

TOWN OF HIGHGATE

Selectboard Mtg.

June 4, 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 @ 7:01pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Highgate Selectboard Members- Jeff Towle, Chair; Chris Yates, Vice-Chair; Diana O'Hara; Paulette Tatro; Randy Connelly arrived @ 7:32pm

Highgate Office Staff – Wendi Dusablon - Town Clerk; Heidi Britch-Valenta – Town Admin; *absent was Tom Racine – Town Treasurer*

Public / Other – Ben Lowell – Constable; Jim Duncan – VT Monitoring Cooperative; Ty Choiniere; Karen Gagne-Fortin; Josh LaRocque; Ashley LaRocque; Brian Spears; Don Gilbert

B. Public Comments

Jim Duncan was present from UVM regarding the VT Monitoring Project. He was here to talk to the board about 70 River View Lane in Highgate. This property was formerly owned by Brian and Wendy Garey and was recently transferred to the Town of Highgate as part of the FEMA buyouts. Mr. Duncan is looking to set up a forest health monitoring plot at this location. Mr. Duncan feels this is a great opportunity to obtain a broader understanding of how Vermont's forests are doing. They have trained crews to do the work, they only need permission to access the land. Long term monitoring on this plot goes back to 1986. The sampling they do is non-destructive and involves only a couple of stakes in the ground and paint bands around trees. They are looking at height, species, how the crown is doing and any damage from wind events or other events of nature. His contact information is on the paperwork he passed out, and he is willing to come back if there are more questions. Jeff thanked him for coming, and we will be in touch with him regarding his request.

C. Town Treasurer – Tom Racine

1. Pay bills

Tom was not present for this meeting, but did prepare some paperwork for the board in advance. There were no questions on bills, other than Paulette asked about the registration renewal and if it was for one of the town trucks.

2. Arena funding update

Donations to date \$22,000.00

Grants to date \$35,800.00 (Freon and Smith Refrigeration)

Expenses to date \$45,172.12

Paulette noted that these figures reflect only the new fundraising account.

There is also a balance in the previous arena fundraising account. They will need to ask Tom for those figures as well.

D. Town Clerk – Wendi Dusablon

1. Minutes

Motion by Chris Yates to approve the minutes from May 21, 2015, with one correction. Motion was seconded by Diana O'Hara – **APPROVED**.

2. Dog update

We have licensed just under 800 dogs as of today. There are still 30+ dog owners out there yet to come in, so Wendi will prepare a list for Vonnie for ticketing. With regard to the husky issue from a few weeks ago, we have not been able to locate the fluffy white husky / malamute dog that attacked the chickens. Vonnie did follow up on the other husky from Meadow Lane, and the owner said the dog in question was rehomed in April and is now in Alburgh.

E. Town Administrator – Heidi Britch-Valenta

1. Fire Department floor repair- engineering estimate

Heidi can create an RFP for the engineering estimate if the board decides to take that route. Chris would like to see the concrete company out of Georgia take a look at it. They do grout pumping to fill the void and bring the floor back up. Heidi noted that Henry Rainville expressed concern for not understanding what is underneath the space. This location is the former church, so we don't know what is down there. Chris added that if the long term plan is to not utilize that part of the building as it is now, we can look at other options. Nothing has been discussed recently with regard to how that space will be used down the road, but in the past it was brought up to relocate the highway department and move the fire department over, as that space is larger. These are all long term ideas which would require approved funding. Many of these questions will be addressed through the ADA planning grant. Chris would like a quote from the firm in Georgia. They may not want to touch it, but they may be able to fix it and guarantee the work. The floor is cracked and settled. Heavy vehicles should not be parked in that space. Holes have been drilled to see if there is an air space there, which there is. Drummac determined there was no water entering under the floor, so that has been ruled out. Chris will pursue getting that quote and we will proceed from there.

2. NRPC Regional Plan – comment period

NRPC has to do a Regional Plan, similar to our Town Plan. It is an interesting document that addresses lots of topics. The document is in the drop box folder for the board to review. There is a meeting in Swanton on June 17th. Public comment is welcomed and encouraged through the end of June.

3. GMTA service update

GMTA is still planning on providing Highgate with a dedicated stop at the park and ride location, which will hopefully start by August, not July as originally planned.

