

TOWN OF HIGHGATE
Selectboard Meeting
Thursday, July 16, 2020 @ 6:30pm
@ Highgate Sports Arena

Approved Minutes

NOTE: All actions taken are unanimous unless otherwise stated

Join Zoom Meeting from your computer

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/96636431042?pwd=NTVQYUtPakQ4bEdPcE9zZ1lBS1BqZz09>

Or by phone - FREE CONFERENCE CALL

Dial in # 425-436-6365

Access code 188557

A. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

The in-person Selectboard meeting / video conference call / phone conference call meeting was called to order by Sharon Bousquet, Chair @ 6:35pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, changes to open meeting law allowed for this meeting to take place in various ways. The meeting was held at the Highgate Sports Arena for proper physical distancing for those who wanted to attend in-person. Zoom video or conference call was also available.

Highgate Selectboard Members – Sharon Bousquet - Chair; Bruce Butler – Vice Chair; Richard Flint; Kyle Lothian

Highgate Office Staff –Wendi Dusablon – Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk; Heidi Britch-Valenta – Town Administrator; Shelley Laroche – Treasurer & Delinquent Tax Collector (all in-person)

Community Members / Others Participating – James Wetherby; Timothy Luneau; Ben Lowell; Dan Beauregard; Jim Harrison (all in person)

B. Public Comment(s)

None

C. Meadow Lane Residents

An email was received this afternoon that the residents of Meadow Lane no longer needed to appear before the Selectboard.

D. Recreation Update – Dan Beauregard

- Indoor programming began this week, which includes roller blading, pickleball and floor hockey. Prices, dates and times are available on the FaceBook page and website.
- A competition is happening now to submit a design for the new Parks & Recreation Department logo. More info is available on the FaceBook page and website.
- The cornhole league is being pushed back a week in order to get all the slots filled. The cornhole league is the only weekly commitment, all other current arena activities are not a commitment, you can just show up, provided the state guidelines are being

followed with regard to numbers. Residents from any town are welcome to come and enjoy programming at Highgate Sports Arena.

- We were just notified that Bushey's will be here this weekend for the parking lot seal coating and striping. The arena lot will be closed off Sunday and Monday.
- The new storage shed facility is in the works.
- The board has the RFP in their packet for the arena HVAC service and maintenance contract. Other than some date tweaking this looks good. Motion by Richard Flint to accept the RFP. The motion was seconded by Kyle Lothian – **APPROVED**.

E. Selectboard Letters of Interest

We have received five letters of interest to fill the remainder of the term until March (vacated by Randy Connelly). Three of the candidates were present and introduced themselves to the board: Tim Luneau, Jim Wetherby and Ben Lowell. Scott Martin and Vern Brosky III were not able to be present this evening. The Selectboard will meet in executive session with each candidate. Wendi will reach out to all five candidates and set up times for next week.

F. Hazard Mitigation Plan Adoption

This plan is a requirement to be eligible for FEMA funding and needs to be updated every five years. Shaun Coleman from NRPC assisted us with this update. It then goes to the VT Department of Public Safety to review and make comments. It is back before the board now for signature, and then goes to FEMA for final approval. Motion by Bruce Butler to adopt the Hazard Mitigation Plan. The motion was seconded by Kyle Lothian – **APPROVED**.

G. Treasurer Updates – Shelley Laroche

- The contract with LaShure's Pro Shop needs Sharon's signature. This was previously approved by the board.
- The check run is large, it covers one month. Kyle had questions about the solar payment, which Shelley explained. Motion by Bruce Butler to approve the check warrants. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED**.
- The auditors were here on July 9th for one day and said the trial balance looks very good. They will be back on Aug. 25th, 26th and possibly 27th.
- Because of the COVID-19 pandemic a tax sale is not doable right now, and that is the same statewide.
- The delinquent tax balance is \$73,107.00. Most are on a payment plan, with a small percentage she would tax sale if she could, but she would prefer to work with people. The fiscal year has been closed and all departments ended well. A budget status was sent to the board members. The highway department looks to be overspent but that was because all the paving funds were spent in one cycle.
- The State education rate came in last week and is up from last year, as expected. We will set the tax rate in August.

H. Town Clerk Updates – Wendi Dusablon

- Motion by Richard Flint to approve the minutes from June 18, 2020, as amended. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**.
- Motion by Bruce Butler to approve the minutes from July 13, 2020, as written. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED**.

- Dog licensing is moving along slower than it should be. We currently have 750 dogs licensed on the books for 2020. Final reminders went out and Vonnie made calls. Fines will be happening next week. We don't want to fine people and we don't want to impound their animals. We want communication from dog owners.
- Aug. 11th from 7am – 7pm Wendi and Shelley will be in the lobby here at Highgate Sports Arena for the State Primary Election. Postcards were sent out at the state level for people to request early (absentee) ballots and Wendi has processed over 400 so far. If you choose to vote in person, we will be here Aug. 11th. If you want to vote early you can call, email, request online or fill out the postcard and mail it.
- Sharon added that the 2020 Census numbers are down and our town needs to step up. Our federal funding counts on those Census numbers to determine what we need and don't need for services and equipment. If our town only has a 50% response we will lose out on funding and other things. Please reach out and complete the 2020 Census – it's simple and easy and available online at <https://2020census.gov/>.

