

TOWN OF HIGHGATE

Selectboard Meeting

Wednesday, May 22, 2019

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; Joshua LaRocque, Vice-Chair; Bruce Butler; Richard Flint *absent* – Randy Connelly

Highgate Office Staff – Wendi Dusablon – Town Clerk / Public Meetings Clerk; Shelley Laroche – Town Treasurer / DTC; *absent* – Heidi Britch-Valenta – Town Admin.

Public / Other – Alice S. Cota; James Guilmette; Philip “Butch” Brosseau; Ty Choiniere; Brian Spears; Richard Noel; Gary Taylor – SAPD; Vonnie Lamotte

B. Public Comment(s)

- Josh LaRocque apologized for having to reschedule this meeting. We have three Selectboard members who are coaches and with this rainy spring many things are getting rescheduled.
- James Guilmette was present and had questions for the board about why he was not awarded the contract for the ADA renovations. James is looking for a clear answer, because he was the recommendation of the architect for the job. Sharon Bousquet replied that Mr. Guilmette and Mr. Gosselin were both eliminated based on not meeting all the criteria in the RFP bid process. This project involves federal grant money and we will also be audited on this process, so everything needed to be followed to the finest detail. Mr. Guilmette stated that the bonds were covered and he spoke to Laz Scangas (architect) and was told everything was in order. The town cannot speak to any conversations between Mr. Scangas and Mr. Guilmette, but Mr. Guilmette did not have workmans comp insurance, which was a requirement. Mr. Guilmette stated he does not have employees, so he does not need it. Any work he subs out has their own. If no one had met the requirements it would have been put out to bid, but we had two other firms that did meet the requirements and one was selected. Josh understands Mr. Guilmette’s frustration and stated that putting Mr. Scangas in that position was not the best option. If Mr. Guilmette feels he was misinformed, that is an issue he would need to take up with that other party. Shelley confirmed that between the grant and the CIP, we have enough funds set aside already to cover the selected contractor. There are no plans to ask the taxpayers for more money on this project.
- Ty Choiniere thanked Debbie Rouse as well as Mrs. Maskell (4th grade) and Mrs. LaBrusciano (2nd grade) at Highgate Elementary School for bringing their students over to help place flags on the graves of our veterans. It worked out very well and the kids learned a lot about Memorial Day and cemeteries. We hope this continues to be a yearly tradition in Highgate.

C. Community Celebration Update

- The date for this celebration on the Village Core property has been changed to August 17th.
- The VCMP committee has discussed doing a fundraiser to raise money for the celebration. There is already a fundraiser on Memorial Day (bake sale) to raise funds for updating our monuments in the park. Motion by Richard Flint to only have one fundraiser on Memorial Day – the bake sale – and ask the VCMP committee to wait until another time for their fundraising efforts. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**.
- The VCMP committee is also looking to see if the Selectboard will give them a budget for the celebration, seeing as the AARP grant did not work out. The property needs a substantial amount of cleaning and maintenance prior to any celebration taking place. Shelley sees this as buildings and grounds maintenance, and there are some funds available in the current budget. Josh expressed concerns about safety on the property and the degree of attention the VCMP committee will need to give it in order for it to be a safe venue for all on 8/17. Richard Flint suggested the celebration be cancelled all together because the grant funding did not come through. Another grant for \$2,000.00 is being applied for through Ben & Jerry's. MVU students are scheduled to help clean the property in early June. Josh questions how much will get done and there were questions about adult supervision on the property during the cleanup days. Bruce feels we have a responsibility for it to be cleaned up, whether there is a party on the property or not. The board would like the group through Alex Airoidi to also spend time at the site, preferably before the MVU students. The board members present all agreed that a final date needs to be set for the property to be entirely cleaned up before the Selectboard would consider committing funds to the celebration. They do feel the funds need to be accessed for cleanup of the VCMP property. A date of July 18th was set for the property to be entirely cleaned up and the Selectboard will visit the site on this date prior to their meeting to make a decision. Motion by Bruce Butler to spend \$2,000.00 from the buildings and grounds maintenance line item to be used for the cleanup effort at the Village Core Master Plan property (formerly Machia property). Further, the Selectboard will visit the property on July 18th and make a decision on if the celebration will move forward based on the cleanup effort and if any funds will be directed to subsidize the community celebration that is currently planned for August 17th. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **3 YES** (Sharon, Josh, Bruce) / **1 NO** (Richard) – **APPROVED**.

