

TOWN OF HIGHGATE Selectboard Meeting

Thursday, January 3, 2019 @ 7pm

Approved Minutes

NOTE: All actions taken are unanimous unless otherwise stated

6:30pm - VCMP phone conference

A. Call To Order & Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order by Sharon Bousquet, Chair @ 7:03pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Highgate Selectboard Members – Sharon Bousquet, Chair; Joshua LaRocque, Vice-Chair (arrived @ 7:21pm); Bruce Butler; Steve LaFar; Randy Connelly

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

Public / Other – Alice (Sue) Cota; Michael Frett – St. Albans Messenger; Corey Parent; Chris Shepard; Woody Rouse; Richard J. Noel; David Roddy; Steve Scott; Clarence Miller; Charon Fegard

B. Public Comment(s)

- None

C. Franklin-5 Rep., Charen Fegard and Franklin County Senator, Corey Parent

The board thanked Charen and Corey for being present. Both were recently elected in November 2018 and will be representing us in Montpelier. Both wish to be very accessible to their constituents and hope to keep an open dialogue going with all towns that they represent. There was discussion on several long and short term issues facing Vermonters and Franklin County, including: ACT46; taxes; crime and the drug epidemic; law enforcement and keeping our residents safe – specifically the children in our communities; food programs, foster programs, school programs; ACT250; economic development; skills needed for careers in trades; budgets and controlling spending and more. The second seat for our Franklin-5 Representative is currently vacant. The person elected to that seat has had to step down and is unable to serve. There will be a meeting here in Highgate on Jan. 12th @ 9am for the Republican Representative District Committee to nominate qualified candidates to the Governor for appointment. Both Charen and Corey are reachable through email and both have an email list going to send out regular updates for those interested. Vermont is a small rural state and these issues are just some of the struggles we face now and going forward. Sharon thanked them for their service we look forward to their updates.

D. Town Treasurer Updates – Shelley Laroche

1. Check Warrants

There were a few questions on the warrants, which Shelley clarified. Our first payment on the tractor has gone out.

2. Misc.

There was a budgeting session held last night, and another next week on Jan. 10th. The town report will go to the printers in mid-January. Shelley gave a quick update on delinquent taxes. As of 12/31/18 the balance is \$121,307.00 compared to \$194,576.00 on 12/31/17.

3. Quote for repairs

Josh LaRocque explained that on Dec. 21st Butch was heading back to the bay to put his chains on and forgot to pick the wing up. He struck the building between the bay doors. The brick was considerably damaged and the column was dislodged by almost a foot. Two steel beams are holding it up and it was pushed back so it is now more straight. A structural engineer looked at it and has a drawing to share with a mason. We have a quote from JL Masonry for \$6,900.00. It was pointed out that there is no rebar currently in there, and there should be. This will be an insurance claim. Heidi initiated the claim and someone from VLCT will be up to look at it. JL Masonry stated they will repair this based on the recommendations of the structural engineer. With regard to our purchasing policy, there was discussion on the price and what our policy states. Bruce does not view this as a "purchase" it is a "repair" and should be considered an emergency repair, as well as a specialty, and the board agreed. Motion by Bruce Butler to consider this repair to the Public Works Department column as an emergency repair, and per the purchasing policy, not subject to the bid process (*"emergency expenditures may include immediate repair or maintenance of town property, vehicles or equipment if the delay in such repair or maintenance would endanger persons or property or result in substantial impairment of the delivery of important Town services"*). The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**. Josh would like to budget for the upcoming cycle to install bollards (inside and outside) to protect the building, to which the board also agreed. Pricing will be pursued to include in the upcoming PWD budget.

E. Town Clerk Updates – Wendi Dusablon

1. Minutes

Motion by Bruce Butler to approve the minutes from December 6, 2018, as written. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.

Motion by Bruce Butler to approve the minutes from January 2, 2019, as written. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.

2. Town Meeting Day Updates & Dealines

- Petitions for warned articles are due to Wendi by 5pm on Thursday, January 17, 2019. The minimum number of registered voter signatures is 110.
- Petitions for elected offices for your name to appear on the ballot are due to Wendi by 5pm on Monday, January 28, 2019. The minimum number of registered voter signatures is 22. The list of positions is on the website and FaceBook page, as well as posted around town, there are a total of 11 positions to be voted on by Australian Ballot.
- Town Meeting Day is Tuesday, March 5, 2019. Polls will be open 7am-7pm at Highgate Elementary School. The floor meeting will begin at 10am.

3. 2019 Liquor License Renewals – Jolley Assoc., R.L. Vallee & Martin's General Store

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to exit the regular meeting and enter into the liquor control board @ 7:50pm. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**. Motion by Randy Connelly to approve and sign the 2019 renewal applications for Jolley Associates, R.L. Vallee and Martin's General Store. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**. Motion by Sharon Bousquet

to enter back into the regular Selectboard meeting @ 7:54pm. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED.**

4. Dog Licensing 2019

Dog licensing started all over again on Jan. 2nd. We have already licensed 22 dogs and only 880 +/- to go! The annual rabies clinic will be held on Saturday, March 16th from 10am – noon at the fire station with Paws For Thought as the attending veterinarian. Renewal reminders were mailed out on December 26th.

