

TOWN OF HIGHGATE SELECTBOARD MEETING

Thursday, June 7, 2018 @ 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 @ 7:03pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Present for this meeting were:

Highgate Selectboard Members – Sharon Bousquet, Chair; Josh LaRocque, Vice-Chair; Bruce Butler; Steve LaFar; Randy Connelly (*arrived @ 8:02pm*)

Highgate Office Staff – Wendi Dusablon, Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk; Heidi Britch-Valenta, Town Administrator; *absent* – Shelley Laroche, Town Treasurer

Public / Other – Woody Rouse; Pat Long – Age Well; Rick Trombley; Tom Conley; Alice S. Cota; Corey Parent; Michael Frett – St. Albans Messenger; Patty & Richard Rainville; Richard Wilkens; Barb Chevalier; Luc Dupuis; Mark Gilbert; Brian Spears; Ryan Maskell; Ty Choiniere

B. Public Comment(s)

- Patty and Richard Rainville were present. Patty spoke and thanked the board for allowing her the time to voice some concerns. She had prepared packets of information for each board member that contained information and concerns with regard to a permit she recently applied for with the zoning administrator. Patty spoke at length about the issues with receiving her permit in a timely fashion as well as money that was spent pouring a concrete pad for a mobile home and having the septic looked at. She contacted the state as well as a licensed septic designer and now questions if she had to spend the time and money that was required by the town. Her perception is that she was harassed and questions if this will be the norm moving forward as she continues to work on the property and has to come back to the town for more permits. Mrs. Rainville has received the permit she applied for and is grateful for that. She also questions some of the content in the letter she received with her permit. The board will discuss this issue and the DRB chair is also present tonight. The board asked for some time to determine what was necessary and what was not necessary. Mrs. Rainville added that her attorney has advised her that she has grounds for a law suit and the town should receive a bill if she spent money that was not necessary. Richard Wilkens stated that he bought a home in town that was previously vacant for an extended period of time and he was not required to get any special permits, so he finds this situation odd. No one, other than the assessors (listers) visited his home and he never had to apply for any permits other than for his porch.
- Corey Parent was present. He is currently a State Rep from St. Albans Town that represents both the city and town. He will be running for Senate and looks forward to sitting down with Highgate residents to hear our concerns about issues facing our town. Corey shared some of his thoughts on important issues facing Vermonters today such as; gas taxes, property taxes, economic development, the opioid epidemic, dairy farming and growing jobs. Communication is key and he promises to be a hard worker and always do his best. The board thanked Corey for attending tonight and introducing himself to the Highgate community.

C. Age Well – Pat Long

Pat Long thanked everyone for having her here to speak on behalf of Age Well. Pat had a plea for our area, they desperately need Meals on Wheels drivers. They will accommodate any schedule; daily, weekly, monthly, or even substitute drivers. As of July 1st they will have a consolidated vendor to serve all four Vermont counties. Quality control will be fantastic and consistent. It is more than just delivery of meals, its about human contact and wellness checks also. If you are interested in helping, or you know someone who can benefit from services that Age Well provides, call 1-800-642-5119. They can provide case management, help with Medicaid and much more. They are funded through state funds, United Way funding and private donations. Sharon thanked Pat for her service, adding that here in Highgate we don't have a lot to offer to seniors. Richard Rainville's parents, Joe and Lorraine Rainville, have been delivering meals weekly for many years. Pat thanked them on behalf of Age Well.

