

# TOWN OF HIGHGATE

## Selectboard Mtg.

December 3, 2015 @ 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 Jeff Towle, Chair @ 7:00pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Highgate Selectboard Members**- Jeff Towle, Chair; Chris Yates, Vice-Chair; Paulette Tatro; *absent – Diana O'Hara & Randy Connelly*

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

**Public / Other** – Andy King – Public Works Director; Ben Lowell – Constable; Rusty Posner – Franklin County Animal Rescue; Vonnie Lamotte – ACO; Kristy Brow – Asst. ACO; Don Gilbert – MAHA; Ty Choiniere – Parks & Rec.

#### **B. Public Comment**

None

#### **C. Solar Project Public Comment**

None

#### **D. Franklin County Humane Society – nka: Franklin County Animal Rescue – Rusty Posner**

Vonnie and Kristy (ACO & Asst. ACO) are also here for this discussion on the contract for 2016. Rusty reported that things are going well, and that they are keeping up with the numbers, particularly with cats. Adoptions are going well, their hands are full, but it is a positive place. Rusty enjoys working with Vonnie and Kristy, complimenting them for their work and response to things, Rusty has no complaints. Vonnie confirmed that FCAR will not take in animals that have been seized, Kristy will be taking care of that for us. Rusty added that as long as animals have been signed over and they have room, they will help. They do not want to be caught in a dispute because then they cannot move forward with an adoption. They will help with courtesy listings to help re-home an animal. The animals must be spay / neutered and up to date on vaccines. They are strict on town licensing, because that is the law. They offer vaccinations at the shelter now which cuts the time an animal is at the shelter because town licensing can happen faster. The vaccinations are a one year rabies vaccine with a certificate that is open to the public on Wednesdays by appointment at FCAR. Rusty will email Wendi the information to advertise this service. This is not a well visit, just a vaccine. They offer rabies, distemper and micro chipping. Spay and neuter clinics are held on Fridays at FCAR. The VSNIP program is funded by licensing fees, but the pet over population problem continues. Paulette thanked Rusty for their great work and services to the community. Motion by Chris Yates to sign the stray animal holding agreement for Jan. 1, 2016 – December 31, 2016 with FCAR. The motion was seconded by Paulette Tatro – **APPROVED.** Kristy Brow has also submitted a proposal for charging a one-time fee of \$30.00 to the town and \$20.00 per day to the pet owner for boarding fees at her home as an alternative to the FCAR. FCAR is not open every day, and Kristy is close by right here in town. This is a cheaper rate than FCAR and Kristy will be available 24/7. Kristy can have up to five dogs per day for day care and up to ten dogs per day for boarding, depending on the size of the dog. Vonnie will be getting a price on large crate to include with budgeting. Paulette confirmed with Kristy, she is only interested in helping out with dogs, not cats. That is correct, Kristy is allergic to cats, she will only board dogs. Vonnie and Kristy will make the best decision possible in each situation. Ben Lowell also assists with dog issues, the board thanked Ben for assisting with dog issues as needed. Kristy asked if the board would like to discuss the Elwood dog situation, she has an email from Mrs. Bourbeau at the Humane Society of the United States

instructing us on the steps we would need to take. Kristy will resend the email, Wendi and Heidi do not recall seeing it.

**E. Town Treasurer – Shelley Laroche**

**1. Pay bills**

Paulette had questions regarding the public works department and the fire department and the workers compensation line item. There were also questions about the bill from John Deere, which was for the zero turn for a complete 500-hour service.

**2. Finance Committee update**

They met on Tuesday night, December 1<sup>st</sup>. Shelley is very close to sending the board a final revised policy on appropriations and spending regarding recurring purchases. The policy on recurring purchases was approved back in 2010 but the amount was left blank. \$3,000.00 was recommended so they will bring the policy back before the board as an amendment. There will be a budgeting meeting on December 9<sup>th</sup> @ 6pm. Chris asked about a conflict of interest policy. The DRB has adopted one, but the Selectboard has to adopt one, per the auditors recommendation. We have received the draft from Sullivan & Powers regarding the September audit. There is a lot of information within the draft document. Paulette noted that the Finance Committee can play a role in addressing some of the comments in the draft. Shelley will also send the VLCT model conflict of interest policy to the board prior to next meeting.

