

TOWN OF HIGHGATE

Selectboard Meeting

Thursday, February 14, 2019 @ 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 Sharon Bousquet, Chair @ 7:06pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. This meeting has been rescheduled twice due to weather conditions (previously warned for Feb. 7 and Feb. 12). This meeting was held in the front office due to the DRB Meeting being held on the same night in the Community Room.

Highgate Selectboard Members – Sharon Bousquet, Chair; Joshua LaRocque, Vice-Chair; Bruce Butler; Steve LaFar *absent* – *Randy Connelly*

Highgate Office Staff – Heidi Britch-Valenta – Town Administrator; Shelley Laroche – Town Treasurer; *absent* - *Wendi Dusablon* – *Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk (at DRB Meeting in Community Room that began @ 6pm)*

Public / Other – Ty Choiniere; Clarence Miller; Jim Harrison

B. Public Comment(s)

- Ty Choiniere reminded everyone about the FNWSU Unified District Organizational Meeting and voting being held Wednesday, February 20 @ 7pm in the MVU Theater. All voting for this organization meeting is from the floor.

C. Treasurer Updates – Shelley Laroche

- Shelley presented two check warrants because several bills came in after the last warrant and then two meetings were cancelled. Both warrants were approved.
- Repro Graphics did a great job on the town report for us again this year and issued us a credit because we had fewer pages than last year.
- Shelley is hopeful that by town meeting day the delinquent taxes will be under \$100,000.00 for the first time in many years! Sharon thanked her for her hard work and getting folks on payment plans.
- Motion by Bruce Butler to approve the GIS mapping system annual contract. The amount is the same as in prior years and the listers are very happy with the program and service we receive. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.**
- There was quite a bit of discussion about the great need for sand this year and the concern that some residents are taking more than their fair share. We are way over budget this year and more may be needed to get through this winter. Sharon reported a very serious concern about residents using the loader to get sand. The board agreed this is a grave concern and will prosecute anyone found using town equipment without the proper authorization. Residents may get buckets of sand from the pile behind the town office building only. No one, other than authorized personnel, is allowed to access the sand shed on Transfer Station Road. Cameras will be utilized and signage has been ordered. Shelley would like to utilize any extra funds in their building & maintenance line item to further secure the area.

- Shelley would like the Selectboard to officially dissolve the Finance Committee. They have not met since last May and there is little reason to meet, other than to reconcile the accounts. The FC member that was performing this duty has been ill and unable to continue. Shelley will check with the auditors, VLCT and NEMRC to find out other ways to achieve the required checks and balances to satisfy the auditors. A policy advisory committee was suggested that could meet possibly quarterly or as needed.

D. Town Clerk Updates – Wendi Dusablon

Shelley presented the following for Wendi:

- Motion by Josh LaRocque to approve the minutes from *January 17, 2019*, as written. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.
- Absentee ballots are available, as well as town reports. Town reports are at several locations in town, or call the town office to have yours mailed, 868-5002.
- Wendi is requesting an edit to the Social Service Agency Appropriations Policy. For petitions with requests \$1,000.00 and over, the deadline is 47 days prior to town meeting, by statute (not December 1st). Motion by Josh LaRocque to approve the edit and sign the new policy as amended. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**.
- A request for a donation has been received from the MVU Substance Free Committee. No dollar amount is being requested, but in previous years the amount has been \$250.00, but we have not received a request in a few years. This year's graduating class has 37 seniors from the Town of Highgate. Motion by Josh LaRocque to donate \$250.00 to the MVU Substance Free Graduation Event. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler. After further conversation, Josh amended his motion to \$300.00, which was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**.
- There are three liquor licenses to approve for The Tyler Place, Inc. – one first class license and two outside consumption licenses. Motion by Josh LaRocque to exit the regular Selectboard Meeting @ 7:23pm and enter into the liquor control board. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**. Motion by Josh LaRocque to approve the three requests for The Tyler Place, Inc. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**. Motion by Josh LaRocque to exit the liquor control board @ 7:30pm and enter back in to the regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.
- Another reminder was given about the FNWSU Unified District Organizational Meeting and voting from the floor at MVU on Feb. 20 @ 7pm.
- Reminder to license your dog(s) by April 1st.
- Reminder about the dog and cat rabies clinic on Saturday, March 16th from 10am – noon at the fire station. Contact Wendi for more information, 868-5002.

