

# **TOWN OF HIGHGATE SELECTBOARD MEETING**

Thursday, May 3, 2018 @ 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 @ 7:00pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Highgate Selectboard Members** – Sharon Bousquet, Chair; Josh LaRocque, Vice-Chair; Steve LaFar; Bruce Butler (arrived @ 7:04pm) *absent* – *Randy Connelly*

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

**Public / Other** – Richard Trombley; Woody Rouse; Jim Harrison; Pat & Fernand Gagne; Alice (Sue) Cota; Raymond & Suzette Laroche; Arthur Derosia; Wendy Culligan; Beverly & Dave Danyow; Reg Beliveau; Cliff Coy; Michael Frett – St. Albans Messenger; Ty Choiniere; Vern Brosky III; Evangeline LaRocque; Joseph Depatie; Mark Gilbert

### **B. Public Comments**

Vern Brosky III was present along with Art Derosia and Wendy Culligan. They expressed concerns for the speed limit on Tanglewood Drive. The speed limit is 35mph but with new neighbors and added visitors it is increasingly becoming more of an issue. FCSO has put in place extra patrols and advised them that they can only enforce what the speed limit is. Pat Loyer, Public Works Director, agrees that 35mph is too fast for that area. A speed study would need to be performed by NRPC. There are new families and at least eight children under the age of ten on Tanglewood Drive. The main concern is always the children. Motion by Josh LaRocque to move forward and ask for a speed study. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.**

### **C. Airport Infrastructure Expansion Planning Grant**

Jim Harrison, Reg Beliveau and Cliff Coy were present for this discussion as well as neighbors and other interested parties. No one from the State of VT was able to attend. The State did come before the DRB a few years ago regarding their planned expansion of the Franklin County State Airport in Highgate. They are the driving force behind the possibility of expanding water to the airport. A new larger hangar space is planned as well as a runway extension. Out of that came conversations with Jim Harrison about developing the adjoining property. The town is participating now to find out what the potential is to get the water line extended to the airport. There is currently no potable water at the airport. The town's only involvement is looking at the planning grant to understand the potential for economic development associated with extending the water line. All the other components have nothing to do with the Town of Highgate. The more economic development we have has the effect of lowering the tax rates. Our town is growing by leaps and bounds and the DRB is inundated with requests for new development. Reg Beliveau is the Village Manager in Swanton. Since 2011 they have invested seven million dollars in water systems infrastructure. By July they hope to be completing the water line extension to MVU. There is the capacity to extend to the

airport but the customer base beyond that does not have the return on investment they would need for it to be feasible beyond that point. This is a great opportunity for all involved. Cliff Coy stated that the State of VT put into effect a capital improvement project and airport layout plan for expanding. The hangar area to the east will grow and the runway will be extended from 3,000 feet (currently) to 4,000 feet in the next two or three years. Keeping it at 4,000 feet will keep jet traffic out of this area and limit it to small passenger aircraft, cargo aircraft and propeller aircraft. There will be no difference in the amount of noise. The location will be desirable with these changes as well as Jim Harrison's proposed expansion. VT Gas and Comcast are already at the airport as well as Swanton Electric. The last piece is the water line. Josh asked about possible septic, which would require a pumping station of some sort. Cliff pointed out that most warehouses don't require a lot of sewer capabilities. If there were factories put in there that would be different. Swanton is also looking at sewer upgrades, but they would need more information on what the capacity would be. Swanton is at about 2/3 of their capacity for water right now. Ty Choiniere had questions about the noise level. Raymond and Suzette Laroche live on Carter Hill which is in the flight path. They have experienced and dealt with the noise for years. She has had to call and complain and things have gotten better. They have further concerns about the expansion plans and the extra flight traffic it will create. The flight pattern is not going to be altered, it will remain the same. Woody Rouse asked if there are any changes to the state's plan since they came before the DRB -- no, there are not. Mr. Harrison gave some history on the property he owns next to the airport. It is behind the Franklin County Field Days location and is a total of 32 acres. The pit he owns is almost depleted. He has considered solar but after speaking with Guy Rouelle (former airport director) has considered developing the property commercially. The state is interested in doing a land swap with Mr. Harrison. Mr. Harrison is serious about this project and will continue to invest in the infrastructure. He believes there will be a great return to the Town of Highgate. Sharon asked about the advantages of warehouses at the airport. Using Amazon as an example, Cliff explained the importance of importing from Canada and other parts of the United States, and how this could happen on a rapid basis. Being so close to Canada and I89 makes this a very desirable location. Fed Ex and UPS both fly into Montpelier right now. The runway extension would make it possible for them to fly into our airport. The FAA has already signed off on the land swap and a survey is underway now. There were questions about the land swap and what that means for the field days location. Fernand Gagne was present and said this means they will be looking for extra parking. Mr. Harrison is meeting with the field days personnel tomorrow. This project has been five years in the making. Cliff gave a timeline on the project. The hangar expansion is still in planning. The runway extension already has a complete layout plan. The engineering for the runway will be complete by spring 2019 with construction to begin in 2020 for the taxi lane. This project will not require a tower and does not change any classifications. It will be large enough for business traffic to use the airport, but not so large that there will be added measures to operate. The airport is state funded. Ray Laroche asked if there are any plans for the state to purchase any homes -- no, not that Cliff is aware of. Vern Brosky III added that he flies in and out of this airport and that piston driven aircraft are noisier, so the public should not notice any difference in noise. The proposed aircraft are turbo propped which have mufflers on them. Vern also talked briefly about noise abatement procedures. Mr. & Mrs. Laroche do not have a problem with what happens at the airport, they have a problem with the approach and circling over their home. It was pointed out that most noise from aircraft comes from the propeller, not the engine. Suzette wants to be good neighbors and said it has improved over the years. Just last night a pilot had a rough go of it over their home