I. Administrator Items – Heidi Britch-Valenta

- A few meetings ago the board approved an expenditure to have an assessment done with regard to the Machia Road project. DeWolfe Engineering is asking to amend our contract with them. The motion was already made for this, so Sharon signed it.
- Paving is in the works. Richard Flint gave an update on the Rice Hill Road culvert replacement. The culvert was caving in after a recent heavy rain and we discovered we had a culvert in that area already for the replacement that has been off to the side for many years. That project was completed on Wednesday. We applied for a structures grant in June but those have been delayed and we won't hear anything until late fall if those are awarded or not. The project could not wait, it needed to be completed to keep the road safe. Sharon thanked the public works department for taking care of it.
- We have a grant to do work on the Rollo Road through the Grant In Aid Program, which is part of the Clean Water Fund. The deadline has passed and we have an extension until Oct. 15th. Butch is concerned about being able to do the work and wants to put it out to bid. This needs to be posted immediately with a site visit on Aug. 3rd. Bids will be due back on Aug. 10th. The design was created by Jim Smith. The road crew has already lost a lot of time with the pandemic and they have plenty of other things to do. The RFP is to replace two culverts and to re-ditch and stone the whole area. Motion by Bruce Butler to accept the RFP as written. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED**.
- Sharon has received good feedback on the Gore Road paving. The public works department is asking for patience from residents with the paving and associated work with individual driveway transitions.
- Tuesday, July 28th @ 6pm will be a joint meeting of the Planning Commission and Village Core Master Plan Committee. The focus will be the wastewater study for the village core. This meeting will be available in person, via ZOOM or conference call.
- Motion by Richard Flint to accept the following road numbers applied to new private roads (road names were already previously approved): Nicklaus Way – private road #107; Palmer Avenue – private road #108; Memory Lane – private road #109. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**.

- Sharon read aloud from the proposed changes to the Enhanced 911 Road Naming, Road Signs & Addressing Ordinance. The road inventory has been updated to include the three new private roads and numbers. Motion by Kyle Lothian to sign the ordinance as updated. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED.**

J. Selectboard Items

- A notice of terms of conveyance for the sale of town real estate has been posted. The State of Vermont, Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Fish & Wildlife will be purchasing the property with a contribution of up to \$1,000.00 towards the town’s closing costs. Anyone who opposes the transfer of the Cherry Hill property (Rheume Road) to Fish & Wildlife can petition the town. All information and associated dates are included in the notice. If no petition is received by Aug. 17th then the Selectboard, by signing the authorization resolution, will authorize Sharon Bousquet to sign the transfer deed on behalf of the Town of Highgate. Motion by Bruce Butler to sign the authorization resolution and consent of the Highgate Selectboard. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED.**
- We are switching firms that manage our alarm systems. Motion by Kyle Lothian to sign the account deletion form for our monitoring system. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED.**
- Richard Flint would like to see Highgate have some kind of an event, such as a parade. Other communities have been successful with parades and the residents really enjoy it. There was discussion on covering a larger territory in town, not just the village, so people could watch from their lawns, and not congregate in the center of town. This will be on the next agenda and HVFD will be here then as well. Richard would like to incorporate the bridge dedication on the same day.
- Kyle has had a hard time connecting with farmers about the Machia Road because they are either spreading or chopping. Kyle also gave an update on speaking with state leaders about the ATV issues in town and on the trails. He didn’t make the meeting, but Andy Godin did, and Kyle spoke with Andy. The sign for the Machia Road bridge dedication is complete, but we are waiting on the post to be primed and painted.
- Sharon noted that some members of our local agricultural community and local businesses have received some financial support from the government, which is much needed and appreciated through this pandemic. It has taken a heavy toll on many.
- We have not heard back from C&M Concessions about setting up their food truck in town. Maybe with things slowly opening back up it is not necessary for him to set up here.

K. Upcoming Events

July 21	6pm	PC Meeting – cancelled
July 28	6pm	Joint Meeting VCMP & PC (in person / ZOOM / phone)
August 6	6:30pm	Selectboard Mtg.

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to exit the regular Selectboard meeting @ 7:26pm. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED.**

L. Executive Session

Motion by Richard Flint to enter into executive session @ 7:26pm with Heidi Britch-Valenta, Shelley Laroche and Jim Harrison to discuss contracts, 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 Bruce Butler – **APPROVED.**

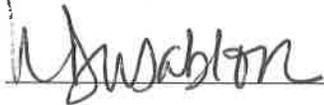
Motion by Bruce Butler to exit executive session @ 8:42pm. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED.**

Motion by Richard Flint for the public works department to purchase and install a horse riding sign for St. Armand Road. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED.**

M. Adjournment

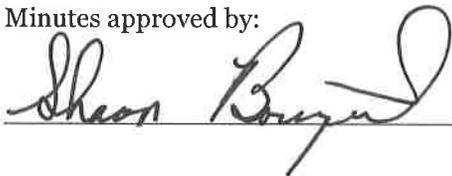
Motion by Bruce Butler to adjourn the meeting @ 9:17pm. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by:



Wendi Dusablon – Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk

Minutes approved by:



Sharon Bousquet – Chair, Highgate Selectboard