

# TOWN OF HIGHLGATE Selectboard

December 19, 2013 @ 7pm

## Approved Minutes

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

### A. Call to Order & Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Henry Rainville, Chair @ 7:03pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Present for this meeting were:

**Highgate Selectboard Members** - Henry Rainville, Chair; Jeff Towle, Vice Chair; Andy King; Steve Bushey; Luke Choiniere

**Highgate Office Staff** – Wendi Dusablon, Town Clerk;

Heidi Britch-Valenta, Town Administrator (arrived @ 9:30pm)

**Absent** – Tom Racine, Town Treasurer

**Public** – refer to sign in sheet

### B. Public Comments

None

### C. B-25 scoping report / public presentation / Chris Williams, AOT Structures Project Manager

The presentation regarding the Machia Road bridge (B-25) lasted 1 hour and 20 minutes, followed by questions from the public. The presentation is attached to these minutes. Chris Williams and Tim Philback were present from AOT as well as Scott Neuman and Caitlyn from AOT Historic Preservation to answer questions following the presentation:

Richard Noel – Can the old bridge be removed, or do we have to keep it? Scott replied, no, we do not need to keep it. Richard also asked questions regarding who owns the right of way in the river, what will the tonnage be on the new bridge, and Richard wanted to make sure they were paying attention to the width of the bridge to accommodate farm and logging vehicles.

Ron Machia – He lives on Machia Road and owns the building right there beside the bridge, the former store building on the east side. David Dragon owns the property on the west side of the bridge. Both of them would be willing to work with the town so a one way bridge could remain open for traffic while a new two lane bridge was being constructed.

Henry Rainville – Henry raised questions about utilities and if they would be overhead. They would likely be overhead and AOT would have to obtain right of way for the overhead utilities.

Andy King – Andy asked about future maintenance costs of historic preservation, those would be the responsibility of the State, per Chris.

Henry Rainville – On that note, Henry asked about the Mill Hill bridge that has been closed for some time due to a failed abutment. Henry's concern is that B25 will also take much longer to reopen. Scott added that the priority is to bridges with vehicular traffic, and the Mill Hill bridge is a pedestrian only bridge.

Ron Machia – If everything goes well, when could construction start? Best guess would be four years in 2018, but it depends on what option we chose.

Henry Rainville – Asked for a show of hands, who would prefer a new two lane bridge vs. a one lane bridge. Most would prefer a two lane bridge. Ron Machia added that a two lane bridge is the **real** fix.

Butch Brosseau – He asked if the bridge we have their now will get us to 2018, as it is not in great shape. There is work to be done to get to any of the options

being presented to us. Henry Rainville added that right of ways tend to be the biggest and most time consuming obstacle.

Norm McAllister – His understanding is that most of the land we need to acquire is in the river, which the state owns already. The corners of the bridge are the biggest right of way impacts. Does it really take several years to get through that process? We have to go through process to get to necessity. There are things out of our control that let others control the schedule. Chris added that it is safe to say that with any new bridge project that requires right of way, 2017 would be the absolute earliest we would get started.

Marcia Sweeney – Marcia lives on Route 78 right beside the bridge. She asked how they could get cranes down into the river. They build slopes down to go around existing abutments, and cranes might not even be necessary.

Steve Beyor – How soon does the town need to buy into a particular option? Chris will be waiting for the town. They will then develop conceptual plans, begin environmental permitting and have another public hearing if the town would like to, followed by processing of local agreements and development of preliminary plans.

Richard Noel – Richard asked about town typical width vs. state typical width. The town typical is much wider. Chris stated that there is also room in between to work with.

Chris Williams provided his contact information, and provided tear-offs with links to the presentation and scoping report. Henry thanked Chris and Tim for coming, it was a very well done presentation.

(five minute recess)

#### **D. Bethany Remmers, NRPC – Route 78 paving schedule update**

Bethany has spoken with Jonathan Harrington, VTTrans Project Manager. Work will begin on Route 78 in mid-July 2014 starting at the junction of Route 105 in Sheldon, through Highgate down to Swanton, stopping just before Swanton Village. They are very close to final design plans. There were some emails circulating that caused some confusion regarding this project, but this is what Bethany heard directly from Mr. Harrington. Questions were asked regarding funding and the chances of that being derailed. Bethany did not think that would happen, what she has seen and heard was very encouraging. They will be leveling and skimming in certain places, other spots will be mill and fill. The final plans would give exact locations of this. Jonathan Harrington can be reached at 802-828-2839.