E. Town Administrator – Heidi Britch-Valenta

- Heidi presented an application to the ANR waste water planning advance fund. Steve asked for more information on this application. The program allows towns to utilize funds to evaluate potential by hiring a consultant and working with them to understand the potential for a shared system. This opportunity comes with no match requirement but if the design ever goes to construction, the cost of the study is rolled in to the construction and paid back to the state. Clarence Miller and Steve LaFar expressed concern about the application. The conversation continued and the Selectboard decided that this project is in line with the way the public vote was worded, which included revitalizing the property. They agreed to approve the

application and asked for further information regarding potential payback scenarios involving partial development of the plan or development by a private entity. Heidi agreed to get more info from the grant administrators. Motion by Josh LaRocque to approve the application. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED 3 YES /1 NO (YES Josh LaRocque, Steve LaFar, Sharon Bousquet / NO Bruce Butler).**

- The roofers have been here on and off when the weather is favorable but not recently due to snow and ice. Sharon asked that we communicate to the roofers to be more mindful of debris and materials in the parking lot and to make sure that sharp objects are picked up to avoid damage. The Public Works Department has reported some tire issues.
- Annual AOT mileage forms were signed.
- Swanton Elementary has requested a supply of some of our bricks to help with a project they have. The Recreation Commission has some ideas for projects (flower planters and update monuments in the park) of their own coming up. Ty would rather not see the board give the bricks away. Motion by Josh LaRocque to send a letter to Swanton Elementary to respectfully decline this request because we plan to eventually use them. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.**
- The ACCD planning Grant is ready for approval, which is for the airport study. This is a \$45,000.00 grant with a \$15,000.00 match, which was covered by Airport Sand & Fill, FCIDC and administrative in-kind hours for Heidi. Motion by Steve LaFar to accept this agreement and to have Heidi execute it in the online grant system. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED.**

F. Selectboard Items

- Sharon gave an update on the Western Star truck repair. It is more than half way completed and might be ready as early as tomorrow (Friday). The expense is expected to be less than \$5,000.00 and any cosmetic work can be done this summer when the truck is in less demand. The truck had chains on the front and back but Luke hit ice and went sideways and rolled it on its side last Wednesday. We are very grateful that Luke was not injured. Repairs included windows, suspension and the dump cylinder. We will be responsible for our \$1,000.00 insurance deductible. Sharon reminded residents to please be patient when the weather is bad. We will be advertising again soon for part time help. Howard “Boy” Vanslette has filled in for us when Nick was out. Congratulations to Nick and family on the birth of their baby girl, Harper!
- Sharon congratulated Clarence & Debbie Miller on the 2018 Town Report Dedication in their honor. Clarence thanked his wife for all her support. The town is very proud of the Miller’s and we appreciate them very much!
- Motion by Josh LaRocque to approve the assignment of the Waugh Farm lease from Nelson Boys Dairy to Nelson Dairies West LLC. This is 10 acres that was gifted to the town from FEMA. It can never be sold, but it can be leased. The lease is 2/1/14 – 1/31/24 and is \$1,000.00 per year. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.** The document was then signed.
- The RFP for policing was discussed. We are currently in a shared contract with the Town of Sheldon. The Sheldon Selectboard will be invited to our March 7th meeting and Roger Langevin, Franklin County Sheriff, will be invited to our March 21st meeting.
- The ADA update was not ready and will be on a future agenda.
- The video surveillance policy was discussed. Randy Connelly is the most knowledgeable on this topic and he is absent. Comments from VLCT are in the drop

box with regard to this policy. Motion by Josh LaRocque to table this until a future date when Randy is present. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.**

- A letter has been received from the Waterbury Selectboard and Strafford Selectboard with a request for a show of support for a proposed \$0.04 gas tax for dedicated funds for infrastructure repair. There was further discussion on this topic and the pros and cons. Motion by Josh LaRocque to send a letter to VLCT *in favor of* the gas tax. The motion was seconded by Sharon Bousquet – **FAILED.**

G. Upcoming Events

Feb. 14	6pm	DRB Meeting
Feb. 18		Offices CLOSED – Presidents Day
Feb. 19	6pm	Planning Commission Meeting
Feb. 20	7pm	FNWSU Unified District Organization Mtg. & Floor Vote @ MVU
Feb. 21	7pm	Selectboard Meeting & Town Meeting Info Session
Mar. 5	10am	Town Meeting @ Highgate Elem. Polls open 7-7

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to exit the regular meeting @ 8:16pm. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.**

H. Executive Session

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to enter into executive session @ 8:16pm with Shelley Laroche, Heidi Britch-Valenta and Jim Harrison to discuss contracts, personnel and legal, where premature general public knowledge would place the town or the individuals involved at a substantial disadvantage. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.**

Motion by Josh LaRocque to exit executive session @ 9:31pm. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.**

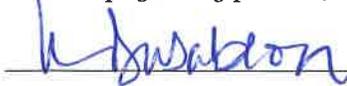
Motion by Steve LaFar to pay Wendi Dusablon \$16.00 per hour, up to 8 hours a week, for performing temporary zoning administrator duties until a new zoning administrator is hired. Sharon will discuss the details with Wendi. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED.**

I. Adjournment

Motion by Bruce Butler to adjourn the meeting @ 9:35pm. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

(minutes were transcribed from Heidi's notes and from watching the video of the meeting, as I was not physically present)



Wendi Dusablon – Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk

Minutes approved by:



Sharon Bousquet – Chair, Highgate Selectboard