

TOWN OF HIGHGATE Selectboard Meeting

Thursday, May 2, 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 @ 7:07pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Highgate Selectboard Members – Sharon Bousquet, Chair; Joshua LaRocque, Vice-Chair (arrived @ 8:00pm); Bruce Butler; Richard Flint *absent* – *Randy Connelly*

Highgate Office Staff – Wendi Dusablon – Town Clerk / Public Meetings Clerk; Heidi Britch-Valenta – Town Administrator / Planner; Shelley Laroche – Town Treasurer / DTC

Public / Other – Ty Choiniere; Joseph Depatie; Woody Rouse; Tom Conley; Alice S. Cota; Michelle Beaulieu; Evangeline LaRocque; Matthew Bouchard

B. Public Comment(s)

- Sue Cota mentioned to the board there is a tree on Monument Road by the Lavoie house that needs to come down or it will fall on its own. Wendi noted that the Public Works Department is also aware of this.
- Ty Choiniere would like to have our Franklin County Senators come in for an update. Corey Parent was here recently, but we do need to hear from them more often than we have in the past.

C. Highgate Library & Community Center Update – Michelle Beaulieu

Michelle Beaulieu was present for an update from HLCC. The childrens programs are doing well, but they are struggling some with adult programming. The recipe club has done well (last Wednesday of the month @ 6:30pm), but little interest shown for the knitting / crocheting group (Tuesdays @ 10:30am). A new program is coming "Spiritual Readings with Susie" (first date is May 21st @ 6pm) and another young lady has expressed interest in bringing Reiki to HLCC as well. Summer programming is underway and there is a lot planned at HLCC. They are trying to recruit adults or senior citizens to help out with the gardening club as well. HLCC has a grant to help fund that program. HLCC would like to build inter-generational relationships within our community. Michelle is very happy with the library employees, Erica and Paloma, as well as how Liza left the library for the next director. Michelle could not have walked into a better situation. Everything they need is there. They still hope for a larger space someday, but the little library is doing just fine. New back steps are needed that lead from the side door out into the green space. The old steps are concrete and are crumbling. They have received three quotes that range from \$250.00 - \$610.00 to replace with pressure treated steps (2) with a railing. This is all dependent on the town crew removing the old steps. They have budget money available for the work, but their lawn care also comes out of that line item. There was discussion on MVU seniors doing community service hours with this project, and Joe from HVFD also offered their services if needed. There is a fundraiser for HLCC coming up at Twiggs in St. Albans on

Friday, June 21st "Comedy For A Cause". Tickets are \$25.00 each and available now, doors open at 5:30pm and the show starts at 7:00pm. Hannaford has also chosen HLCC for the month of May for their reusable bag fundraiser. The board thanked Michelle and HLCC for all they do and appreciated her being here for this update.

D. Highgate Vol. Fire Department Update – Joe Depatie

- Memorial Day planning is going well. Auction donations are being accepted now, call 868-7722. The parade will not start at NOON (previously was 1pm). BBQ will start selling early and will not be affected by the time change of the parade. For the auction, there is a list of items they will not accept, including: mattresses, tubed televisions, clothes, tires and books.
- HVFD has offered to cook hamburgers and hotdogs at the VCMP community celebration on Aug. 10th. They will discuss it more at their business meeting on May 6th. They are also available for clean up at this event. Any proceeds from the event on May 10th, HVFD will donate to the new memorial fund.
- When the back side of the roof was done their tripods were found to be rotted. HVFD is looking for the opinion of the Selectboard on a 10' x 10' radio tower at the end of the building instead of connecting it to the roof. The antenna would come off the roof and go onto a small tower, similar to what Amcare uses in Sheldon. We are licensed for 100' and this would put us higher than we are now on the roof. The antenna was taken down for the roof work and was remounted across the hose tower and HVFD no longer gets reception in St. Albans now. Joe has gotten pricing from Radio North, installed \$10,000.00 - \$12,000.00 and from Burlington Communications, installed \$15,000.00 - \$20,000.00. There is \$5,500.00 left in that line item in their budget for the year and there was discussion about additional funding in the stipend line item. Their budget balance is roughly \$16,000.00. Ty asked about the receiver that was going on the cell tower. That would have been for central dispatch only, so we would still need our antenna here. The cell tower with dispatch is at a standstill, as there is interference at the location they would need on the tower. The tower Joe is considering for this building is about 2' x 2' and won't interfere with anything else. It would be attached to the side of the building by the peak for stability. Motion by Richard Flint for Joe Depatie to move forward with this project with Radio North for HVFD. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**. It was noted that their quote is within HVFD's fund balance and Radio North has been good to us in the past. Joe will get this started tomorrow.
- We have been approved for the dry hydrant at Airoldi's pond on Hanna Road. Joe needs to get with Butch to nail down a time. Joe wants to measure it and get proper depth. They need 4' feet of water and may need to dredge it.
- Heidi spoke with Joe about AED paddles for the municipal complex through the equipment grant. Joe would like to update the units on HVFD trucks. We are welcome to use their AEDs at any time if needed, but we would need to be certified in CPR and AED first. Liza is now a certified instructor and we could be certified at the same time the department is recertified. The current AEDs at HVFD are 15-18 years old. If they are replaced, Joe would like to re-dedicate them to the residents who originally donated them to HVFD. Michelle Beaulieu asked what they cost because Liza had written a grant for the CPR class that did not happen. Maybe those funds could go towards training town employees?
- Ty asked about HVFD membership. Their numbers are good but Joe would like to see response time pick up some. This time of year people become busier, which is

the reason. Ralph and Gary are doing a great job getting the inventory done. Once that is complete Joe will get the info to Shelley.