in a bad wind storm. The board thanked everyone for coming and for the information and input.

**D. Fire Department Updates – Chief Joe Depatie**

**1. Misc. Updates**

The fire department moved into their new office space and it is all going well. Those that did the work did a fabulous job on the new kitchen and office space. Engine #1 has had a few issues and a new clutch brake was put in. It also needs a repair to the pump panel in the transfer case. The shaft seal leaks, so the bearings and seals will be changed. Joe shared information on illegal burning and nuisance burning. Information is posted online. Anything that is NOT natural wood cannot be burned. There are two sites in town that are being watched carefully with regard to burning. Joe is working with NorthWest Solid Waste District and law enforcement with regard to enforcement and fines. Ty asked about the cell tower and when central dispatch will be adding their equipment to our tower. The contract has been signed so it should be any time now. We were not awarded the grant for the fire truck. Heidi has a phone call scheduled for May 8<sup>th</sup> to find out what we can do differently next round to increase our chances. This is a very competitive national grant.

**2. Dry Hydrant Grants**

We had a review recently and visited some possible locations to install dry hydrants. The former Noel Farm on Gore Road, now owned by the Choiniere Family and also the Airoidi Pond on Hanna Road are both promising sites. The dry hydrant at the Choiniere property will be gravity fed, which will require maintenance. Guy Choiniere wants to see more information on the design in writing before he signs off on it. Mrs. Airoidi was not home when they visited the property. This location would benefit both Highgate and Franklin. A possible third location is on Cassidy Road by the cement culvert. We will need to wait until late summer when the water is at a low point. Dry hydrants provide easier access to water with no need to dig into ice. They are placed around town for a better water source to benefit all community members. This will all come back before the board once we have estimates.

**3. Emergency Operations Plan Update**

Joe has reviewed this briefly and didn't see any issues. All flood properties were added into the plan by NRPC this year. We learned a few things in January with the flooding. It was humbling to find out how quickly things could happen and how many people got involved to help and combine resources. Sue Cota was a victim of the flooding and was very scared but grateful for the help. Motion by Steve LaFar to accept the EOP plan. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**. Sharon thanked everyone involved in helping out on January 13<sup>th</sup> and the days and weeks that followed.

**E. Town Treasurer Updates – Shelley Laroche**

**1. Check warrants**

There were no questions on the check warrants.

**2. Misc. Updates**

- Delinquent tax update – as of Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup> (excluding the Jedware property) the delinquent balance was \$276,094.91 and as of today that is down to \$91,485.40. There are still 51 parcels on the list, 34 of which are on payment plans. She will be working on the next tax sale process soon.
- Sullivan & Powers should be contacting us soon with dates for the fixed asset inventory.

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

### **1. Minutes**

Motion by Bruce Butler to approve the minutes from April 19, 2018, as written. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**. Motion by Bruce Butler to approve the minutes from April 23, 2018, as written. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.

