

TOWN OF HIGHGATE

Selectboard Mtg.

March 19, 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; Diana O'Hara; Paulette Tatro; Randy Connelly

Highgate Office Staff – Wendi Dusablon - Town Clerk; Heidi Britch-Valenta – Town Admin; Tom Racine – Town Treasurer

Public / Other – Ben Lowell – Constable; Ty Choiniere; Steve Bushey; Don Gilbert; Vonnie Lamotte; Steve Ploof; Kristy Brow; John LaFrance; Tim Smith; Kathy Lavoie; Jay Labare & Tim Heinlein – DEW Construction.

B. Public Comments

None

C. Arena Construction Update – Steve Bushey & DEW

Jay Labare and Tim Heinlein were present from DEW, as well as Steve Bushey, Don Gilbert and Ty Choiniere from the Arena Construction Committee. Their intent this evening is to have the board sign a letter of intent so they can move forward. The committee has chosen an ice system that they are comfortable with, that fits our needs and our budget. To have the ice system designed, they need a formal contract with DEW, which the board has in front of them tonight. Jay said in order for DEW to contract with Custom Ice, the town needs to formally contract with DEW, allowing DEW to finish the design of the entire project, working with Custom Ice. This is an interim step and bridges the gap for the process to continue. The system is an 82 ton, 6 compressor scroll system. Custom Ice is a firm out of Buffalo NY and Burlington Ontario Canada. It is a fairly straight forward system that's sets down, hooks up and is ready to roll. Jay added that its an air cooled chiller that sits outside the building. The chilled water is the glycol that will flow through the floor. Steve added that once the letter of intent is signed and we have a more firm design from Custom Ice, we will then get all the sub bids and have a much more firm idea of the total project cost. Chris Yates clarified, this is just a letter of intent and it allows DEW to contract for the refrigeration system. The original bid was for \$478,700.00 with add-ons of \$25,930.00, which totals \$504,630.00. The only unknown is the warranty price. If the warranty is within our budget, that would give a level of comfort. Jay asked for a sample warranty with costs, which we should have shortly. Jay noted it is important to understand the process that was involved in the selection and effort that was put in to make sure it was the best system for our needs, now and in the future. It was a very thorough process and was narrowed down from five applicants to two systems. Those final two were interviewed face to face, two weeks ago. The committee that is steering this process had lots of discussion and the final decision was made last night. This is the best choice for our budget and the town. Motion by Chris Yates to sign the letter of intent with DEW. Motion was seconded by Paulette Tatro – **APPROVED.** Paulette had questions about the final figure, which was verified by Jay as \$504,630.00 and any addition with a warranty could be captured in the cost when they do a total GMP. Steve Bushey notified the board that on March 14th all the boards, glass, player's benches and media box had been removed. We have new boards and glass which were donated by Sticks & Stuff. The old boards are behind the arena, and if anyone shows interest in them, the sooner they are gone the better. As far as price, Steve said we should not wait for anything extravagant. Don noted that someone approached him about the old boards the other day, and Don instructed them to make a written offer and present it to the town. Jeff

would like to set the date for offers on the old boards to be received by April 1, 2015.

D. Highway Department Updates – Steve Ploof

- The road crew has been busy with some band aid work on back roads and trying to soften some pot holes and spread stone.
- Steve asked if he should get prices on trucks. Chris and Jeff would like to put a truck committee together. Clark's has called the town garage and are interested, and we have also dealt with J&B and VT Mack in the past as well.
- There was a water leak in Flat Iron Park over by the library. Chris added that the water pressure at the library is at a slow trickle and there is a lot of sediment. Steve said they had fixed the leak on Monday afternoon and that the line is only down about 4'. They also plow over there in more places to allow for parking which could also be leading to the freezing issues as well. Tom added that the pipe leading from the Municipal Building to the septic will need to be insulated.
- Chris asked about the sand shed roof. Steve said we will need to empty out the other side and use a man lift.
- Steve will see if George Britch can work on the Mack. The tailgate is not closing up from years of hauling heavy stone. It trickles gravel, so Steve won't even attempt to haul rock fine. A plate of steel will take care of the problem, but George might have a better idea. George is also going to do the patches on the side of the one-ton.

