

TOWN OF HIGHGATE Selectboard Meeting

Thursday, June 20, 2019

Approved Minutes

NOTE: All actions taken are unanimous unless otherwise stated

6:00pm – Executive Session / Employee Evaluations

A. Call To Order & Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order by Sharon Bousquet, Chair @ 7:07pm, 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 – Treasurer / DTC; Heidi Britch-Valenta – Town Administrator

Public / Other – Alice S. Cota; Woody Rouse; Keith Ploof; Debbie Rouse; Richard J. Noel; Henry Rainville; Evangeline LaRocque; Ty Choiniere; Ryan Maskell; Brian Spears; Karen Fortin; Gary Taylor – SAPD; Ben Couture – SAPD; Jason Wetherby - SAPD

B. Public Comment(s)

- Richard Noel let the board know there is tractor information in their packets this evening. This is for their review and will be discussed in greater detail on July 18th.

C. Public Hearing – Hanna Road Reclassification

This legally needs to be warned for a 30-day period, so the official public hearing will take place on July 18th. Richard Noel noted that the Hanna Road is currently a class III road that runs through Highgate (2.53 acres) and Franklin (2.18 acres). The discussion will be with regard to it potentially becoming a class II road and the benefits to both towns. This will involve an application process and working with VTrans.

D. Treasurer Updates – Shelley Laroche

- This is our last Selectboard meeting before the end of our fiscal year. Shelley presented the board with a financial management questionnaire that she filled out and needs to be signed by the board. The only changes to the document were board member changes (Steve LaFar removed / Richard Flint added). Motion by Josh LaRocque to sign this document. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED.**
- Motion by Richard Flint to sign the audit contract with Sullivan Powers in the amount of \$20,200.00. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED.** Shelley added that this will be our fourth cycle with them and this will go out to bid next year. Jordan from Sullivan Powers will be here on June 24th to prepare for year end and finally finish the fixed asset inventory.
- Members of HVFD are already in the payroll system (most) for their stipends so if they have certification cards to help public works with flagging this is a good idea. Richard will mention to Joe at their special meeting on Monday.

- Check warrant – there was discussion on the additional expenses for the roof. An emergency meeting was held on June 12th to authorize \$11,200.00 for the emergency repairs. This will be coming out of the buildings and grounds line item, which will be overspent by approximately \$2,000.00, but our revenues were also more than anticipated. Josh and Bruce explained the necessary repairs that involve replacing the main beam that supports the valleys because it is completely rotten, as well as some plywood. The current rafter was also found to be inadequate. Progress on the roof has stalled due to these issues. The board approved the repairs on June 12th. Woody Rouse and Debbie Rouse both had questions and concerns about this, referring back to last summer when we had the special town meeting about the roof. Woody feels the roofing company should have to eat the funds necessary for the repairs because they didn't believe buffer funds were needed. Bruce disagreed, adding that these issues are over and above what was bid and considered last summer. Josh commented that the plywood is a small issue, but the rafters being rotted from the top down is a large issue and needs to be addressed before moving forward with the roof replacement. A crane will be brought in for this work. The buildings and grounds line item is overspent but we still have \$36,000.00 in our town operations budget through June 30, 2019. The emergency repairs will be paid this fiscal year and are included in this check warrant. We are not asking the tax payers for any additional money and we are still under budget with one week left in our fiscal year. Motion by Josh LaRocque to sign the check warrant. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**.
- Shelley was not present at the June 6th Selectboard meeting, but she has watched the video. The Cummings Electric invoice was a 50% deposit and 50% final payment. She questioned why no board members asked to see the invoice from Matt Bouchard for the computer upgrades. That invoice included the computers as well as a three year fire wall, which we need. His quote per computer was \$1,538.00 and Randy forwarded us some numbers of \$1,038.00 per computer. Shelley let the board know, if we don't go with Matt's quote, we will also lose our IT services. If the purchasing policy is the issue, we can order three computers this round to fall under the dollar amount. Shelley stated that Matt is right for our town, and this doesn't just affect the town office, it affects the library and arena as well. He provides us with great and punctual service. We have switched service providers in other areas of the town and we are not having our needs met in those areas. Richard would like to make sure Randy is here before a decision is made on this. It was also noted we have subscriptions coming up and ready to expire, so this is a time sensitive issue. It was again noted that the funds for this purchase are not tax payer dollars, they are generated from recording fees into the computerization fund. Sue Cota supports what Shelley was saying, and as a taxpayer it makes sense to her. Motion by Richard Flint to *table* this issue until Randy Connelly is present. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**.