### **2. Green Up Day – May 5<sup>th</sup>**

We have received additional bags and we have plenty, so please pick up yours up by Friday @ 4:30pm. The bags can be left roadside for pick up on Monday, May 7<sup>th</sup> or brought to the town offices behind the building.

### **3. Household Hazardous Waste Day – DATE CHANGE!**

Due to a permitting issue with NWSWD, our HHWD will not be this Saturday. Residents can still bring HHWD to the Georgia facility, or Swanton is holding their satellite collection day on May 19<sup>th</sup>. Our new date for Highgate HHWD will be Saturday, August 25<sup>th</sup>. More details to follow.

### **4. Dog Licensing Update**

As of today we have licensed 780 dogs. Also today, 31 municipal fines were sent out, \$25.00 per dog. Another round of fines will go out on 6/1, \$50.00 per dog.

### **5. Memorial Day Events – May 28<sup>th</sup>**

HVFD Chicken BBQ @ 11:00am – cost is \$10.00 per person, followed by the parade @ 1:00pm and the HVFD auction after that. The Memorial Day Committee is coordinating a planning session.

### **6. Vault Maintenance**

This has been completed and a new touch pad lock has been installed in place of the dial.

### **7. Zoning Administrator Applications**

Applications are due by Tuesday, May 8<sup>th</sup> at 4:30pm. This is a part time position 16-20 hours per week.

### **8. NWSWD Paperwork – April St. Francis**

April was appointed last month to replace Ben Lowell as or NorthWest Solid Waste District Representative. There is paperwork to be signed to complete this appointment so she can begin attending meetings. Sharon filled out the paperwork and Wendi will submit it back to NWSWD tomorrow. Thank you, April!

### **9. Health Officer – Merry Souza**

Merry's appointment from the State of VT became official on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Merry can be reached at 782-2090 or [merrysouza@comcast.net](mailto:merrysouza@comcast.net). Thank you, Merry!

## **G. Administrator Items – Heidi Britch-Valenta**

### **1. KAS PH II Proposal for Municipal Office – ADA Grant**

This proposal is to complete work that was recommended in Phase I. The review was to meet one of the conditions in the ADA construction grant. We need to have scope work completed down the drains in the highway department and fire department to test the soil for contamination and close the drains. Motion by Steve LaFar to accept the KAS bid of \$7,540.00. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**.

### **2. R&A Enterprises Roof Contract**

We have committed to R&A already but the board has asked for more information on replacing the entire municipal roof. The replacement costs came in at \$99,250.00 plus \$3,000.00 bond. Does the board want to stay with the smaller project or replace the entire roof? Sue Cota would like to see some of the projected surplus from the Bridge 25 project be used for the full roof replacement. Moving CIP funds

requires voter approval. We are committed to R&A and are on their calendar. The smaller project entails replacing the valleys and recrimping the metal. We do have an anticipated surplus of over \$100,000.00 from the Bridge 25 replacement project, but Shelley disagrees with moving money before a project even starts. This would require a special town meeting to let the voters decide. If we move \$30,000.00 to have a full roof replacement, there will still be ample money to do the bridge project. This would be a floor vote and no expense to the town. Motion by Josh LaRocque to schedule a Special Town Meeting for *Thursday, June 7, 2018 @ 6pm*. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**. Wendi will get this noticed tomorrow to meet the statutory requirements.

**3. DeWolfe Contract for Machia Road Slide Repair (MRSR) Design**

There is a kick off meeting with the consultant on May 9<sup>th</sup> @ 5pm. Motion by Bruce Butler to sign the agreement. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**.

**4. Clean-Up Projects – New Info**

We have already authorized the clean up on Hempyard Road. Since that time, NWSWD has notified us that the disposal fee for tires has increased \$2.00 per tire. If it's a large tire, it is .10 cents per pound. Steve expressed concern on where the funds will come from. We have a place to store them on the Carroll property and the building is behind a locked gate. Collected tires at NWSWD are cut in Pennsylvania and burned in Maine, so we do not have any facilities here. We worked with an out of state firm a few years back on Green Up Day. This issue was tabled until next meeting. Steve and Heidi will try to do some research before then.

**5. BUILD Contract – Village Core Master Plan (VCMP)**

A kick off meeting with the consultant is scheduled for May 8<sup>th</sup> @ 6pm. The amount of the contract is \$24,995.00 and falls under the Municipal Planning Grant. We do have a match in the grant, but Heidi could not recall the exact amount, it is around \$6,000.00. We have funds in the CIP to cover the match. Motion by Steve LaFar to approve the BUILD contract. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**. This will be signed at a later date.