E. Town Treasurer – Tom Racine

1. Pay bills

There are two clauses in the contract at the arena with the snack bar, and it is confusing. Tom suggests as we get closer to renegotiating with MAHA that we should clean up the sub contracts. The bills we have received are for maintenance on the snack bar equipment. Tom finds it interesting that the town was bound to something that was between MAHA and a group they were leasing space to. Chris asked if there had been any agreement on the J&B invoice. They will continue to discuss this in executive session. The pricing on the Simplex Grinnell fire alarm maintenance contract is very similar to the prior contract. This contract covers the town office and the arena and includes a 2% increase each year over a course of three years. The arena amount is more because there are more devices and more monitoring. Motion by Chris Yates to sign the three year contract extension with Simplex Grinnell for the town offices and arena for both monitoring and service. Motion was seconded by Jeff Towle – **APPROVED**. Paulette asked if the 2% increase per year is consistent with years past – yes.

2. Misc.

- The audit is complete and reports will be coming soon. Tom will ask Fred Duplessis to come in and review the reports with the board.
- Merchants Bank is planning to have the note ready for signing at a Selectboard meeting in April.
- Ernie at NEMRC will be coming up on March 31st to work on the data conversion with Tom. Tom has been communicating with Ernie, Fred Duplessis and also Bill Hall from VLCT regarding consolidating funds in the general fund vs. keeping them separate. Ernie has some sound reasoning for keeping them separate.

F. Town Clerk – Wendi Dusablon

1. Minutes

Motion by Chris Yates to approve the minutes from March 5, 2015 as written. Motion was seconded by Paulette Tatro – **APPROVED**.

2. Dog update

We have a long way to go with dog licensing. As of today we have licensed 330 dogs for 2015. Last year we licensed almost 800 total. Deadline to license your dogs is April 1st by 4:30. Fees increase after April 1st and after May 1st municipal tickets will also be issued.

3. Kraft Hockeyville update

The nomination period ended at 11:59pm on March 18th. The numbers are changing constantly, as they continue to post them. We were leading the pack with 2200+ nominations, but the gap was narrowing. We will not hear anything for several weeks, until approximately April 11th. If we are judged and

placed in the top ten (5 east / 5 west), we will move on to Round #2 which is April 14-16. This next round is voting, not nominations, and there are three ways to vote – text, call, or online voting – and you can vote up to 50 times per day, per method (so yes, up to 150 times per day you can vote!). If we make it to the next round, we are guaranteed a minimum of \$20,000.00 towards arena renovations, and possibly more, depending on how we do. Wendi will keep the board and the community updated on our progress.

G. Officer appointments

- **NRPC / TAC Representative**– Motion by Jeff Towle to nominate Richard Noel as our **NRPC / TAC representative** for the Town of Highgate. Motion was seconded by Chris Yates – **APPROVED**. Richard has done a great job representing us. There is one more open seat if anyone is interested.
- **Health Officer** – We have not received any letters of interest. It is a big job and can be an unpleasant job with not a large stipend involved. Jeff would be willing to take on the HO role if someone else would take over as the highway commissioner. Chris would consider the highway commissioner role, and added that the fire department is taking a lot of time right now. Motion by Chris Yates to nominate Jeff Towle as **Health Officer** for the Town of Highgate. Motion was seconded by Paulette Tatro – **APPROVED**.
- **Highway Commissioner** – Motion by Jeff Towle to nominate Chris Yates as **Highway Commissioner** for the Town of Highgate. Motion was seconded by Paulette Tatro – **APPROVED**.
- **Deputy Health Officer** – Motion by Jeff Towle to nominate Ben Lowell as **Deputy Health Officer** for the Town of Highgate. Motion was seconded by Diana O'Hara – **APPROVED**.
- **NWSWD Representative** – They meet once per month in Georgia, and they will feed you. Diana will consider this, Heidi will get more info to Diana.
- **Development Review Board member** – We have received a letter of interest from Scott Martin. Motion by Chris Yates to nominate Scott Martin as a member of the **Development Review Board** for the Town of Highgate. Motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**.
- **Planning Commission Board member(s)** – There are two vacant seats on the PC. Interested persons should submit a letter of interest to Heidi.
- **Animal Control Officer** – We have received two letters of interest for the ACO position. Vonnie Lamotte and Kristy Brow are both present here tonight. We did not receive a letter from Mr. Dixon and he is not present. This is a first for the town that we have more than one person interested in the ACO position. Kristy noted that this is an important position and the town would have less problems if we worked to educate pet owners and worked with them and their dogs. Vonnie feels it should be about the dog, or the animal itself, and she would like to work with the town and pet owners. Both Kristy and Vonnie are very interested and would certainly consider assisting one another or working as a team. Chris noted that they are correct, the issues we have are mostly owner issues and the dog pays for it. Owner education is a big piece. Chris asked if both had seen our new ordinance that took effect in early 2014. Both have read it and neither would have an issue upholding the ordinance. Jeff would like to have someone be the lead, and someone available to assist or cover a vacation. This way, someone is always available. Paulette asked both about their availability. Both Vonnie and Kristy work from home and have flexibility. The board let both Vonnie and Kristy know they will discuss this in executive session and they will hear from the board in a letter. Later in the meeting, after this discussion, Ray Dixon did show up and said he has a camera, cages and carriers that belong to the town that he will return tomorrow. The board thanked Ray for his many years of service to the Town of Highgate.