E. Town Clerk Updates – Wendi Dusablon

- Motion by Bruce Butler to approve the minutes from *June 6, 2019*, as written. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**.
- Motion by Bruce Butler to approve the minutes from the Emergency Selectboard Meeting on *June 12, 2019*, as written. The motion was seconded by Sharon Bousquet – **APPROVED**.
- MVSD School Budget Vote Recap – it was a disappointing voter turnout, district wide for this vote on June 11th. In Highgate, we had 170 people vote (out of a check list of

2,200+). District wide, three towns, 643 people voted, and the budget of \$37,001,935.00 passed 402 YES / 241 NO. Three new board members for MVSD were also elected: Jen Chevalier (Highgate); Peter Magnant (Franklin); Terri O'Shea (Swanton) – making them now a board of nine. Wendi thanked the Recreation Committee for their hospitality the last few elections that have been held at the Highgate Sports Arena. Ty commented that aside from Wendi posting results he would not have known the outcome. FNWSU / MVSD needs to do a better job of getting information out and he plans to address this with them.

- Motion by Josh LaRocque to accept the proposed road name request from Adam & Nannette Locke "*James Locke Way*". The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**. This will be a private road off Lamkin Street and a four lot subdivision process was just completed with the DRB.
- Recording fees are changing state wide on July 1st. We have not had an increase in ten or eleven years.

Document recording fees	Old \$10 / page	New \$15 / page
Property Transfer Tax Return	Old \$10 / document	New \$15 / document
Survey plat / mylar	Old \$15 / sheet	New \$25 / sheet
Certified copy of records (no change)	Old \$10 / page	New \$10 / page
Examination of records (vault time)	Old \$2 / hour	New \$4 / hour

- Vital Records / ACT46 – Effective July 1st as well. Only family members, legal guardians, certain court-appointed parties or their legal representatives can apply for certified copies of birth and death certificates. For death certificates, a funeral home or crematorium may also apply for a certified copy. Applicants must provide valid identification when applying for a certified copy of a birth or death certificate. Nothing is changing with regard to ordering copies of marriage or civil union certificates.
- Summer Sounds Concerts begin in Highgate on Sunday, July 7th. The dates for the summer are July 7, 14, 21, 28 and August 11 & 18. Always at 7pm and always free!

F. Administrator Items – Heidi Britch-Valenta

- We have been awarded \$50,000.00 from Rural Development towards the purchase of the fire truck. This grant was discussed at length back at town meeting. We are \$16,000.00 short for the purchase. This will need to go back out to bid. Henry Rainville asked about pre-payment and if that would get us a discount. The value of our old truck was also discussed. Ty had questions about the bid process. Keith Ploof noted that Swanton's old ladder truck was sold for less than \$10,000.00 and shipped half way across the country. Motion by Richard Flint to sign the grant agreement with Rural Development. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**. It was noted that once we order the new truck, it takes about one full year to take delivery.
- Motion by Josh LaRocque to authorize Heidi to sign the contract agreement with Millbrook for the ADA construction project in the amount of \$92,000.00. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**. This project has been in the works for years and includes the front and back entrances, doorways, handicapped parking and bathrooms – all to make the town offices ADA compliant. Construction is set for 2019 with completion in 2019 as well.
- RFPs for the Frontage Road box culvert project are due by July 18th. Heidi understands the amount of grant work is causing some heartburn for PWD this year, combined with the weather has put them in a crunch. Josh wants the crew to be able

to concentrate on getting caught up on cutting trees, roadside mowing and other things that have been put on the back burner. The board would like Heidi to bring grant opportunities before them and let them decide if we will move forward.

Richard stands behind what Josh is saying about backing off on grant projects. He doesn't want to be replacing crew members because they are overwhelmed.

- A grant from Ben & Jerry's was received for \$1,500.00 for the VCMP Community Celebration, scheduled for Aug. 17th.
- Jim Smith created an RFP for the bollard design. This can be handed out to any contractors that come to the site visit for the box culvert project next week. We don't have funding for the bollards yet.