4. NFCT interns in town June 8th through June 12th

Next week, the Northern Forest Canoe Trail group will make their annual trip to Highgate. Interns will be working on the trail, which they like the board to be aware of. Board members are invited to stop by and meet the group. Chris would be interested to know their feedback on the portion that was re-worked last year and see how it held up. If they need any assistance from Butch next week, he can help them out.

5. Misc.

- The library is looking to utilize the back area where the mound system is that we share with the gas station. Heidi and an engineer walked over there and he did not see any reason that it would be an issue. Library trustees have met recently and are eager to purchase and install a fence around the back for privacy and for separation from traffic. They have the funds in the Friends of the Library account, and they have volunteers willing to install it. The library trustees are looking for approval from the Selectboard to move forward with the fencing project, as well as involvement in the exact location if they would like. Heidi noted that they would be reaching out the RL Vallee also, owners of the gas station. RL Vallee takes care of mowing the mound space, so the library would either need to maintain it, or give them access. Time is of the essence with summer vacation almost here and HPL is also going to be a summer meal site, so they need the additional space.
- The Lamkin Street sidewalk plans are at AOT. They would like an archeological assessment. RSG has forwarded us an amendment to the contract to cover this additional step, and they will be working with UVM. The contract amendment is for \$5,000.00. It is an approved grant expenditure and will be lumped in with the \$250,000.00 we have been awarded for this sidewalk project. Motion by Chris Yates to approve the archeological assessment for the Lamkin Street sidewalk project. Motion was seconded by Jeff Towle – **APPROVED**. Chris asked if it would be worth reaching out to VT Gas about this. Heidi isn't sure if it will be along the same level of review. VT Gas will be digging in the same area. Their surveyor has to have a plan to them by June 12th. Chris received a call from VT Gas to come evaluate his own property regarding conversion. If they can get enough appointments and interest generated they want to complete this project on Lamkin Street prior to the next heating season.

F. MAHA Arena Update

MAHA will be here for executive session for contract negotiations, but no one is present yet for an update.

G. Other Business

- Chris gave an update from public works. The storm on Saturday May 30th took down a tree on Ballard Road. Gabree & Sons helped us out with that. Chris thanked him and asked him to forward the invoice. Another tree came down at 3123 Carter Hill Road. Butch cut the limb so the fence can be removed in preparation for the rest of the tree being removed, which is in the town right of way. Chris will get a quote for the removal of this tree. Butch has been busy with grading, chloride and mowing the parks. Chris has a quote from Gabree & Sons to remove the trees at 1149 Carter Hill Road, but did not hear back on the other quote. Motion by Jeff Towle to hire Gabree and Sons Tree Service to take down the large maple trees located at 1149 Carter Hill Road at a cost of \$2,100.00. Motion was seconded by Chris Yates – **APPROVED.**
- Paulette asked about the non-smoking ordinances. Heidi looked at the Enosburg ordinance again today, and it makes sense to blend it in with the existing ordinances for parks, curfew and usage instead of creating a new ordinance. Ben Lowell will be happy to help us with this.

H. Upcoming Events

June 8	6pm	Arena Construction Committee Mtg with DEW
June 10	5pm	Arena Construction Committee Mtg with Selectboard
June 11	6pm	DRB Mtg.
June 16	6pm	Planning Commission Mtg.
June 17	6:30pm	NRPC Regional Plan Presentation – WIB Training Ctr.
June 18	7pm	Selectboard Mtg.
July 9	7pm	Selectboard Mtg. with Town Plan Update Hearing
July 23	7pm	Selectboard Mtg. with 2 nd Town Plan Update Hearing

I. Executive Session

Motion by Jeff Towle to enter into executive session @ 7:40pm for contract negotiation, lease negotiation and personnel. Motion was seconded by Chris Yates – **APPROVED.** Motion by Jeff Towle to exit executive session @ 9:20pm. Motion was seconded by Paulette Tatro – **APPROVED.** Motion by Chris Yates to accept the resignation of Steve Ploof, effective May 28, 2015. Motion was seconded by Jeff Towle – **APPROVED.**

J. Adjournment

Motion by Jeff Towle to adjourn the meeting @ 9:25pm. Motion was seconded by Chris Yates – **APPROVED.**

Respectfully submitted by,

_____ Wendi Dusablon, Highgate Town Clerk

Minutes approved by,

_____ Jeff Towle, Chair – Highgate Selectboard