#### **E. Tom Treasurer – Tom Racine**

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

Tom was not present for this meeting

##### **2. Budget updates**

Tom was not present for this meeting

##### **3. Personnel policy amendment**

Tom was not present for this meeting

##### **4. Humane Society contract**

Motion by Henry Rainville to sign off on the FCHS contract as presented for 2014, seconded by Steve Bushey – **APPROVED**. Discussion: Steve asked if Ray Dixon has a key to the lock box at night, yes he does. Also, Steve asked if Ray has a complete list of registered dogs in the Town of Highgate, yes he does. Steve asked about stray animals that need vet care, who pays for it? Ray stated that they will not take an animal from him that is injured (broken leg, etc). At night all that is available is the lock box. Steve also had questions about long term holding, we have done that at another site and it is cheaper than \$50 per day.

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

##### **1. Minutes**

Motion by Henry Rainville to accept the minutes from December 5, 2013 as written, seconded by Luke Choiniere – **APPROVED**.

**2. Dog licensing fees for 2014**

Motion by Jeff Towle to set the dog licensing fees for 2014 as follows;

On or before Apr. 1, 2014	spay/neutered \$12.00	not spay/neutered \$16.00
After Apr. 1, 2014	spay/neutered \$18.00	not spay/neutered \$22.00

Motion seconded by Andy King – **APPROVED.**

**3. Misc.**

- Emergency plan needs to be updated from 2012
- Henry added that we need to get articles in order for Town Meeting Day on March 4<sup>th</sup>. A few we already know are B25 funding, sale of town property, fire truck and arena renovation.
- Budgeting? We will continue with this after the first of the year.

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

**1. Healthy people strong communicates grant award / arena dehumidification system**

We have been awarded \$18,000.00 and MAHA is working on a proposal to come up with matching funds.

**2. Park & Ride map**

Steve Bushey measured some dimensions at the Frog Pond park & ride site. Steve thinks the map in their packets will work well, but doesn't know if 7 slots will fit on each side, possibly 6 if they are straight in. If they are angled we might get a few more. We need at least 10 slots, and a few need to be handicapped accessible. The barrier in between the two sections should be nothing permanent, perhaps temporary curbing or jersey barriers if they are available. The state will be paying the entire thing as part of the Route 78 project in 2014. Henry wants minimal obstructions within both sections of the park & ride, for reasons of snow removal. Heidi noted we will want to link this park & ride project with our review for the sidewalk project along Route 78 in the future. Heidi also noted that Rob Hall suggested putting a locking gate in there so the dry hydrant is not blocked. The area closest to the cemetery will be the park & ride section.

**3. Equipment grant -- Jan. 1**

Heidi has not yet received a list from the fire department. She asked Dick Souza again the other day and he indicated he was calling Radio North to discuss pagers. The grant opens on January 1 and it is on a first come / first serve basis until the money is gone. Andy will try and come up with a list. Heidi understood that the airpacks were the most urgently needed item. As a fall back, we could order what we did the last time, but either way the sooner the better.

**4. Casella sand request**

Motion by Steve Bushey to allow Casella to use sand for the 2013/2014 winter season at no charge for the Casella site only, seconded by Henry Rainville – **APPROVED.** Casella has been very cooperative with us in opening the brush depot site and they will be monitoring it for us.

**5. Law enforcement luncheon**

There is an invitation in the Selectboard packets.

**6. Misc.**

- The request to HUD to use grant funds for the cooling system has been approved. From the time of purchase, you have three days to access the funds. Heidi has 264 pages of documentation on the unit. Henry would like to talk to Josh LaRocque. A motion was made at the last meeting that if HUD approved it, the Selectboard was ok with it. There is a year warranty on the product once its installed. We need to clarify where it will be set and stored once it arrives in Highgate.
- There is an ice storm predicted for Saturday night, December 21<sup>st</sup>. Reg Belevieu from Swanton Village and Shawn from Regional Planning contacted Heidi. She has asked our highway crew and fire department to be on guard and prepared for weather related events over the weekend.