**6. Crosswalks**

This continues to be an issue. They came back and painted them again and they came back up the same day. They believe it is a product issue. There was discussion on the temperature outside when they have applied the product.

**7. Mowing**

The PWD started their four day work weeks this week, with Fridays off. They have a lot of work scheduled for this summer. Ty Choiniere and Brian Spears are willing to do the mowing if that is the board's decision. There was discussion on the new P&R Director helping with the mowing. This new employee will have a lot to absorb quickly before the ice goes back in this fall. The PWD has projects scheduled for Mill Hill, Tarte Road, Frontage Road, and lots of dead trees to deal with this summer. Mowing takes a lot of time to be done right. Shelley pointed out that the PWD has \$15,000.00 left in their budget with three pay periods left in this fiscal year. We either pay Ty and Brian or end up paying OT to the PWD. Motion by Steve LaFar to have Ty Choiniere and Brian Spears do the mowing of the parks and arena property for the 2018 mowing season. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**.

## **H. Selectboard Items**

### **1. Appointments to the Parks & Recreation Commission Board of Trustees**

We have several volunteers to serve on this commission to work with the new full time Parks & Recreation Director. The members will have staggered terms. Josh would like to put out a post to the community asking for letters of recommendation. Randy Connelly contacted Josh today and he would like to see this also. We have also received an email to the same effect. Ty pointed out that the Parks & Rec. Committee has advertised for volunteers for years with little or no luck. Josh agreed, but would like to make sure that we are offering others a chance and have diversity on this commission, not just hockey or arena related residents. The bylaws state 5-7 people on this commission and we have had 6 people step forward already. Brian Spears has offered to be the representative for Little League, so it's not just hockey people stepping forward. All were fine with advertising to fill the 7<sup>th</sup> spot on the commission, which would be a one year term. Wendi will post this tomorrow, with letters of interest due by May 16<sup>th</sup>. Motion by Steve LaFar to appoint the following people to the Parks & Recreation Commission effective 7/1/18: 1 year terms: Brian Fortin, Brian Spears, Mark Gilbert / 2 year terms: Ryan Maskell, Ty Choiniere, Karen Fortin. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**. Ty is working on bids for the tractor and also line striping for the arena parking lot. We also need to have the website in place for Parks & Rec prior to July 1<sup>st</sup>. Ty reached out to a boring company about the gas piping for the dehumidifier, which can be patched with asphalt afterwards. Motion by Josh LaRocque to approve the bid of \$4,500.00 for the boring. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**. Sharon noted to Ty and Mark that her driver will be moving the trailer for them in the next day or so. On Town Meeting Day the voters approved \$1,000.00 to be used for the park benches. Ty wants to put down concrete pads under the benches and tables in the Municipal Park. Motion by Steve LaFar to approve this request. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**. Heidi found an opportunity through AARP to apply for a pavilion grant for the Highgate Falls park. Brian Spears has quotes already that can help Heidi with the pricing.

### **I. Upcoming Events**

May 5	Green Up Day	May 12 10am	Flood Clean-Up
May 8 6pm	VCMP Kick Off Meeting	May 15 6pm	Planning Comm. Meeting
May 9 5pm	MRSR Kick Off Meeting	May 17 7pm	Selectboard Meeting
May 10 6pm	DRB Meeting	May 28	Memorial Day Events

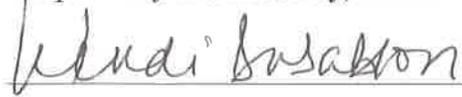
### **J. Executive Session**

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to exit the regular meeting @ 9:10pm. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**. Motion by Sharon Bousquet to enter into executive session @ 9:11pm with the Town Administrator and Town Clerk to discuss personnel, contracts and legal, where premature general public knowledge would place the town and the individuals involved at a substantial disadvantage. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**. Wendi exited the executive session @ 9:45pm. Heidi exited the executive session @ 10:10pm. Motion by Sharon Bousquet to exit executive session @ 10:28pm. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**.

### **K. Adjournment**

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

Respectfully submitted by,



Wendi Dusablon, Highgate Town Clerk &  
Public Meetings Clerk

Minutes approved by,



Sharon Bousquet - Chair, Highgate Selectboard