G. St. Albans Police Department

SAPD Chief, Gary Taylor was present with Lt. Jason Wetherby and Lt. Ben Couture. Effective July 1st we are entering into a one year contract with SAPD. Chief Taylor had the contract with him that he had signed off on, as well as the Mayor of St. Albans. Chief Taylor introduced both Lt. Jason Wetherby and Lt. Ben Couture and explained their roles within the department. They will be staying for executive session to discuss scheduling that should not be done in open session. For on camera purposes, Lt. Wetherby said scheduling will be four 6-hour days for a total of 24 hours per week. It will be predominately evenings until midnight or 2am. Sue Cota asked about the price difference between FCSO and SAPD. Chief Taylor answered that SAPD is \$2.00 more per hour than FCSO. The board feels, at this time, that SAPD has more to offer the Town of Highgate, including – GPS trackers in all vehicles, drug task force, detectives and undercover officers to name a few. Reports will be provided to the town about activity in our town and stats on a calendar year as well as fiscal year period. Chief Taylor stated that if this does not work to our mutual benefit then he does not want to continue. If you do the same old thing the same old way, you will get the same old results. SAPD doesn't take responsibility for our ATV issues, but will be part of the solution. They won't chase ATVs or deflating tires, but they will follow the law and will need the help of the community to do so. There was discussion on the town's ATV ordinance. Chief Taylor has some ideas and has spoken to the State's Attorney, who is supportive. Josh pointed out that with FCSO we had a 28 hour per week contract, but not all of that was patrol hours. Sharon stated that it's evident to her that SAPD has resources at our disposal and she feels they have the guts to go and make a difference. Nothing against anyone at FCSO, but our experience there wasn't good all of the time. Woody had questions about patrol and working in conjunction with other agencies, like VSP. VSP will assume responsibility of covering our town when SAPD is not on patrol here. It was noted that SAPD will not hesitate to roll a backup unit whenever it is necessary. Richard wants SAPD to interact with our youth and not just sit in their cars. Richard is very worried about the future of our youth and feels a good relationship with law enforcement can make all the difference. Lt. Wetherby is a former school resource officer, so he sees the value in those relationships as well. Ty would like to see SAPD develop a relationship with our schools as well and be visible to our students. Lt. Wetherby agrees, adding that officers enjoy that type of interaction as well and it doesn't happen often enough. SAPD will take some time getting familiar with our town. Chief Taylor is already hearing from Highgate residents about the transition on July 1st. It is not their intention to put the fear of god in people, it is not who they are and not what they do. The board thanked them for being here and for this update. SAPD will stay for executive session.

H. **Recreation Commission Update**

Ty Choiniere, Brian Spears, Ryan Maskell and Karen Fortin were present for this update. The summer at Highgate Recreation looks to be very busy, with many programs happening. Their first newsletter was released outlining all the programming:

Highgate Recreation

Newsletter – Activities to be on the watch for!

For more info please contact the Rec Department or visit highgatevt.myrec.com

Archery: Pelkey's Archery will be hosting 2 classes on Tuesday July 30th! There are only 15 spots in each class, classes will be held at 4pm and 5pm at the Highgate Arena. Ages 8 - 14!

Pickleball: The Highgate Arena will have two courts open on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10am - 12pm and again from 3pm - 5pm. All skill levels are welcomed, and paddles are provided. There will be a \$2.00 entry fee.

Cornhole League: The Cornhole League is back and will be on Sundays 6 – 8pm at the Highgate Arena starting on July 14th. Teams of two players (Men's, Women's, or Co-Ed) and league entry will be \$50 per team.

Women's Self-defense Class: The Safety Team will be at the Highgate Arena on August 5th at 6pm. There are only 20 spots available and the age range is 14 and up!

Floor Hockey League: The league will be played on Thursday nights. Players must be out of high school. Contact us for more info!

Pickup Floor Hockey: Monday night's 5-7pm at the Highgate Arena with two rinks set up. 5-6pm will be for kids between the ages of 6 and 17. With 6-7pm being for adults, 18 and up. Sticks, gloves and helmets will be required and there will be a small entry fee.

Open Rollerblading: Just like public skate but with rollerblades, \$5 entry fee and rollerblades are provided if needed!

Fall Soccer will be here before you know it! If you are interested in coaching youth soccer (Kindergarten – 4th Grade) please reach out to the Rec Department soon!

Farmers Market: Fridays starting June 21st at the park next to the Town Offices. Vendors will be open from 3-7pm. If interested in being a vendor, please contact the rec department.

The Recreation Department is looking to start a Youth Cross Country Program. We are currently looking for volunteers to help run the program. If interested, please reach out to us!