- With regard to Memorial Day, Sharon asked 1) spread the word to HVFD and all mutual aid about the parade on May 27th and 2) asked for HVFDs help to stop traffic at Route 78 and Route 207 for the parade. The committee is having a bake sale on May 27th to raise funds to update the memorials in the park. They stop at the Vietnam era and we would like to continue to honor our Veterans since then, starting in 1991 with the Gulf War era. This will be a long process of gathering info and names.

E. Town Treasurer Updates – Shelley Laroche

- Shelley has the audit in her office and will have it for the board at the next meeting. The fiscal year will be wrapping up and there was one finding in the audit regarding journal entries. Shelley will be contacting NEMRC and asking them to come in.
- Motion by Bruce Butler to sign the check warrants. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED**.
- Delinquent tax payments continue to come in and the delinquent balance is approximately \$80,000.00.

F. Town Clerk Updates – Wendi Dusablon

- Motion by Bruce Butler to approve the minutes from April 18, 2019, as written. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED**.
- Dog licensing is moving right along – as of today we have licensed 808 dogs in the Town of Highgate. That leaves 70 +/- left to pursue. Vonnie (ACO) will be picking up the list and ticket books at the end of the day tomorrow. The first round of fines will be out very soon and will continue to get more expensive until all dogs are on the books for 2019.
- Green Up Day and Household Hazardous Waste Day – both are Saturday, May 4th. HHWD is at the town shed on Transfer Station Road 8am – 2pm. Green Up bags are available now and we have plenty left. We have received lots of calls about HHWD so hopefully it is very busy down there. And thank you to everyone that is helping to Green Up Highgate!
- Tuesday, April 30th was the special vote / election for the Missisquoi Valley School District. Wendi and Shelley were at the polls 7am – 7pm at Highgate Arena. It was a very slow day with only 104 (5%) Highgate residents casting their ballots. This was to elect our permanent MVSD board members (six total, two from each town) and to vote on whether to adopt the amended articles of agreement. As a district (Swanton, Highgate, Franklin) only 463 people voted. Elected to the board were: Devin Bachelder & Eric Beauregard (Franklin); Chris Shepard & Steven Scott (Highgate); Donald Collins & Meaghan Conly (Swanton). Article #2 regarding the amended articles of agreement passed overwhelmingly as a district **337 YES / 97 NO / 29 BLANK**. Next, we will now be adding three more board members (1 Swanton, 1 Highgate, 1 Franklin) to make a total of nine. We will also be voting on an MVSD district budget. This will all be taking place on Tuesday, June 11th. Highgate voters will again cast their ballots at the Highgate Sports Arena from 7am – 7pm. Petitions and consent forms to run for these three positions on June 11th are available now and are due to the MVSD office by Friday, May 10th at 5pm. Stay tuned for more information!

G. Administrator Items – Heidi Britch-Valenta

- The first VCMP meeting to plan the community celebration was held prior to this meeting at 6pm. The next meeting will be May 16th @ 6pm prior to the Selectboard meeting again.
- The waste water planning advance is still in the works. We may not need to apply for the Northern Borders grant, which would be for wrap around services. Heidi is asking the board for the ability to apply for the Northern Borders grant which is due on May 10th. Hopefully we won't have to apply, but we don't know at this point. Our project meets their criteria, but probably won't rank that high. Bruce asked about using the word "hope" being used many times and questioned whether this funding source was even worth applying for. We can't win if we don't play. We will need an exact estimate from an engineer before the WW planning advance (ANR) can even give us a commitment. Richard Flint asked for more information and details on each of these funding opportunities. Motion by Bruce Butler to authorize Heidi to apply for the Northern Borders grant if the ANR planning advance did not allow for the feasibility studies that are needed in order to apply for that money, if necessary. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED**.
- Motion by Bruce Butler to sign the letter of support for the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**. LVRT is hoping to apply to Northern Borders to hire a coordinator to do full time marketing and to put them on a fundraising push to finish this project.
- Everything else from Heidi is in the drop box under the Town Administrator's report. She has some legal and contractual issues for executive session.
- We have received notice from SBA that T-Mobile will be replacing antennas on the tower. This will be replacement of existing equipment and there may be some additional equipment on the ground.