**F. MAHA update – Don Gilbert**

The first high school game of the season is in the books. The MVU girls lost 2-1 vs. Northfield, a Division I team. The refrigeration equipment is running beautifully, they have been able to run the ice at 22 degrees on the surface and maintain it. The October electric bill was \$4,500.00 which is down some over previous years, and the November bill was \$4,600.00. They were still dialing the system in during early November, so that number should be lower in the future. This system is much better with the outside temperature being so warm. Paulette asked about the on demand charge, Don stated there will always be the demand charge, it's a matter of to what degree. They are still waiting on parts to come in for the dehumidifier. A manufacturer was found here in the U.S. for the defective coil. Once fixed, they will sit down with VHV about the scenario. The zamboni is now working well. The fuel management was out of whack, but is good to go now. Safeguards are in place with regard to CO levels at the arena. The building has been tightened up, so there isn't as much air exchange, which created awareness of the issue. Last night at the high school game at the third period, the meter reached 14, that is with the zamboni being used several times in one game at that point. Jeff asked if there is any gauge or alarm that sounds when the meter reaches 35? Don replied when the meter hits dangerous levels for evacuations (80 parts per million) an audible alarm is triggered. The insurance company is requiring the hand held meter readings, we will continue this every time the machine goes out if that is what the insurance company wants. Heidi noted that the concern is within the glass and boards area, that any gases would be held in that area. CO is equal with air. Once the skaters are on the ice, the air starts moving. There were no comments this year from VLCT on the arena inspection regarding CO. The security system is in place and all set at the arena. Paulette asked about the final construction committee meeting now that all the invoices have come in. There is a crack in the concrete in the zamboni room. Paulette would like to get everyone together and hash it out. Programs at the arena are running well. Contracts should be ready next week after the MAHA meeting. Don put in a plug for co-ed pick up hockey on Tuesday and Thursday nights at 9:15pm, \$5.00 per person and goalies skate for free, they need goalies! Broomball on Friday nights has been a big hit. Skate with Santa is coming up on December 20<sup>th</sup> 4:30-5:30pm and public skating numbers continue to rise, with 140+ skaters attending last week! Andy King added that we have a possible donation of an old snowmobile drag to groom the recreational walking path. The new scoreboards are being installed tomorrow, 12/4, by North East Scoreboards. Total package cost was \$12,900.00 for an 18' long scoreboard with score, time and penalties for both teams, wireless controller, and a smaller scoreboard for time and score only. The 18' scoreboard will be at the Gore Road end of the building and the smaller one will go under the American flag at the opposite end. The price also includes removal of the old scoreboards. There was some discussion on whether or not Black Dog Electric had billed MAHA for the two cameras and DVR system or not. Ty asked if Matt Bouchard had been

contacted regarding the wiring for the security system and how it was run. The cables are not currently encased in conduit. Ty also touched on the CO issue, he wants any zamboni operator to be safe, and feels the hand held monitor after each use is the best way to ensure their safety as well as anyone else in the building. Don has spoken to Andy about parking lot maintenance. Don asked when the well would be hooked up and operable. We have our permit now, so it can be hooked up after we run a 2" line from the back to the front to get the water to the restrooms and have just one line coming into the building. At this point, it can wait until spring. Chris will let McCuins know what our intent is, so we are all on the same page with regard to the water system.