5. Misc.

- Jan. 12th @ 9am at the Highgate Municipal Building will be the Republican Representative District Committee meeting, as mentioned earlier under section C.
- Jan. 23rd @ 7pm at MVU – Franklin NorthWest Unified Union School District meeting. Sharon read aloud from the meeting warning and stressed the importance of being present. Chris Shepard, Chair of the Highgate School Board, also stated how vital it was for people to participate. It will be decided how we vote on future school budgets (ballot or from floor), as currently Swanton and MVU vote via ballot and Franklin and Highgate vote school budgets from the floor. It has to be the same method for the entire district. This is your time to stand up and speak, don't complain afterwards if you did not participate in the process. This is an organizational meeting to begin the process. A transitional board will be sworn in. Chris Shepard and Steve Scott will be on that transitional board. The articles of agreement need tweaking. There was also discussion on equal representation by all towns on this board being a necessity. Chris hopes the theater is FULL on Jan. 23rd!

WARNING
SPECIAL MEETING
FRANKLIN NORTHWEST UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
January 23, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

The legal voters of the Franklin Northwest Unified Union School District (the "District"), comprising the voters of the Towns of Franklin, Highgate, and Swanton are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Missisquoi Valley Union Middle-High School in Swanton, VT on the 23rd day of January, 2019, in the Trahan Theater at 7:00 p.m. to conduct the following business:

- i. To elect a temporary presiding officer and clerk of the District from among the qualified voters of the district.
- ii. To adopt Robert's or other rules of order, which shall govern the parliamentary procedures of the organizational meeting and all subsequent annual and special meetings of the District.
- iii. To elect the following officers of the District from among the qualified voters of the district, which officers shall assume office upon election and serve for a term of one year or until their successors are elected and qualified:
 - Moderator
 - Clerk
 - Treasurer
- iv. To determine a date and location for the first annual meeting of the District and all subsequent annual meetings, which shall be not earlier than February 1 and not later than June 1 in each year.
- v. To determine whether to vote on the District's budget and all other public questions by Australian ballot.
- vi. To determine whether to elect members of the District Board by Australian ballot.
- vii. To determine and approve compensation, if any, to be paid to officers of the District.
- viii. To determine and approve compensation, if any, to be paid to members of the District Board.
- ix. To establish provisions for the payment of any expense incurred by the District before it becomes fully operational on July 1, 2019 under a voter-approved budget for the fiscal year beginning on that date.
- x. To authorize the District to borrow money pending receipt of payments from the State Education Fund by the issuance of its notes or orders payable not later than one year from date provided, however, that the District is authorized by Vermont Statutes to borrow sufficient funds to meet pending obligations.
- xi. To determine whether to authorize the Board of School Directors, pursuant to the provisions of 16 V.S.A. § 563(10) & (11)(C), to provide mailed notice to residents of the availability of the Annual Report and proposed school budget in lieu of distributing the Annual Report and proposed budget.

Dated this 18th day of December, 2018.


Daniel M. French, Ed. D.
Secretary of Education

F. Town Administrator Items – Heidi Britch-Valenta

1. Rural Dev. Hearing on Fire Truck Application

This is a warned public hearing as a requirement of the grant application. Heidi read the notice aloud that was posted. We have applied for \$50,000.00 towards a new fire truck. There were no questions or comments on this application.

2. Grant / Project Updates

A few updates are in the Selectboard packet. A meeting is scheduled for Jan. 8th @ 10am with AOT and the consultant via skype on the Machia Road storm water grant to stabilize the slide. Our original project manager has left AOT and we did not have an assigned person for some time. This project is a few years out and has become a much larger project than originally anticipated. The other change is with regard to ADA modifications at the Municipal Building. Our test results came back and the EPA has responded that we are ready to move forward. We have to discontinue the test wells, which only a licensed driller can do. Federal money comes with many hoops to jump through.

3. VCMP Update – Public Presentation of Sketch Concepts – Jan. 17th

This presentation is scheduled for January 17th as part of the Selectboard meeting. There are three concept designs to be shared and there will also be a required noticed hearing on the Brownsfield application for funding to clean up the Stinehour Café. Greta from NRPC will be here on Jan. 17th as well.

4. FNLC Storm water Project – Letter of Support

Motion by Randy Connelly to sign the letter of support for Kent Henderson at Friends of Northern Lake Champlain in support of storm water planning. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.**

5. VCDP Planning Grant – Committee Members

A list of suggested members is in the packet and is also something the public can participate in. There will be public hearings as well as presentations. The list contains the same names that Heidi had worked with to file the original application. Anyone with a passion or interest in economic development should contact Heidi to join the committee.