H. Town Administrator – Heidi Britch-Valenta

- Heidi has nothing major to report. Buzz Surwilo will be here in late April or early May to discuss the temporary debris storage reduction sites.
- We have received word from FEMA that our Hazard Mitigation Plan is official now. That removes the burden of having it done in order to finish the home buyout grants on Riverview Lane. The title opinions have been completed and the paperwork has been forwarded to FEMA. We are close to a closing date so the homeowners can get out. Paulette clarified, only two of the three homes on Riverview Lane are being demolished – yes. The Garey home and the

Simmons home are the two being demolished. The Hazard Mitigation Plan being official also frees us up to be eligible for funds to stabilize the transfer station landslide area.

I. Constable

Ben Lowell has been working with Sheriff Norris and the tentative date for Coffee with a Cop will be on Saturday, April 25th here at the town offices. Ben will ask the Sheriff about using his radar gun for some speed studies in the Highgate Area. Jeff also asked Ben to inquire about the speed cart they just purchased. Chris asked about the speed studies and if one is needed with regard to the sidewalk study. The speed study on Darlene Drive was done but was not viable. Ben will take data anywhere they want him to be, just let him know.

J. Selectboard items

1. Selectboard Institute on March 21st

Neither Randy or Paulette will be able to make this. Both have a copy of the Selectboard handbook. Chris has a binder from when he attended the institute last year he can share with them.

K. Upcoming Events

April 1	by 4:30pm	Dog licenses are due
April 2	7pm	Selectboard Mtg.
April 9	6pm	DRB Mtg.
April 14 – 16		Next voting phase for Hockeyville (round #2)
April 21	6pm	PC Mtg.

L. Executive session #1

The board had some time before Tim Smith and Kathy Lavoie arrive at 8:25pm. Motion by Jeff Towle to enter into executive session @8:03pm to discuss the ACO appointment. Motion seconded by Chris Yates – **APPROVED**. Motion by Jeff Towle to enter back into the regular Selectboard meeting @ 8:25pm. Motion was seconded by Chris Yates – **APPROVED**. Motion by Jeff Towle to appoint Vonnie Lamotte as the Animal Control Officer for the Town of Highgate, and Kristy Brow as 1st Alternate Animal Control Officer for the Town of Highgate. Vonnie will be the first point of contact and the stipend will be split 2/3 (Vonnie) and 1/3 (Kristy). Motion was seconded by Chris Yates – **APPROVED**.