****Please note that these programs and their times can change depending on interest****

Highgate Parks & Recreation Department: 802-868-4406 or recdirector@highgatevt.org

Outside on the fields there will also be Wednesday night pickup baseball starting in July. Fall Soccer and Cross Country signups will be happening soon. Richard Flint

wants to be involved and help set up a home meet for the XC runners. The flower pots were installed in the town park today and they look great! Karen hopes to transfer the flowers from the old planters to the new. The planters will have to be capped for the winter so they don't freeze up and pop. Turf will be rolled up this Sunday. Ty and Brian are keeping up with mowing of the parks and that is going well. Henry asked if they still plan to build the storage facility this year – yes, hopefully this year and Ryan will reach out to Henry when they do. The Selectboard still needs to walk the VCMP property since it has been cleaned up. The VCMP committee meets on Tuesday, June 25th for their next planning session. Josh said a special meeting may be needed for decisions about VCMP and computer purchases.

I. Selectboard Items

- Heidi is waiting for more information on the crosswalk paint.
- Roof update – was given earlier under treasurer section.
- Elwood property transfer – David Rouse dropped off three checks this morning 1) \$5,000.00 for the purchase 2) \$72.50 for the transfer tax and 3) \$30.00 for recording fees. Sharon recapped the history on this property, which was a health order and the town cleaned up the property but had no bids previously when we had the town parcels for sale. Mr. Rouse has since offered us \$5,000.00 which is nowhere near what we put into the cleanup effort, but gets the property back on the tax rolls. The process with Mr. Rouse was properly advertised and posted. Anyone taking issue with it had the opportunity to petition the town and that did not happen. Motion by Richard Flint to release the property located at 293 Lamkin Street (land only, .50 acres per the property transfer) to David Rouse and to accept the three checks he dropped off earlier today. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**. Mr. Rouse is an adjoining property owner. Due to the way each parcel is titled, Shelley noted that they will not be combined as contiguous parcels.
- Richard asked about the situation in the listers office and if any positions are open. We currently have two listers, Aimee and Pete. The third position is available and no one ran for it on Town Meeting Day. There really is not enough work for a third person, but if anyone is interested, they should submit their interest in writing to the town clerk. Pete would like to retire and has actively been seeking a replacement for his lister seat as well.
- Josh let the board know that an employee of McDermotts in Enosburg (Highgate resident) asked him if our road crew would be interested in applying chloride to their lots. Fairfield has helped them in the past but they would like it done sooner. They are willing to pay for trucking, labor and chloride if we agree to help them out. Butch and the crew are already overwhelmed, as discussed earlier. We do not work on private roads for liability reasons, so this is the same scenario. Motion by Josh LaRocque to chloride McDermott's parking lots using town equipment and to charge them fully for the services. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **FAILED (4/0)**.

J. Upcoming Events

June 20 + 21		Lister Grievance Appointments
June 25	6pm	VCMP Committee Mtg.
July 4 + 5		Town Offices are CLOSED
July 11	6pm	DRB Mtg.
July 16	6pm	Planning Commission Mtg.
July 18	7pm	Selectboard Mtg. & Hanna Rd. Public Hearing

Summer Sounds Concerts @ 7pm – July 7, 14, 21, 28 and Aug. 11, 18

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to exit the regular meeting @ 8:32pm. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED.**

K. Executive Session

Motion by Richard Flint to enter into executive session with Heidi Britch-Valenta, St. Albans Police Department (Taylor, Wetherby & Couture), and the Recreation Commission (Ty, Karen, Ryan, Brian) @ 8:33pm to discuss personnel, contracts and legal where premature general public knowledge would place the town and / or the individuals involved at a substantial disadvantage. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED.** The Recreation Commission members exited executive session @ 8:55pm and SAPD joined the board. Motion by Josh LaRocque to exit executive session @ 10:05pm. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED.**

L. Adjournment

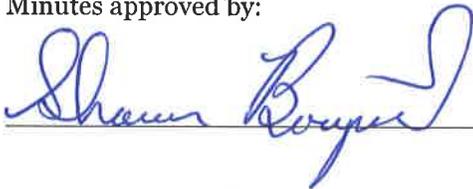
Motion by Josh LaRocque to adjourn the meeting @ 10:10pm. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by:



Wendi Dusablon – Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk

Minutes approved by:



Sharon Bousquet – Chair, Highgate Selectboard