6. Rural Development RED L&G Program – Letter of Interest

More information is in the drop box with regard to this program. This is an opportunity for a power company to manage a revolving loan fund at 0% interest for electric power customers. Trustees from Swanton Village are interested but need to figure out how much staff will be needed to make the program work. It would be in Highgate's best interest to put our interest in the program in writing and forward to the Swanton Village Board of Trustees. Heidi prepared a letter to be signed. This could be the economic tool to facilitate growth if things happen at the airport or other areas in our town. Motion by Josh LaRocque to sign the letter. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.**

7. Planning Discussion

There are several projects happening that could come to fruition all at the same time. We need to consider an Economic Development council. The next Planning Commission meeting is Jan. 15th @ 6pm and this will be discussed. Selectboard representation on Jan. 15th is needed to discuss managing big projects moving forward.

8. Misc.

We are updating some of our road numbers and have had to back track some. Our numbers were not matching with the state. If road classifications change or new roads are added it creates a number change or addition. Butch has been going through the list to make sure we have proper documentation and Aimee from the

listers office has been involved as well. Motion by Randy Connelly to accept the following changes to road numbers and classifications: *Eric Drive from Private to Class 3 #72; Meadow Lane from Private to Class 3 #73; Boone Drive from Private to Class 3 #74.* The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.**

G. Selectboard Items

1. VELCO Easement

Rob Naramore was present to execute these documents with the Selectboard with regard to the VELCO easement on the school property. The board has previously seen the documents and they have been reviewed. Motion by Steve LaFar to move forward with the easement documents as reviewed in the drop box. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED.** Chris Shepard, Chair of the Highgate School Board, also joined the table, as his signature was required as well. It was noted that the clause was added, at the School Board's request, with regard to chemical spraying. The town is receiving no proceeds from this easement. Rob went through the documents page by page with the board and Chris. The documents will come back to the town for recording. A check will be sent to the State of Vermont for \$65.74 for the sales tax. A check for \$4,534.00 made payable to the Highgate School was given to Chris Shepard, the amount is calculated per the formula VELCO uses, and this formula was discussed at a previous meeting.

2. Misc.

- There are signs popping up around town for a private business, some of which are on town property. This is in violation of our zoning regulations. The company will be contacted to remove them or they will otherwise be disposed of.
- We have received a letter of interest for the deputy health officer position. Motion by Steve LaFar to further discuss this in executive session. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED.**
- A new contract is being proposed with the Probation & Parole crew for clean ups around town. This proposal is for a \$100 flat fee, otherwise the contract is the same as before. They have done a great job for us on different sites, most recently pulling out tires at the end of Lamkin St. To date, 292 tires have been removed there with many more to go! Unfortunately, the illegal dumping continues. Sharon asked people to be vigilant to report any illegal dumping activity to law enforcement and/or to town officials. Motion by Josh LaRocque to authorize the new contract. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.**
- Randy was approached by a local business owner inquiring about storage space at the Machia property for trucks. The board discussed the liability involved in storing anything other than town assets. Motion by Josh LaRocque to *not allow* anything other than a town asset to be stored at the Machia property. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.**
- Ned Spears office sent us some documents with regard to "glebe land". Steve Ducham has looked the paperwork over for us and he sees no issues, he also noted that towns won't have to worry about this much longer. New legislation will have these glebe land issues dissolved. We are allowed, by statute, to make a motion with regard to glebe land. The application is for Gerald & Dianne Laroche for properties located at 2673 and 2735 St. Armand Road. Signing off on this will relinquish any remaining rights of the town. Glebe land goes back to colonial times when towns and churches owned most of the land in towns. During the sidewalk project we had to deal with this as well, concerning the Methodist Church and glebe land in the town park. Sharon read aloud from the document. Motion by Josh LaRocque to sign the

document with regard to this glebe land for Gerald & Dianne Laroche. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.

H. Upcoming Events

Jan. 7	5:30pm	Recreation Comm. Mtg. @ arena
Jan. 10	6pm	DRB Mtg.
Jan. 10	6pm	Selectboard Budget Mtg.
Jan. 15	6pm	Planning Commission Mtg.
Jan. 17	7pm	Selectboard Mtg.
Jan. 17	7pm	VCMP Presentation of Concept Plans
Jan. 17	by 5pm	Petitions for warned articles due with min. 110 reg. voter signatures
Jan. 21		OFFICES CLOSED – MLK Jr. Day
Jan. 21	5:30pm	Recreation Comm. Mtg. @ arena
Jan. 23	7pm	Special Mtg. – FNWSU Unified School District @ MVU Theater
Jan. 28	by 5pm	Petitions to run for elected offices due with min 22 reg. voter signatures

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to exit the regular Selectboard Mtg. @ 8:46pm. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**.

I. Executive Session

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to enter into executive session with Heidi Britch-Valenta @ 8:47pm to discuss personnel 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 Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.

Motion by Josh LaRocque to exit executive session @ 9:15pm. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.

J. Adjournment

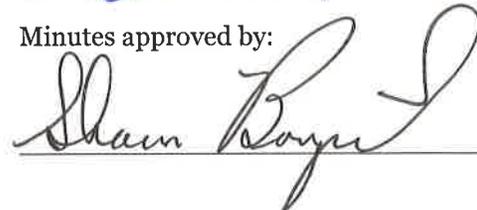
Motion by Bruce Butler to adjourn the meeting @ 9:15pm. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:



Wendi Dusablon – Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk

Minutes approved by:



Sharon Bousquet – Chair, Highgate Selectboard