#### **G. Public Works Department update – Andy King**

- Two large culverts on the Tarte Road have failed. A hydraulic study has been requested and Andy and Heidi have met with Chris Brunnelle.
  - The loader is back from Britch's. Andy is researching facilities that have the capability to paint heavy equipment completely. This will extend the life of our equipment.
  - The grader is all serviced and ready to go.
  - Uniform agreements – we have numbers from Unifirst, Foley and G&K. G&K came in highest, and that is our current vendor. The best quote came from Unifirst. Andy has questions regarding our contract status with G&K, which will be further discussed in executive session. Paulette asked what Andy is looking for regarding uniforms. He is looking at cost per item, pick up and drop off details, fuel surcharges, replacement costs, prep guard costs, image costs, and a laundry list of other charges involved – no pun intended! An important piece of the conversation has been long sleeved / short sleeved and swapping them out at no additional charge.
  - Meadow Lane – necessary signs have been ordered and received.
  - Heidi and Andy will be attending a Vermont Local Roads training in Essex on December 10<sup>th</sup> pertaining to designing pedestrian facilities.
  - Engine 2 (fire department) has problems with the anti-lock brake system and will be going to Clarke's on Tuesday 12/8. It is expected to be ready for pick up on the 10<sup>th</sup>. Andy will pick up Engine 2 after their training on 12/10.
  - Flagger certification cards were received today from their training on Nov. 19<sup>th</sup>.
  - Andy is working on the yearly report for the public works department for the town report and is also working on budgeting in preparation for the meeting on Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>.
  - The street light inventory is coming along slowly, there will be more to come on this.
  - Andy is ready to start using the Fleetio management system. The cost is \$29.00 per month and he would like to implement the system on January 1<sup>st</sup>. The system covers up to 10 vehicles and allows you to track anything from mileage, fuel, maintenance costs, costs per vehicle per mile, hours on vehicles, and more.
- Motion by Jeff Towle to enter into executive session @ 8:07pm to discuss contractual agreements with vendors. The motion was seconded by Chris Yates – **APPROVED**. Motion by Jeff Towle to exit executive session @ 8:27pm. The motion was seconded by Paulette Tatro – **APPROVED**.

#### **H. Town Administrator – Heidi Britch-Valenta**

##### **1. Allocation request letter**

We have one last letter to make a decision on the amount. Paulette does not think the amount is high enough, based on the amount of skaters participating from the Town of Swanton. The number is nearly equal to the number of MAHA skaters from Highgate. 2015 MAHA numbers are as follows: *Highgate 53; Swanton 49; Franklin 15; Sheldon 17; Alburgh 1; Milton 1*. Other towns have contributed with fewer skaters. St. Albans and Milton pay a different fee for ice time, MAHA charges the same enrollment fee for everyone. Franklin and Sheldon have generously allocated money to the arena, which offsets fees for skaters. Paulette feels that Swanton should have to contribute as a non-residential offset and stated that this is an issue. Highgate has stepped up to the plate with the project on our own. We have had a lot of support from other towns, businesses and individuals. A request to Swanton for \$15,000.00 is the least they should do. Last year Swanton would not take it to their voters to decide.

2. **PACE program literature**  
This program is a good opportunity for property owners in town. Paulette had questions about the sample ballot language within the literature and also had questions with regard to payback. The board would like to have a representative come in and visit with the board prior to making any decisions.
3. **Highgate Cliffs update**  
FYI, the state will be looking at the park this summer and writing up a long range maintenance plan.
4. **PACIF insurance recommendations**  
Heidi is open to suggestions for the scholarship and equipment grant applications.
5. **Landfill Custodial Care Permit Amendment**  
This amendment is at the request of the State Geologist. They are hoping to have some sort of ability to check the ground saturation if there is a slide at the time of any incident and track them.

#### I. **Town Clerk – Wendi Dusablon**

##### 1. **Minutes**

Motion by Chris Yates to approve the minutes from November 19, 2015, as written. The motion was seconded by Paulette Tatro – **APPROVED**.

##### 2. **Town Meeting Petitions to run for elected office on the ballot**

There are 11 elected positions that will appear on the ballot for Town Meeting Day. Please contact Wendi or stop by the office for a petition and consent of candidate form. All forms are due back to Wendi by Monday, January 25, 2016 by 5pm. Petitions require a minimum of 1% registered voter signatures, which is approximately 20 signatures, but it is recommended to get more. Please refer to the list below:

### Town Meeting 2016

Tuesday, March 1, 2016 @ 10am  
Highgate Elementary School  
Polls will be open 7am – 7pm for voting

List of town positions for the ballot:

- Delinquent Tax Collector - 1 year term
- Moderator – 1 year term
- Town Agent – 1 year term
- Selectboard Member – 2 year term
- Selectboard Member – 3 year term
- Lister – 3 year term
- Trustee of Trust Funds – 3 year term
- Library Trustee – 5 year term
- Cemetery Commissioner – 5 year term
- Town Clerk – 3 year term
- Town Treasurer – 3 year term

Documents are available at the Highgate Municipal Offices for pick up,  
or contact us to have them sent to you.