D. Town Treasurer Updates – Shelley Laroche

- Motion by Josh LaRocque to sign the check warrants. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED**.
- Delinquent taxes are at an all time low \$72,647.61 (not including Jedco). Shelley is beginning to look at an initial tax sale list.
- Amber Baker from NEMC (also treasurer for Town of Georgia) will be coming to sit with Shelley to work on the finding from the most recent audit.
- Butch is here from the Public Works Department. We have a quote from Pike Industries which came in \$12.00 per ton less than last year. Josh asked if we need to obtain more quotes. Butch contacted Pike solely because the paving for next year is all add-ons to what we are doing this year (extensions of paving we are already going to do). Butch will talk with Heidi about timing of these paving projects and any grant deadlines associated with different projects. Motion by Josh LaRocque to accept the

bid from Pike Industries of \$263,200.00, which is \$12.00 per ton less than last year, which equals 3,500 ton of asphalt to cover 1.5 miles of road on sections of Gore Road, Carter Hill Road and Frontage Road. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED.**

E. Town Clerk Updates – Wendi Dusablon

- Motion by Josh LaRocque to approve the minutes from May 2, 2019, as written. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED.**
- MVSD vote / election – Tuesday, June 11th from 7am – 7pm at Highgate Sports Arena. This includes new board members and a budget for our new district \$37,001.935.00. Absentee ballots are available now. An informational meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 4th @ 7pm at MVU.
- Dog licensing is going steady – we are at 843 with 30 give or take left to go. The first round of fines went out on 5/9 at \$25.00 per dog. The next round of fines will go out in mid-June at \$50.00 per dog, in addition to licensing fees.
- Memorial Day Events 1) HVFD BBQ starts @ 11am and is \$10.00 per person 2) Memorial Day Parade starts at NOON this year and begins at Highgate Sports Arena 3) Traditional ceremony in the park 4) HVFD Auction to follow – call 868-7722 with questions or drop items off Saturday 10-2 or Sunday 12-3. Please, no electronics, VHS / DVDs, books, clothing, car seats or any broken items 5) Bake Sale with proceeds to benefit the fund to update our memorials in the park.
- Wendi and Shelley participated in a mandatory webinar last week with regard to the Vital Records Modernization Act. This will be effective on July 1, 2019. Changes include an online data base, so town clerks have access back to 1909 for birth and death records, state wide. Another change is who can obtain certified copies. Vermont will no longer be an open records state. A form needs to be filled out as well as identification shown and relation to the person of record specified. More details will be available as we move closer to the July 1st date.

F. Administrator Items – Heidi Britch-Valenta

Heidi was not present but had prepared some items in advance for the board to review and take action on.

- Community Celebration Budget – earlier the board authorized \$2,000.00 for cleanup of the site. This will be readdressed in July after the site visit by the board.
- A grant update is in the drop box for the board to review.
- The Town of Franklin wishes to meet with us regarding the Hanna Road. The board would like Franklin to attend our meeting on June 6th.
- The Mill Hill project has gotten complicated with all the rain. It was no longer safe for the town crew to be there. We have acquired three bids for the work that needs to be done. The low bid was Goodhue Excavating at \$18,550.00. We do have funds in the grant to use for this purpose. We have a deadline to meet and Goodhue can start the second week of June to get it done in time. Motion by Josh LaRocque to accept the bid of \$18,550.00 from Goodhue Excavating for the Mill Hill project. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED.**
- A map was provided and Josh marked where the bollards need to be placed at the Public Works Department. Two per pillar, inside and out if we can afford to do the inside as well. We have budgeted \$10,000.00 for this. Jim Smith will be here in the morning to discuss this further.

- Butch stated he hoped to be done the Hanna Road project tomorrow, but may need a little more time. Boy Vanslette will be helping us get caught up on grading as the weather permits.
- John Maille has been working with the Recreation Commission on starting up a farmers market in town on Friday evenings. He wants the Selectboard's approval to sell hemp and CBD products as well. You can buy these anywhere and they are legal. Motion by Richard Flint to approve this request. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED.**
- Grant In Aid Road Project idea – the Public Works Department will get back to the board on this at a later date.
- The dispatching contract with St. Albans Central Dispatch was approved previously and was signed by Sharon.
- The school's attorney has contacted the town's attorney about the transfer of the Nadeau property that was approved at Town Meeting. He is under the impression that the school is only giving an easement. This is not the nature or wording of the article at Town Meeting. All those present regard the approval as a TRANSFER of the property, not an easement. Shelley has a message in to Lora McAllister at central office.