**M. Franklin County Industrial Development, Tim Smith
Workforce Investment Board Director, Kathy Lavoie**

Kathy Lavoie works with local high schools, CCV and VT Adult Learning. She has recently also assumed the role vacated by Marilyn Savoy, due to her retirement. The training center in Swanton is owned by FCIDC and they have tested over 1,300 people for TSA, FBI, Border Patrol and the USPS. They recently added a class in heating and repair service, taught by Chandler Ede. It is an active center that offers various programs, internships and placement programs. Last year she worked with 63 young adults and placed 49 of them. The difference is usually the ones dismissed from the program for various reasons. Tim added that the focus has shifted to finding good employees. There is a lot of discussion about soft skills and showing up to work on time and coming back the next day. Kathy referred to one of her programs "Attitude, Attire & Attendance". The job fair is coming up in St. Albans at the complex on March 26th. Kathy noted that the career exploration program at MVU is way out in front compared to other schools. Heidi asked Kathy how you qualify for her programs, it is an interview process. Kathy added that if she is working harder than one of the students, they will talk, if they have to talk again, they are done. If she can help them and bring them farther than they have ever been, she will assist. Many young adults want to get out from underneath the generational poverty, and they line up to talk to Kathy. She has expanded her programs to include up to 22 year olds. She also uses work investment board resources to help out recent college grads and organizes trainings for companies such as Mylan, Vermont Precision Tools and Barry Callebaut. She is currently looking for a paved site for CDL practical training. Tim added that if kids have chosen not to continue schooling or have delayed it, they should track Kathy down. Kathy added that she accepts calls from the students, not their parents. Both Tim and Kathy serve on the Healthy Roots Committee. Through a grant, they have hired Kristen Hughes to promote the local foods movement. In conjunction with that, Tim said there are lots of questions

regarding slaughtering and he passed out some literature adding there is a meeting on Monday night at the St. Albans Cooperative building. The last two years at City Hall in St. Albans they have hosted "In Good Taste" which has been a big hit. Kristen and Kathy work together scheduling trainings on marketing, distribution and other things for workforce development for producers. Whatever your questions are, you can reach Kathy Lavoie at 802-782-1924 or kathy.lavoie2@myfairpoint.net. Switching gears, Tim moved on to discuss the Jedware property on Route 78 in Highgate. Tim has made contact with Chad Farrell from Encore Redevelopment in Burlington. He has experience working with properties such as the Jedware property that are contaminated. Chad works as the middle man for developers who want to create solar arrays. The Jedware property would be ideal for a solar array. Due to contamination (former landfill) the arrays can be erected on pedestals so they do not disturb the land. The size and location of the land are great for this. The Vermont Public Power Authority is looking for projects for their portfolio and would love to talk to the Highgate Selectboard. Chris asked about the capped landfill and if that could be utilized as well, he just saw something about it being done in Southern Vermont. Heidi isn't sure, but the capped landfill site is significantly smaller and we have just moved to custodial care on that site. Tim noted they are looking for a large chunk of land, and the Jedware property is large. Chad is well versed in what is allowed and is not allowed. There is a transmission line going through there also, Chad was intrigued by the parcel. If we get to the point of doing an RFP, Chad is the one to have a conversation with. He can meet with the board, and his appointments are 2-3 weeks out. Tim noted this would not be a cash cow, but could bring in as much as \$14,000.00 per year in lease revenue. The town does not currently own the property, but could sooner than later due to the amount of delinquent taxes owed on the property. The location is not very visible, it is isolated and this would turn a negative situation into a positive one and also generate something out of it. Tim touched base on some other industrial development in Franklin County. The Energizer building in St. Albans is very close to a closing with a developer. Brownfield contamination is holding it up some, there are 15 monitoring wells still open on the property. They are hoping to make the building a multi-tenant scenario. There are currently no empty spaces available in Franklin County. Hiring continues to increase at Vermont Precision Tools. EnergTech purchased a parcel off Waugh Farm Road in Swanton. They will focus on compressed natural gas and reach out to smaller businesses in rural areas, such as McCuins. They hope to be up and running in late 2015. VT Brick, Tim does not have much hope for, the building is in rough shape and he is not sure what the future holds. The board thanked Kathy and Tim for coming and for their updates and information.

N. **Executive session #2**

Motion by Jeff Towle to enter back into executive session @ 9:25pm to discuss a legal matter. Motion was seconded by Chris Yates – **APPROVED**.

Motion by Jeff Towle to exit executive session @ 10:15pm. Motion was seconded by Paulette Tatro – **APPROVED**.

O. **Adjournment**

Motion by Jeff Towle to adjourn the meeting @ 10:17pm. Motion was seconded by Chris Yates – **APPROVED**.

Respectfully submitted by,

Wendi Dusablon, Highgate Town Clerk

Minutes approved by,

Jeff Towle, Chair – Highgate Selectboard