

TOWN OF HIGHGATE

Selectboard Mtg.

February 5, 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 @ 7:02pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Highgate Selectboard Members- Jeff Towle, Chair; Andy King, Vice- Chair; Chris Yates; Diana O'Hara; Luke Choiniere

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

Public / Other – Ben Lowell – Constable; Rick Trombley; Andy Leduc; Rick Leduc; Richard Souza; Merry Souza; Don Gilbert; Josh LaRocque; Will Ruprecht - FCSO

B. Public Comments

None

C. Highway Department

- Steve Ploof was not present tonight.
- Andy noted that the snow was getting built up around the dry hydrant at Frog Pond. Heidi will mention this to Steve.
- Liza asked us to share information regarding the Duct Tape Derby on Feb. 21st. There is more information on the website and towns FB page regarding the event. The highway crew will be keeping the parking area clean and bringing over garbage barrels to Carter Hill.
- Heidi mentioned that the state traffic committee did meet regarding the Route 7 speed study. The speed will change from the intersection of Carter Hill Road to approximately Martin's Store to 40 mph.

D. FCSO – Sheriff Robert Norris

Sheriff Norris was not present. Will Ruprecht was present on behalf of FCSO for an update. He noted they had purchased a speed cart for use around the county. With regard to stats, for the month of January there were 80 cases in the Town of Highgate. He noted an increase in property watches, which is a service they offer where an officer visits the property and walks around to be sure it is secure. Arrests were down in Highgate for January, which has a lot to do with the cold temperatures we are dealing with. There was one DUI arrest in Highgate, and as a whole he noted that DUI arrests have gone down. Traffic stops have been consistent, and he reiterated that motor vehicle interdiction is a good angle of attack. Their schedule has changed for the month of February. Will is very statistics driven as far as what law enforcement does. There has been an increase in day time burglaries when homes are vulnerable due to people being at work. Their shifts on Sunday through Thursday will be changing hopefully to put a stop to this. Friday and Saturday shifts will remain the same. After February he will look at the data and see if there has been an impact. Jeff asked if the 33 property watches in January were all for Highgate – yes – some may be multiples for the same property if people are away and have asked for this service. Will said anyone interested in the property watch service should come to the office and fill out paperwork. Property crime is very upsetting, so they are looking at ways to better utilize their time and better serve the people. He noted that VSP is also available during any period that FCSO is not on patrol in Highgate. The board appreciates the communication from FCSO and thanked Will Ruprecht for coming.

E. Town Treasurer – Tom Racine

1. Pay bills

New signs are up at the Machia Road bridge (B25). Andy asked if we had any further communication from J&B. Heidi has more information for executive session. The highway department ordered some items that were delivered and the jack was quite heavy. Tom will check if the oil drain pan came in yet.

2. Town Meeting Day articles

Everyone has seen and signed the town meeting day warning, except Luke. The article regarding the constable position will be on Australian ballot, by statute. Floor articles include the two money articles – General Fund and Highway Fund. We are in the process of working out the capital improvement program which will likely take a number of months and we will seek public input. This will have to be adopted by the board. The monies we have moved in the capital fund are a combo of reserves which the voters voted on and also the community development money which was discretionary under the boards control. Once we have an approved plan we will likely have policies associated with it. The elimination of the town auditors (article #6) will be from the floor and must be a paper vote, per statute. With all the activity we have going on in town, neither Steve or Ron will continue as town elected auditors. The recommendation is to vote to eliminate the position of elected auditors and have a professional audit done annually. Article #7 is regarding public questions (town) and budgets (town) moving to Australian ballot. We currently already elect town officers by Australian ballot. Lastly, we will need to set a date for taxes to be due and whether or not to accept postmarks. This years is a fairly simple town meeting warning overall. Chris asked if we get into a situation like last year with the budget repeatedly not passing, will that have any affect on the due date for taxes. Tom said no, the Selectboard has the authority to borrow without asking permission from the voters. If the due date set at town meeting is delayed the board would have to set a new due date. Tom wanted to remind folks that over the years we have been combining departmental budgets within the general fund. Amendments can be made from the floor. People should not be intimidated by them being consolidated within the general fund.

F. Zoning bylaw hearing

1. Bylaw hearing

This is the first of two zoning bylaw hearings. There will be one more on Feb. 19th. There was no one present from the public and no comments on this issue. Rick Trombley, DRB & PC Chair, was present to answer any questions for the board. Rick noted a few of the highlights of the bylaw revisions, including the airport overlay map and the new flood plain regulations.

2. PC & DRB stipend increase request

The board was in receipt of a letter from the PC & DRB regarding an increase in their per meeting stipend. Motion by Jeff Towle to increase the stipend for the PC & DRB from \$15 per meeting to \$20 per meeting, effective January 1, 2015. Motion was seconded by Diana O'Hara – **APPROVED**. The board thanked Rick for all that the PC & DRB have done and continue to do.

3. Misc.

- Chris asked if the Selectboard was required to send a letter of support for the cell tower. Heidi noted that the Selectboard has enacted a contract with SBA which has shown their support. SBA also required a letter from NRPC and the PC in Highgate as well, which have both been done.

G. Town Clerk – Wendi Dusablon

1. Minutes from Jan. 22nd

Motion by Jeff Towle to approve the minutes from *January 22, 2015*, as corrected. Motion was seconded by Chris Yates – **APPROVED**.

2. Town Meeting updates

- Absentee ballots can be requested any time. Please call, email or stop by to request yours.
- The last day to register to vote is Wednesday, Feb. 25th @ 5pm.
- The warning was posted earlier this week on FB, the town website, the town office and several locations around town.

