

TOWN OF HIGHGATE SELECTBOARD MEETING

Thursday, October 19, 2017 @ 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 @ 7:05pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Highgate Selectboard Members – Sharon Bousquet, Chair; Steve LaFar; Bruce Butler; Randy Connelly *absent* – *Josh LaRocque, Vice-Chair*

Highgate Office Staff – Wendi Dusablon, Town Clerk/Public Meetings Clerk; Heidi Britch-Valenta, Town Administrator/Zoning Administrator
Absent – *Shelley Laroche, Treasurer/Delinquent Tax Collector*

Public / Other – Chris Uzell; Henry Rainville; Cara Fournier; Cecile Paradee; Peter Fournier; Jean Chevalier; Vonnie Lamotte – ACO; Cindy Shedrick; David Tremblay; David Rouse; Rich Wilkens; Daniel Favreau

B. Public Comment(s)

- Daniel Favreau was present from the NorthWest Riders Snowmobile Club to get permission from the board to use certain sections of town roads in Highgate. There was some discussion on gas line work that has been done on Carter Hill Road. Mr. Favreau also had questions about the gate being closed at the former Anderson gravel pit. It is closed because of a dumping issue. Mr. Favreau pointed out that they carry a million dollar policy for coverage in case anyone is injured. Motion by Steve LaFar to approve the request of the NorthWest Riders Snowmobile Club from December 15 – April 15 and to sign the application, conditional on having Pat Loyer check in with Vermont Gas. The locations are as follows: along the gas line on Frontage Road, the bridge over the interstate on Carter Hill Road, and a section of Durkee Road. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED.**

C. Vicious Dog Hearing

Vonnie Lamotte, ACO, began with an explanation of what happened on Wednesday, October 18th. We have had issues with the two boxers belonging to Lucas and Rebecca Kane (St. Armand Road) previously. On October 18th the boxers were out loose again and took the rail trail down to Parizo Road and killed a goat. The dogs also really upset their horse that had to be sedated by a vet. The owners of the animals, Tammy and Peter Fournier, are looking for compensation for the vet bill, cost of a replacement goat, and burial expenses. The town has also fined the Kane's \$100.00. This has been an ongoing issue, and the behavior has gotten worse. The Kane's have not fixed the fence, as was required of them at a previous hearing, and they can't keep them hooked. Mr. & Mrs. Fournier could not be present tonight, but their three children are here; Cara Fournier, Cecile Paradee and Peter Fournier. Cara was present at the Parizo Road residence when this incident happened. Vonnie proposes that she takes the dogs and tries to rehome them – separately. She would also like to see them neutered, which is part of the reason they are always on the run. Cara expressed concern for their pack mentality and behavior and worries that a child could be hurt. The dogs are eight and five years old, she doesn't know if neutering them will even make a difference, and she questions if rehoming them will help either, given their ages. Vonnie would like to get them into a facility that will monitor them and would not rehome them until they know what their issues are and if they can successfully be re-homed. She feels the dogs, in general, are good dogs, and doesn't know what is going on with them. The current owners are not willing to fix the problem(s), but Vonnie is. If working towards rehoming the dogs is not successful, it will be up to the facility to determine what to do with them. Sharon expressed sympathy to the Fournier family for the loss of their pet goat. Cara said the dogs showed aggression towards her, so she backed away. Sharon let everyone know that Lucas Kane, owner of the dogs, came to see her today. He let her know they would not be coming to this meeting. He had offered to euthanize the dogs this evening. Sharon asked him to please wait and see what the Fournier family would like to