D. Town Clerk Updates – Wendi Dusablon

- Motion by Josh LaRocque to approve the minutes from May 17, 2018, as written. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.
- Wendi recapped Memorial Day in Highgate, which was celebrated on Monday, May 28th. HVFD members and auxiliary put in MANY hours preparing for the BBQ and Auction. HVFD sold 500 chicken dinners. The parade was wonderful and had many participants this year. Sharon and her helpers did a wonderful job! HVFD also had a very successful auction this year and the weather was very favorable for all the days events. Sharon recapped the pie eating competition. Ty Choiniere thanked the Air Guard for the fly over. It was after our parade, but was still very nice to see. Woody Rouse commented that the crowd was very large this year. A lot of people made their way to Highgate to enjoy all the festivities. There was some discussion on politicians being involved in the Memorial Day parade. See motion made later in this meeting under section F.
- As of today we have licensed 835 dogs in Highgate. This week a second round of municipal fines (15 of them) were also mailed out. We have already had some unhappy people come into the office. Sharon reminded folks to be courteous when they come into the office.
- 2018 is an election year. The State Primary Election will be held at Highgate Elementary School on Tuesday, August 14th. The State General Election will be held at Highgate Elementary School on Tuesday, November 6th. Wendi did convey to the school that in 2016 concerns were brought up about having the children in school during a large election with so many people coming and going. The decision is up to the school whether school will be in session on November 6th. Our facility and parking situation here cannot accommodate such a large election and by November the arena is not an option either.
- Fundraiser / Benefit dinner for Jeff Towle will be held on Friday, June 22nd starting at 5:30pm at the Swanton VFW. There will be a lasagna dinner, dessert auction and 50/50 raffle.
- The 2018 Summer Sounds concert series in Highgate will begin on Sunday, July 8th @ 7pm.
- Shelley is not here this evening, but had prepared the check warrants in advance. The board had no questions on the check warrants.
- Shelley had also prepared the RFP for the copier and printer. The board had no issues or questions on the RFP.
- Vern Brosky III was asking for any updates on the speed study on Tanglewood Drive. There was nothing new to report on the speed study, we are still waiting.

E. Town Administrator Updates – Heidi Britch-Valenta

- NRPC road grant letter of intent – this is for the drainage project on Hanna Road. Motion by Steve LaFar to sign the letter of intent. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**. A requirement for this is the municipal roads general permit and fee of \$240.00 which will be on the next agenda.
- NRPC equipment grant letter of intent – this is to purchase the hydro seeder with the town contributing \$1,300.00 and was voted on at the last meeting. This just needs to be signed.
- AOT grant class II Frontage Road awarded – this was modified and the amount was reduced down to \$75,000.00 so this project will be on a reduced scope.
- PACIF grant – Randy spoke with the firm providing the two quotes on camera systems for this office. He feels we should go with the more expensive system which would allow us to, if we wanted, connect with the system at the arena. Sharon agrees the office should be protected, but our major assets are on either side of the office in the town garage and fire station. Josh would rather have the security system done and done well and hold off on the pressure washer. This grant application is due in August. We can discuss this more at the next meeting, as Randy had not arrived yet tonight. Randy arrived @ 8:02pm and the conversation circled back to the security system. Randy sees no issue with the more expensive system being able to handle adding additional cameras the town garage and fire department. We will need an updated quote for the additional cameras. He sees many benefits to the more expensive system.
- Project updates – We are on track with the Machia Road Bridge project. The storm water grant to fix the Machia Road slide is in progress. They were out surveying the other day, and the town apologizes to Mrs. Young for them being on her property and not communicating with her. Bruce Butler has also spoken to Mrs. Young. It was out of our control, but hopefully we have remedied the situation. Mrs. Young also sent the town a letter, which was received yesterday. We have received the contracts on the BBR grants. Both are for the Tarte Road. Site #1 is at Tarte / Parent Road intersection to replace a culvert under Parent Road. Site #2 is at the bridge over Rock River on Tarte Road to install stone ditches and create splash pools to slow the water down as it goes over the bank. The Tarte Road projects are mandated by the state in an attempt to properly get storm water under control. We are required to complete so many projects per year. Motion by Josh LaRocque to sign both Better Back Roads grants. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**. We have our official notice of award for the design funds for the FEMA grant but we have no contract yet. For the ADA grant, the drillers were here today and took seven core samples. The samples should be back in two weeks followed by a report and sent to ANR DEC for approval. We then can issue an RFP for construction. The Village Core Master Plan (VCMP) Steering Committee had their second phone conference tonight, Heidi and Woody were present. They are finalizing details for Tuesday's meeting at 6pm at the school. Highgate businesses have been invited to attend for input on what they would like to see in the future as far as growth. This is an open meeting, so anyone is invited to attend. There will also be other meetings as this moves forward. This particular meeting is focused on businesses. The grant for the pavilion in the Highgate Falls park was submitted on May 15th. Parks & Rec., together with MAHA and Highgate LL already have \$10,000.00 put aside in the CIP for a storage facility to be shared by all three organizations. Ty spoke to the concept, they have a rough idea on the location and have approximate dimensions and a rough quote. There is a grant available for \$15,000.00 with an equal match from the town. The Parks & Rec. Committee is now the Highgate Recreation Commission and the board previously appointed