G. Recreation Updates

- At their last meeting the Recreation Commission made a decision to ask the Selectboard to approve some changes in the town park. They would like to replace three benches / flower boxes in the area of the water fountain and replace them with flower boxes similar to what H&B has separating their parking lot from their outdoor sales space. The new flower boxes would be placed in between the benches up by the sidewalk. They would also like to move the water fountain. There is a plaque imbedded in the water fountain to honor four citizens for their community service, dated 1986. The plaque can be relocated, but the current benches and flower boxes are 35+/- years old and are beyond repair. Motion by Josh LaRocque for the Recreation Commission to remove and replace the old benches / flower boxes and replace them with new ones. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED.** The water fountain will remain as is for now. The location suggested to move it to is over by the shorter leg of sidewalk closest to the Public Works Department. There was concern about it being hit and snow storage in the winter.
- Butch, Ty and Brian have spoken about mowing for the season. The Public Works Department is swamped for at least the first half of the season. Ty and Brian are both willing to mow again this year, and have already been doing so. Josh appreciates them helping out, but asked if the Rec. Director has any time in his schedule as well. Ty feels right now he does not. It takes about 10 man hours per week to do all the mowing in town, including the trimming. Richard agrees, Dan needs to focus on programming and getting more programs that have been neglected up and running. Motion by Josh LaRocque to have Ty Choiniere and Brian Spears take care of the mowing for the 2019 season, and if they get into a bind to ask for assistance from the Public Works Department, Rec. Director or any temporary help (Boy Vanslette) that is available. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED.**
- Motion by Richard Flint for the Rec. Commission to till, top soil and reseed the small park in front of the library after Memorial Day. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED.** Bruce added that soil testing might be beneficial to see if lime needs to be used as well.

- Josh would like to see the area behind the arena where the water line broke get smoothed out after baseball season.

H. Selectboard Items

- Roof update – the new roof will not be finished in time for Memorial Day, but all their equipment will be moved out for the town’s festivities.

I. Upcoming Events

May 27	Memorial Day Events in Highgate – TOWN OFFICES CLOSED
May 28 6pm	VCMP Community Celebration Planning Mtg.
June 2 9:30am-2pm	Highgate 6th Grade Car Wash & Bottle Drive @ HVFD
June 6 7pm	Selectboard Mtg.
June 10 10am	Highgate Airport Infrastructure Study Group Mtg.
June 11 7-7	MVSD Budget Vote @ Highgate Arena 7am-7pm – TOWN OFFICES CLOSED

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to exit the regular Selectboard meeting @ 8:23pm. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED.**

J. Executive Session

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to enter into executive session @ 8:23pm with Vonnie Lamotte, Wendi Dusablon, Shelley Laroche and Gary Taylor for contracts, legal and personnel, where premature general public knowledge would place the town and / or the individuals involved at a substantial disadvantage. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED.**

Wendi, Shelley and Vonnie exited executive session @ 8:45pm.

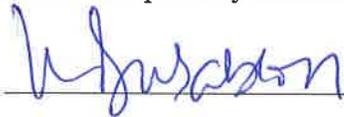
Motion by Josh LaRocque to exit executive session @ 10:10pm. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED.**

Motion by Richard Flint to accept the proposal from St. Albans Police Department for policing services for a term of one year beginning July 1, 2019 using the directed patrol funds to cover the additional costs. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED.**

K. Adjournment

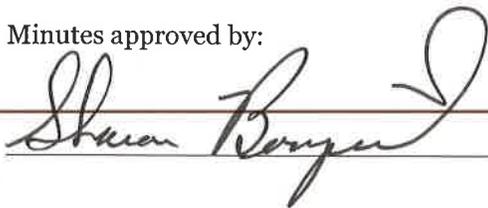
Motion by Josh LaRocque to adjourn the meeting @ 10:14pm. The motion was seconded by Sharon Bousquet – **APPROVED.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by:



Wendi Dusablon – Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk

Minutes approved by:



Sharon Bousquet – Chair, Highgate Selectboard