see done. Bruce Butler is impressed with Vonnie's track record as ACO and her ability to place dogs. He cited the example from last fall with the bull terrier dogs that did bite a human. Those placements were successful. Vonnie feels the boxers still have a chance, and that the owners are the ones who need to be held responsible. She is here to protect the dogs from this happening again, as well as protect animals and people from this happening again also. She has spent time with them and they are not typically vicious. Cara disagreed. Woody Rouse stated they have a taste for blood (previously killed chickens also) and it won't stop now. The organization Vonnie wants to work with is called Long Trail out of Middlesex. The town of Highgate won't have any financial burden with this process. Henry Rainville feels that if the dog owner is willing to take care of the issue, let him take care of the issue. Randy is concerned, and would want them to be euthanized humanely. Cindy Shedrick said if they are euthanized the town should require a receipt to show it was done properly. The board would like to go with Vonnie's recommendation. Everyone can agree that the dogs need to be split up, and that neutering them will also help. Jean Chevalier expressed concern that this could come back on the town if the dogs are placed and something happens. Vonnie said the organization is fully insured. Sharon reiterated that the Kane's will be responsible for all expenses related to the incident on October 18, 2017. It was noted that the Kane's have two other dogs. There are no reported incidents on the other two dogs. The town can't dictate that they can't get any other dogs, but hopefully they have learned a lesson. Vonnie pointed out that the Kane dogs were not abused in any way, they were just not taken care of in a responsible manner that would keep them home. It was also noted that the Kane's have children of their own and no incidents have been reported in the home. Motion by Randy Connelly to give Vonnie Lamotte the opportunity to rehome separately and neuter the two male boxer dogs that belong to Lucas and Rebecca Kane. If they are not able to be rehomed in a timely fashion, they are to be euthanized in a humane fashion. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.

D. NorthWest Riders Club – Daniel Favreau

See above under public comments.

E. Treasurer Updates – Shelley Laroche

Shelley is absent, but had prepared the check warrants ahead of time. Sharon asked about the invoice from Laz Scangas. We have received all the documents from him that we were waiting on. Sharon also wanted to double check the amount on the VT Concrete Cutters estimate.

F. Town Clerk Updates – Wendi Dusablon

- Motion by Randy Connelly to approve the minutes from October 5, 2017, as written. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.
- Motion by Randy Connelly to approve the minutes from October 11, 2017, as written. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.
- November 7th – special ballot vote regarding the MVU Capital Reserve Fund. Voting will be held at Highgate Elementary School from 7am-7pm. Following that will be a floor discussion and vote at 7pm regarding ACT46. It will be a very long day. Absentee ballots are available for the MVU vote.
- Volunteers are needed for bulb planting on Saturday, Oct. 21st. Volunteers will meet at the Highgate Falls Park @ 9am.
- The job advertisement has been posted for the part time Zoning Administrator. It will print in the paper starting Monday. Interested applicants need to have all their paperwork in by Monday, Nov. 13th @ 4:30pm to the town clerk. All documents are available on the town website at www.highgatevt.org.

G. Town Administrator Items – Heidi Britch-Valenta

- Grant update – Heidi shared a grid with updated statuses on several grants. There was considerable discussion on the trees in front of the Bolia property that are along the route of the Lamkin Street sidewalk project. A change order is needed for the project regarding these four trees. The estimate to remove them is \$5,000.00. GW Tatro manages all the sub contracts regarding this project. GW Tatro's price on the project was very good, much lower than the others. There was an attempt to get bids to take the trees out, the amount of \$5,000.00 is based on VTrans standard five year cost estimates. GW Tatro is hoping to take the trees out when they come back to

do the granite curbing. It will be even more expensive to extend the change order. There were questions on if the trees could be replanted somewhere else. Cindy Shedrick asked about the sidewalks in East Highgate and why they are not maintained. Most everyone at the meeting was unaware there were sidewalks in East Highgate. She said yes, they are across from the river near the Hanna Road intersection and proceed along in front of a few homes. She is concerned the new sidewalks will suffer the same fate and fall into disrepair. Sharon had some comments about amending the RFP for sidewalk snow removal. Heidi would like to address these issues at the next sidewalk meeting, held every Thursday morning at 10am. The tree removal costs are part of the sidewalk grant. Our match was 20% of the overall project. David Rouse put it in perspective, that of the \$5,000.00 our share is really only \$1,000.00 or \$250.00 per tree. We can quibble over this, but it will delay the project and ultimately end up costing us more. Sharon also pointed out that sometimes our hands are tied when it comes to issues associated with grant funding. Motion by Bruce Butler to approve the \$5,000.00 to remove the trees. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**.

Rich Wilkens had a question about the snow removal RFP. It references the best interest of the *library*. Heidi said that must have been left there from a former RFP and that the Selectboard has sole discretion.