six members to this commission. They are still looking for their seventh member. The Planning Commission will be doing a walk around the village as part of their meeting on June 19th at 6pm. Anyone is welcome to join the PC, please meet here at the town offices at 6pm. The walk will focus on work that has already been done, as well as getting the conversation started about plans for the future. Heidi spoke to Barry at NWSWD with regard to clean up projects and tires. We can work with BDS out of Maine or K&S Tire out of Albany VT. Heidi had pricing for both options. Alex Alroldi's work crews can help on Sundays. Sharon said that Hodgdon's also has a lot of tires to get rid of, so maybe we could collaborate with them to make the numbers work. Woody asked if private citizens could drop off tires as well if they are willing to pay for the disposal of them. Motion by Josh LaRocque to have Alex's work crew clean up on Hempyard Road and to store any tires on the Frontage Road property in the fenced in area until we can arrange for pick up at a later date. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.**

F. Selectboard Items

- Fernand Gagne has submitted a proposed road name request form for a new private road off Lamkin Street. Motion by Josh LaRocque to approve the name "Easy Street". The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED.**
- Sharon touched on ACT46. The state is attempting to force towns to merge under their approved system. They are disregarding our votes in November as well as our wants and desires as a community. If this proposed union goes into effect, the Town of Highgate school property would become the unions property. The town would have to sell it to the union for \$1.00. The union could decide to force the closure of our school and sell it. This should really make people angry, as we would have no control over budgets, bond votes, etc. It is time to speak up! Ryan Maskell asked if the former Cassidy property would be included – yes, it would. There are 88 towns in Vermont that are currently being attempted to be forced into these unions and we are one of those towns. Sheldon is being recommended to merge with Bakersfield and Berkshire. There is talk of a class action lawsuit against the state. A meeting is being scheduled with the state board of education in July, but no date has been announced. Ty asked if the Selectboard and School Board could communicate, because there is overlap on meetings and people can't be in two places at once. If we merge, Highgate will no longer control it's own debt, we will assume other town's debt. Steve attended the meeting at the school with regard to the memorandum of understanding regarding the soccer fields being moved off the baseball fields. The MOU was written up and the town was included in it, which was not correct. The paperwork was edited to remove the town from the MOU because Steve made it clear the town was not involved. The MOU was signed after the town was removed.
- The special town meeting originally scheduled for tonight at 6pm was cancelled because of a discrepancy. The motion at town meeting to set money aside for the roof was for repairs only, not replacement. We consulted with the town attorney who advised us the best solution was to cancel the vote and to re-warn it when we had the correct wording. We now have the choice to move ahead with just the repairs, or to reschedule the special vote and re-warn it with the proper language to ask the voters if they want to replace the entire roof. Sharon read aloud from the motion at town meeting. That motion set aside a total of \$73,250.00 for repairs to the roof. The quote we got for complete replacement was \$103,000.00. We will invite the roofer to our June 21st meeting to answer questions about the roof. Ryan pointed out that with just repairs, the color will never match what has been

there since 1998 or 1999 when it was replaced the last time. It was pointed out that it was also recommended that the remaining metal on the roof would also need to be repainted. Motion by Josh LaRocque to have Wendi consult with the town attorney for proper language and to re-warn the special town meeting for 6pm on Thursday, July 19th. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.**