Consent of Candidate Forms & Petitions of Nomination are due to Wendi  
Dusablon, Highgate Town Clerk, by 5pm on January 25, 2016. These forms  
must be turned in on time for your name to appear on the ballot.

Wendi Dusablon  
Highgate Town Clerk  
868-4697 x201  
wdusablon@highgatevt.org

**J. Selectboard items**

**1. Personnel policy update**

Amendments to the policy will include; page 4 #3.2 changing the date of the compensation plan to be established the first day of July following a successful vote; #3.4 the public works director is now a salaried position; #3.6 add in that premiums shall be determined annually by the Selectboard in December, to be effective on January 1<sup>st</sup>; Page 6 #3.9 change the reimbursement rate for mileage to the government standard rate, which is required; #4.1B all vacation taken will be in the current fiscal year prior to June 30<sup>th</sup>; #4.1A change from calendar year to fiscal year; #4.2 change December 31<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>; #4.2B change the dates in two places; spelling error on page 11 under #6.6; last page under appendix D we can site the new smoking prohibition policy. Heidi will bring this back to the board on December 17<sup>th</sup> with these changes.

**2. CIP final**

We were hoping to have this back from Amanda at NRPC, but do not have it yet.

**3. Department update schedule**

Heidi is looking for feedback on how often the board wants to see each department for an update. ACO – quarterly or as needed; Auditors – we no longer have internal auditors; Finance Committee – quarterly; FDIC – yearly in conjunction with their allocation request; HVFD – every-other-month; FNLC – twice a year in conjunction with upcoming projects; Health Officer – is also a Selectboard member, so will report as needed; PWD – communication is very good on a daily basis, so once per month at a Selectboard meeting will be fine; Legislative updates – the board would like to see them when they are in session, but it is very difficult; Library – quarterly; Listers – twice per year; MVR – yearly at the first meeting in December (this year they will be here on Dec. 17<sup>th</sup>); Planning Commission – once per year and a rep will also be part of the Finance Committee, so PC & FC could attend together; Parks & Rec – every-other-month; NRPC & TAC – quarterly; School – quarterly if possible, Jeff would like Connie to come to a board meeting prior to Town Meeting Day, if possible; Trustees – yearly; Cemetery Commissioners – they meet just once or twice per year, the board would like to review their meeting minutes; Historical Society – they already meet once per month April through October, the third Wednesday of each month so May would be a good time to meet with them. Wendi noted that Charlie and the Historical Society had a nice holiday dinner last night at The Abbey, they had a good crowd and a great meal.

**4. Town report – Selectboard update**

Needed in final form by January 15<sup>th</sup> to Shelley.

**K. Upcoming events**

Dec. 9	6pm	Selectboard Budget Mtg.
Dec. 10	6pm	DRB Mtg.
Dec. 13	10am-2pm	Santa Day @ HVFD
Dec. 14	6pm	Selectboard Mtg. w/ AmCare
Dec. 15	6pm	Planning Comm. Mtg.
Dec. 17	7pm	Selectboard Mtg.
Dec. 20	4:30-5:30pm	Skate with Santa @ Highgate Sports Arena
Dec. 24, 25		Highgate Municipal Offices – <b>CLOSED</b>
Dec. 31		Highgate Municipal Offices – <b>CLOSING @ noon</b>
Jan. 1		Highgate Municipal Offices – <b>CLOSED</b>
Jan. 1	12:00 & 1:30pm	MVU Men's Hockey Alumni Games @ Highgate Sports Arena

**L. Executive session**

Motion by Jeff Towle to enter into executive session @ 9:00pm for contract negotiations. Executive session is necessary, as premature knowledge would put the town at a disadvantage. The motion was seconded by Paulette Tatro – **APPROVED.** Motion by Paulette Tatro to exit executive session @ 10:05pm. The motion was seconded by Chris Yates – **APPROVED.**

**M. Adjournment**

Motion by Paulette Tatro to adjourn the meeting @ 10:06pm. The motion was seconded by Chris Yates – **APPROVED.**

Respectfully submitted by,

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Wendi Dusablon, Highgate Town Clerk

Minutes approved by,

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Jeff Towle, Chair – Highgate Selectboard