- Town reports will be ready by Feb. 19th for our pre-town meeting info session. We will be reviewing the proof by Feb. 10th. Wendi will post when they are here and ready to pick up at locations around town, or you can call to have one mailed.
 - Town Meeting lunch will be available to purchase and will be served and hosted by the Highgate Historial Society – turkey & biscuits.
 - Free child care will be available in the Highgate school library. Please call or email Wendi to let her know your children will be attending. Snacks and activities for the children will be provided.
 - Highgate is participating in the **KRAFT HOCKEYVILLE 2015** contest. Log on to www.krafthockeyville.com to nominate the Highgate Sports Arena until March 18th in this phase of the competition. You can nominate up to three times with each email address.
- 3. Liquor license renewals – Desorcies Market and Martins General Store**
- Motion by Chris Yates @ 7:22pm to exit the regular Selectboard meeting and enter into the liquor control board. Motion was seconded by Andy King – **APPROVED.**
- Motion by Chris Yates to approve the liquor renewal license for Martins General Store. Motion was seconded by Andy King – **APPROVED.**
- Motion by Andy King to approve the liquor renewal license for Desorcies Market. Motion was seconded by Chris Yates – **APPROVED.**
- Motion by Chris Yates @ 7:27pm to exit the liquor control board and re-enter the regular Selectboard meeting. Motion was seconded by Jeff Towle – **APPROVED.**

H. Town Administrator – Heidi Britch-Valenta

1. PACIF Workstrong Program

Heidi participated in a webinar for this. They are offering limited incentives to people willing to participate. This is geared towards constables, fire departments and highway departments. The goal is to incorporate basic stretches and exercise in the early part of the day to prevent injuries throughout the day. At a minimum, they would come in and look at work areas and suggest ways to make them more ergonomic. Jeff feels its tough to get buy in from everyone, unless its part of their job description. Heidi doesn't think there is a dramatic shift in workers comp payments but there is a dramatic change in the amount of claims. In the past the focus was on walking. Stretching now seems to be the focus and its worth taking a look at. Heidi will invite them to come in. Andy said they do something similar at his place of employment and it does make a difference.

2. School informational session – joint with ours on Feb. 19th

The Highgate School Board is asking if a collaborative pre-town meeting day presentation with the Selectboard would work. They usually have very low attendance, so if we team up we could have somewhat of an audience. All agreed we should collaborate with the school more often. We will hold the joint pre-town meeting information session here on Feb. 19th @ 7pm.

3. Misc.

- VT Gas is interested in continuing into the Highgate area. They have sent a map indicating the new area they want to begin campaigning in. It is the Lamkin Street area. They are looking for town feedback to ensure the extended lines are not going to be an issue with our construction maintenance schedule (sidewalks). The board supports this 100%.
- Heidi has more items for executive session and MAHA is also here for executive session.

I. Selectboard items

1. Streetlight project – MOA

Chris has been the lead on this project. Efficiency VT won't assign us someone to work with until we sign the MOA. Motion by Jeff Towle to sign the MOA between Efficiency VT and the Town of Highgate. Motion was seconded by Chris Yates – **APPROVED.**

2. Documents for Meadow Lane

Chris Yates recused himself from the discussion and removed himself from the table. These documents have been reviewed by our legal counsel already. Motion by Jeff Towle to send the Irrevocable Offer of Dedication to Chevalier / Highgate. Motion was seconded by Andy King – **APPROVED.**

3. Arena lease discussion

This will be discussed in executive session.

J. Fire Department update

- Dick & Merry Souza were present. Dick has asked Gary Greenough to accept the role of Assistant Chief, and Gary has accepted. New nominations took place on Monday, February 2nd with the following results:
 Captain – Joe Depatie
 Lieutenant – Chris Uzell
 The next round of elections will take place in March 2016. Chris Yates wanted to verify that Chris Uzell has been a firefighter over the age of 18 for five years, per the bylaws. Dick double checked and yes, he is all set. Motion by Jeff Towle to accept the nominations of Captain and Lieutenant for the HVFD. Motion was seconded by Chris Yates – **APPROVED.**
- On Feb. 21st the library will be hosting the Duct Tape Derby at Carter Hill. The HVFD will be hosting their annual sliding party, also at Carter Hill, on Feb. 28th. More details to follow. NorthWest Riders will start grooming tomorrow and they will groom the hill down to be in good shape for both of those events, per Chris Yates.
- Chris Yates also pointed out a very positive article in the Messenger recently regarding the Santa Day event at the HVFD.

K. Upcoming events

Feb. 17	6pm	Planning Comm.
Feb. 19	7pm	Selectboard Mtg / Joint Town Meeting Info Session
Feb. 21	1pm	Duct Tape Derby @ Carter Hill
Feb. 28	4-8pm	HVFD Sliding Party @ Carter Hill

L. Executive Session

Motion by Jeff Towle to enter executive session @ 7:47pm to discuss a legal matter, personnel and contracts. Motion was seconded by Chris Yates – **APPROVED.**
 Motion by Chris Yates to exit executive session @ 10:20pm. Motion was seconded by Andy King – **APPROVED.**

M. Adjournment

Motion by Jeff Towle to adjourn the meeting @ 10:23pm. Motion was seconded by Chris Yates – **APPROVED.**

Respectfully submitted by:

_____ Wendi Dusablon, Highgate Town Clerk

Minutes approved by:

_____ Jeff Towle, Chair - Highgate Selectboard