- Ray's Auto Certificate of Approved Location – the owner has corresponded with Heidi and they are very close to getting their dealer plate permit. Josh asked if this has anything to do with the COAL or if they are separate. The COAL is the town's statement that to our knowledge they are not operating outside of their permit and they have no violations. Steve made some phone calls and, as he understands it, they are separate. As long as they won't sell cars until they settle the dealer permit the state, the town can issue the COAL. Josh pointed out that they have cleaned up and it looks great over at the site. Steve made a motion to approve the COAL for the salvage yard only and when he gets his permit to sell cars we can deal with that. Josh asked for clarification about approving the town COAL if they are in violation with the state on the dealer permit. Rick Trombley, DRB Chair, was present and he asked where their area for selling cars is located. Steve said all cars have been removed from the lawn area and they have neatened up, and a fence was put up. Heidi added that the DRB town permit states they have to be in compliance with all state permits. Steve stated the state wants to leave the town issue separate from their issue. This issue will be tabled for now and continued in executive session as a contractual / legal issue.
- Sharon brought up the issue of politicians in the Memorial Day parade. The town does not have a policy, so it was allowed. She took it as these folks have a hand in sending troops off to war, sending them to duty, providing them their benefits and more. She looked at it from that point of view, but heard from others that politics don't belong in this parade. Franklin and Swanton do not allow it, but those running for office can stand on the side with their banners etc. Motion by Josh LaRocque to not allow any politicians in our Memorial Day parade but they are welcome to stand on the side with their banners and all are to be respectful of the veterans and their families. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.**
- The municipal property sales will be June 28th @ 11am here at the town office. Sharon was brought a concern today about the Cherry Hill property and whether there is or is not a right of way. Mr. Gagne feels there is no right of way, but the deed says there is. There was discussion on if the right of way had gone by the way side with VT Gas. This will need to be researched. The three pieces of property being sold are the Dalcourt property on Route 78, the Cherry Hill property on Rheaume Road and the former Elwood property on Lamkin Street. This is not a tax sale, this is an auction that has minimum starting bids. Sharon has heard complaints from people that were not notified. These land sales have been well advertised and Sharon is not responsible to contact individuals with regard to these properties. She is not your mother.
- The ATV ordinance went into effect on June 5th.
- Our ordinance with regard to 911 addresses and road naming procedures is on file, but we can not find a signed copy and it is not dated. This will be put before the board at the next meeting for signatures by this board.

G. Upcoming Events

June 12	6pm	VCMP @ Highgate Elem.
June 14	6pm	DRB Mtg.
June 19	6pm	PC Meeting – walk about the village
June 21	5:30pm	BCA hearing
June 21	7pm	Selectboard Mtg.
July 8	7pm	Summer Sounds concerts begin
July 19	6pm	Special Town Meeting vote for roof
Aug. 14	7am-7pm	State Primary Election @ Highgate Elem.

H. Executive Session

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to exit the regular meeting and enter into executive session @ 9:06pm with the Town Administrator, Zoning Administrator hiring committee and the Director of Parks & Recreation hiring committee 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 Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.

Bruce Butler left the meeting and did not participate in executive session.

Both hiring committees left executive session after making their recommendations to the board.

Motion by Josh LaRocque to exit executive session @ 11:06pm. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to hire Anna Roberts as the town’s Zoning Administrator. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**.

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to hire Rob Sweet as the town’s Director of Parks & Recreation. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**.

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to approve the COAL for Ray’s Auto. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to re-enter into executive session @ 11:10pm. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**.

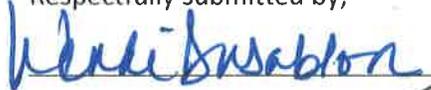
Heidi Britch-Valenta left the meeting and did not participate in the remainder of the executive session.

Motion by Josh LaRocque to exit executive session @ 11:45pm. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.

I. Adjournment

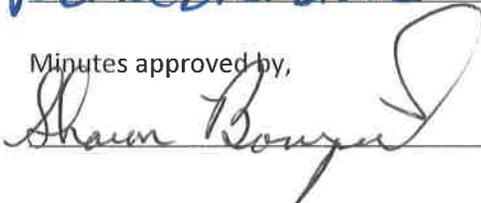
Motion by Sharon Bousquet to adjourn the meeting @ 11:45pm. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.

Respectfully submitted by,



Wendi Dusablon, Highgate Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk

Minutes approved by,



Sharon Bousquet – Chair, Highgate Selectboard