode asked about the storage space under the bleachers. We are not supposed to be using that as storage space anyway. These bleachers are closed back so nothing can fall through. They are the same bleachers used in Essex at their facility, with blue contoured seats. These bleachers will be ADA compliant as well. The price went up slightly since spring, mostly because the original bid missed two rows of 6' bleachers. The demo of the old

bleachers will be volunteer, as to not accrue more costs. John Patnode would like to help with that. Motion by Josh LaRocque to approve \$75,050.00 to replace the bleachers at the arena which will be coming from the arena construction fundraising account. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**. It was noted that the color of the seats will be ordered to match the blue caps on the boards as closely as possible.

**2. Misc.**

- Sue Cota wanted everyone to know that MVU Varsity Field Hockey will be in the State Championship Game on Saturday, Nov. 5<sup>th</sup> at UVM vs. Bellows Falls. GOOD LUCK MVU!!!!
- RSG contract amendment – this is being delayed until Chris Yates is present.
- Josh thanked Don Gilbert for all his time and work on the arena facilities board. Don resigned as president and we wish him the best. If you see him, thank him for the work he has done. Ty added that tonight they met at 5pm and elected co-chairs of the facilities board – Josh LaRocque and Mark Gilbert. They are looking for members and volunteers. Everyone puts in a lot of work and it is always great to share the load. The facility looks beautiful, we should be proud of it. It doesn't matter what town you live in, anyone can become a facilities board member if you have time to donate and are willing to work.
- There are miscellaneous updates in the drop box for the board to review.

**3. Complaints – Mill Hill speed**

We have received two complaints, and another may be coming. Residents are frustrated with the amount of traffic, the speed of traffic and the mission of the traffic. Andy has some recommendations regarding speed reductions in the village. Some spots need to be looked at to maximize the safety within our town. As far as Mill Hill, there is no need to be going 35mph down that hill.

**I. Upcoming Events**

Nov. 8	7am – 7pm	General Election @ Highgate Elementary School
Nov. 10	6pm	DRB Mtg.
Nov. 11		Veterans Day – Municipal Offices are CLOSED
Nov. 15	5-7pm	Municipal Open House
Nov. 17	7pm	Selectboard Mtg.
Nov. 18		Municipal Offices closing @ 3pm
Nov. 24 & 24		Thanksgiving Holiday – Municipal Offices are CLOSED

**J. Executive Session**

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to enter into executive session @ 8:21pm. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**.

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to exit executive session @ 9:05pm. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**.

**K. Adjournment**

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to adjourn the meeting @ 9:05pm. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**.

Respectfully submitted by,

\_\_\_\_\_ Wendi Dusablon, Highgate Town Clerk

Minutes approved by,

\_\_\_\_\_ Sharon Bousquet, Vice Chair – Highgate Selectboard