H. Selectboard Items

- Sharon read aloud from a contract change between the Town of Highgate and St. Albans Central Dispatch. Our fees with them have been reconsidered because MVR will be our provider effective 7/1/19 and their dispatching is handled by Middlebury Regional Emergency & Medical Services, Inc. (MREMS). Based on a review of these facts and circumstances, Gary Taylor with SAPD determined that a reduction in our fees was appropriate. In averaging the last two years, between 25% - 30% of the total emergency calls dispatched by SAPD in Highgate were for HVFD. Our dispatching bill for Highgate FY2019-2020 is \$34,408.00, and 30% of that equals \$10,322.40. Our dispatching services fees with SAPD is being reduced to \$10,322.40, effective 7/1/19. This may be subject to review and change in the future. Sharon clarified that SAPD will cover fire dispatching in the Town of Highgate, and MREMS will cover dispatching, as a subcontractor, for MVR in the Town of Highgate. MREMS will be billing us on a per call basis, which is very unknown territory for us. We did look into going with MREMS for everything, but that was not possible, they did not have the ability to take on another territory. We are mandated to go with MREMS, per the court order. Motion by Richard Flint to accept the new contract amount, effective 7/1/19, of \$10,322.40 for HVFD dispatching through St. Albans Central Dispatch. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**.
- We are looking for entrants for the Memorial Day Parade on May 27th. Email or call Sharon (sbousquet@highgatext.org or 868-3173). Please leave a message with a call back number. Volunteers are always welcome to help with planning. Baked goods are needed for the fundraising campaign towards a new memorial in the park.

Contact Sharon or Wendi at the Town Office, 868-5002, if you can help in any way. Ty noted that the board made a motion last year to no longer have politicians in our Memorial Day parade. This is not an election year, but something to remind people of.

- Ty also let the board know that the Rec. Commission made a motion at their last meeting to not pay Highgate Little League the full \$2,000.00 for raking the parks. Their motion was to only pay \$1,200.00. In the eyes of the Rec. Commission the job was not done well and they did let LL know so they would have the opportunity to come back. Tonight the Rec. Commission members finished up the library and the small (Flat Iron) park. They would like the Selectboard to authorize the \$1,200.00 to LL and the remaining \$800.00 to go towards park maintenance. There is some hydro seeding that needs to be done and flower pots in the parks to be updated. The Rec. Commission will go back to the LL board and find out if this is a fundraiser they want to continue. Josh LaRocque added that in the defense of LL (he was there that night), it was very windy and a tough night to rake, but he understands the concerns being expressed. If the LL board is in agreement with the reduction, Josh would be ok with it. Ty has not spoken to the LL board about the lesser amount. Josh also noted that the parents are the ones doing the work (mostly) and taking the funds away only hurts the kids. Richard thinks we should stick to our word and disburse the full \$2,000.00 to Highgate Little League. The funds are staying here in our community. If we weren't happy with the job done, we can change the amount when we budget for next year. The amount was amended from the floor a few years ago from \$1,000.00 to \$2,000.00. Richard wants to let it go for this year and budget differently if need be. Shelley also feels that it will come up during the audit if we pay them an amount different from what was approved at town meeting. The Rec. Commission will reach out to the LL board for further comment and info on what will happen in the future. The full \$2,000.00 will be disbursed to Highgate Little League for this cycle.

I. Upcoming Events

May 4		Green Up Day
May 4	8am – 2pm	Household Hazardous Waste Day @ town shed
May 6	10am	Highgate Infrastructure Economic Dev. Study Mtg.
May 9	6pm	Development Review Board Mtg.
May 15		Town Offices open at 11am (staff training)
May 16	6pm	VCMP Mtg.
May 16	7pm	Selectboard Mtg.
May 21	6pm	Planning Commission Mtg.
May 27		Memorial Day in Highgate – BBQ / PARADE / AUCTION
May 27		Town Offices are CLOSED

Motion by Josh LaRocque to exit the regular Selectboard Meeting @ 8:30pm. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED.**

J. Executive Session

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to enter into executive session @ 8:31pm with Heidi Britch-Valenta, Shelley Laroche, Ty Choiniere and Matthew Bouchard to discuss personnel, contracts and legal, where premature general public knowledge would place the town and / or the individuals involved at a substantial disadvantage. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED.**

Ty Choiniere left executive session @ 8:35pm.
Shelley Laroche left executive session @ 9:30pm.
Matthew Bouchard left executive session @ 10:00pm.

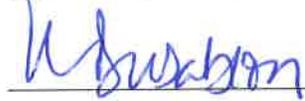
Motion by Josh LaRocque to exit executive session @ 10:10pm. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED.**

Motion by Richard Flint to authorize Ed Adrian to sign the Boone Drive deed. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED.**

K. Adjournment

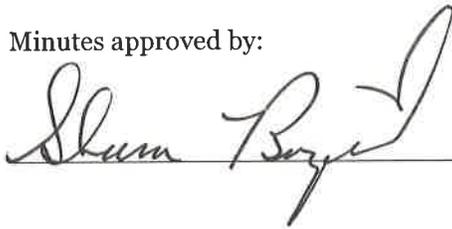
Motion by Richard Flint to adjourn the meeting @ 10:30pm. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by:



Wendi Dusablon – Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk

Minutes approved by:



Sharon Bousquet – Chair, Highgate Selectboard