- Energy Chapter Amendment to the Town Plan – The Planning Commission held a hearing on Tuesday and voted to forward this on to the Selectboard for two public hearings and adoption. Motion by Bruce Butler to accept the amendment and hold two public hearings with the Selectboard. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**. The first hearing will be in December, as there needs to be a 30-day notice. The second hearing will follow sometime soon afterwards. These hearings will be properly noticed for the public.
- FEMA Mapping Meeting – There will be a meeting on November 6th @ 6pm at the VSP facility in St. Albans.
- Gore Road Crosswalk – The striping for the crosswalk over Route 78 is being subbed out. While they are in town and GW Tatro is already paying the mobilization fee, we can have the Gore Road crosswalk redone. There was discussion on the need for the Gore Road crosswalk. Heidi gave a brief history on the need for it so the day care can safely transport students. The school is also working on walking school buses so a responsible adult can safely walk kids to school. Randy would like to see a blinking light at the Gore Road crosswalk as well. There is a lot of funding available for pedestrian safety, she will look into this. Motion by Randy Connelly to pay \$1,000.00 to L&D Safety Marking Corporation to restripe the Gore Road crosswalk using durable crosswalk marking polyurea. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.
- Better Back Roads Grant Application - Applications are now open. Jim Smith is coming in tomorrow to meet with Pat Loyer and Heidi to discuss what our next application should be. Application deadline is November 17th.
- VASA – VASA will be here on November 2nd. And as a reminder, there is an ATV meeting being held at Johnson State College on October 26th @ 6pm.
- Snow Removal RFP – due date is October 27th @ 3pm.
- Roof RFP – due date is October 23rd by 3pm.

H. Selectboard Items

- HVFD Floor – The floor was poured today and they are still working on it as we speak this evening. Sharon thanked Doug Rollo, VT Concrete Cutting, Brian Sartwell and Dan's Concrete for all doing a super job. There have been some hiccups along the way, but everyone has worked together to keep it timely. Doug did lose his cell phone somewhere in the floor ☹. We do not have a total cost yet, but we believe we will be well within the budget of the CIP.
- Platt Road – The board discussed a site visit some time ago. Randy visited the property last night. This is a small triangular piece of property and after the town's right of way is considered, there is not a lot of property left. There have been suggestions about changing the traffic pattern in that area. The town has asked her to move her fence. She has asked why the town just doesn't buy that portion of the property. More homework is needed to be done by the Selectboard and this will be back on the agenda for next meeting.

- Arena – The rental dehumidification unit is working very well and the ice season is officially underway. There have been countless volunteer hours. Sharon thanked everyone involved.

I. Upcoming Events

Oct. 21	9am	Bulb planting – meet in Highgate Falls Park – volunteers needed!
Oct. 27	6-9pm	MVU Haunted Forest
Oct. 31	5:30-7pm	Trunk or Treat @ Highgate Elem.
Oct. 31		Trick or Treat at Highgate Vol. Fire Department
Nov. 1	by 5pm	Property taxes are due!
Nov. 1	6:30pm	Library Trustees Mtg. @ library
Nov. 2	7pm	Selectboard Mtg.
Nov. 7	7am-7pm	Special MVU Capital Reserve Fund ballot vote @ Highgate Elem.
Nov. 7	7pm	Special Highgate floor vote – Act46 - @ Highgate Elem.
Nov. 7		Municipal Offices are CLOSED – voting @ Highgate Elem.
Nov. 10		Municipal Offices are CLOSED – Veterans Day observed

Motion by Steve LaFar to exit the regular meeting @ 8:22pm. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED.**

J. Executive Session

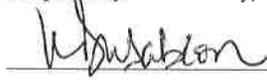
Motion by Sharon Bousquet for the Selectboard to enter into executive session @ 8:23pm with the Town Administrator to discuss personnel, legal and contracts, where premature general public knowledge would place the town and the individuals involved at a substantial disadvantage. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED.**

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to exit executive session @ 9:04pm. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.**

K. Adjournment

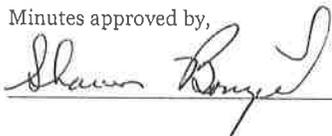
Motion by Randy Connelly to adjourn the meeting @ 9:05pm. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED.**

Respectfully submitted by,



Wendi Dusablon, Highgate Town Clerk
& Public Meetings Clerk

Minutes approved by,



Sharon Bousquet - Chair, Highgate Selectboard