- The expectation is enough ice to bring down limbs and power lines. We also need to be prepared to help if people lose power.
- Connie Beyor was in today asking about the generator issue at the school. The school is the emergency site for the town, but the main building is now properly set up for a generator, only the white building is. The Selectboard wants an estimate on what it would cost to wire everything properly for the school. Jeff will stop by and see Mike Bockus in the morning and have them test our generator here in preparation for the storm.

## H. Selectboard items

### 1. Selectboard letter for town report 2013

If anyone has any more feedback regarding the Selectboard letter for the town report, please email your comments to Henry.

### 2. ATV ordinance update

Henry has not yet talked to Joe Rainville regarding the ATV ordinance and the publication in the 1984 Town Report. Ray Dixon said it was a proposal at town meeting. Ray stated that back then, three Selectboard members ran this town and that's the way it was. Henry will speak with Joe to see what he remembers. Steve Beyor was president of the snowmobile club in the late 1960's / early 1970's and they opened roads to snowmobiles at that time with no ordinance. It was done on a year by year basis, just as it is done now. VAST comes to the board annually. All the roads on that list from 1984 were dirt roads at the time. Ron Machia asked if farmers have the right to go from one farm to the next via ATV? His kids got pulled over recently. Andy stated you can only cross a state road at a 90 degree angle if you own the property on both sides of the road, that is how the statute is written.

### 3. Development Review Board & Planning Commission appointments

Development Review Board:

Motion by Steve Bushey to appoint these individuals to the DRB effective immediately, seconded by Jeff Towle – **APPROVED.**

Three year DRB terms – Rick Trombley, Tim Reynolds

Two year DRB terms – Julie Rice, Woody Rouse

One year DRB terms – Pauline Decarreau, Mike Patnode

We will need to look for one more person to fill the last (seventh) DRB slot for a three year term.

Planning Commission:

Motion by Andy King to appoint these individuals to the PC, seconded by

Henry Rainville – **APPROVED.**

Three year PC terms – Rick Trombley, Woody Rouse

Two year PC terms – Bruce Ryan, Luc Dupuis

One year PC term – Julie Rice

Alternates – David Cadieux, Tim Reynolds, Mike Patnode

### 4. Municipal parcel discussion

We are going to ask the voters at town meeting about putting two parcels up for sale and present our reasoning. Have we decided on the Pine Forest property? Andy and Steve do not see the benefits to the town if we keep it. Jeff would also be fine with putting this property back on the tax roll. This would be a floor vote at town meeting and should be all or none that go up for sale.

### 5. Dispatching fees info

Is in the Selectboard packets as an FYI.

### 6. Municipal building roof

Henry will be taking a look at this, and it will be soon, possibly Saturday morning. Steve is available if Henry needs help.

Motion by Henry Rainville to enter into executive session @ 9:00pm with Ron Machia and David Dragon to discuss potential land purchases, seconded by Steve Bushey – **APPROVED.**

Motion by Henry Rainville to enter back into the regular Selectboard meeting @ 9:40pm, seconded by Steve Bushey – **APPROVED.**

Note: these appointments were corrected and superceded by a new list of appointments. Please refer to the Approved Selectboard Minutes dated January 6, 2014. wsd

**I. Upcoming events**

January 6	6pm	Planning Commission / sidewalk presentation
January 9	7pm	Selectboard Mtg.
January 13	6pm	Planning Commission / bylaw revision
January 16	6pm	DRB Mtg.

Steve Bushey added that he is not seeking re-election in March and that petitions will be available for this two-year term.

**J. Executive Session – legal matter**

Motion by Henry Rainville to enter executive session @ 10:26pm for a legal matter, seconded by Luke Choiniere – **APPROVED.**

Motion by Andy King to exit executive session @ 10:50pm, seconded by Henry Rainville – **APPROVED.**

**K. Adjournment**

Motion by Steve Bushey to adjourn the meeting @ 10:50pm, seconded by Andy King – **APPROVED.**

Respectfully submitted by:



Wendi Dusablon, Highgate Town Clerk

Minutes approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Henry Rainville, Highgate Selectboard Chair