

TOWN OF HIGHGATE

Selectboard Mtg.

July 23, 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; Diana O'Hara; Paulette Tatro; *absent – Chris Yates & Randy Connelly*

Highgate Office Staff – Wendi Dusablon - Town Clerk; Heidi Britch-Valenta – Town Admin; Shelley Laroche – Town Treasurer

Public / Other – Rick Trombley & Woody Rouse – Highgate Planning Commission; Steve Bushey; Shirley Fecteau; Eric Parker; Todd Greenough; Debbie Rouse

B. Public Comments

- Steve Bushey was present to report on the arena project. Custom Ice is moving right along and things are going very well. They are going to be ready to pour the concrete as soon as July 28th. Custom Ice has offered DEW a deal on new boards, one that we can't refuse. Rather than retro fit the boards from the IROC facility, they can supply us with a complete set of boards built for our arena, higher quality with a thicker surface and higher gauge frame, at no additional cost. They needed an answer quickly, so Taylor from DEW and Steve spoke today and the offer has been accepted. Taylor could not see any draw backs to the proposal. This will allow Custom Ice to put them in quicker. Custom Ice will take our boards from the IROC donation as trade and use them on another project they have. The bottom line is, we will have a complete set of boards made to fit our facility at no additional cost to us. Heidi noted that DEW is impressed with Custom Ice and the work that has been done to date.
- Shirley Fecteau was present on behalf of the Highgate Methodist Church. They would like to hold an outdoor service in the municipal park on Sunday, August 16th @ 10am. They hold outdoor services on a regular basis, but our park is bigger and provides shade, where their location does not. Motion by Jeff Towle to allow the Methodist Church to hold an outdoor service in the municipal park on August 16th @ 10am. Motion was seconded by Diana O'Hara – **APPROVED.**

C. Shipyard Bay Issues – Eric Parker & Todd Greenough

Eric liked that we began our meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Jeff noted we started this tradition when Andy King joined our board in 2013. Eric and Todd are here to address some water issues in the Shipyard Bay area. Eric believes the culvert system has been compromised as the result of use, age and deterioration. The area used to be firm and dry and over the last 6-8 years has become saturated. It is a combination of ground water and surface water, but the real culprit is the culvert and piping that goes under the road. Eric, Todd and Jeff met with Denise from FNLC and Lake Wise last week. They would like to see the town on board with a solution to implement next year regarding stewardship of the lake and best management practices. Mr. Parker and Mr. Greenough agree that their property is their own responsibility but both believe the town should be involved with state agencies to address the water issues and apply for funding. Jeff added that Chad Tyler would also be willing to work with the town and landowners. Jeff also noted that we have a new Public Works Director, Andy King, coming on board soon, and he will work well with all the parties involved, and hopefully grant money will be available. The Greenough's have spent years installing plant beds and heavy wood chips, which has helped the situation a lot. Mr. Parker has concerns for his septic system. Jeff would like Andy King and Chris Yates to look at the area and create a path to a solution. Eric and Todd noted there had been a few thefts in that area, and some random incidents over the winter. Mr. Parker asked if the town has a

marine rescue crew. No, we have MVR, Border Patrol, VSP and FCSO to help when and where needed. HVFD has a boat, but no one certified to operate it.

D. Town Plan Update Hearing #2 – Rick Trombley & Woody Rouse

This is the 2nd required hearing at a Selectboard meeting with regard to updating the Town Plan. Rick does not have anything further from when he was here on July 9th. Paulette had a few edits, which Rick noted. Motion by Jeff Towle to adopt the Town Plan, as presented by the Planning Commission. Motion was seconded by Paulette Tatro – **APPROVED**. Jeff wanted to be sure that all proposed edits from the two public hearings will be reflected in the final version.

E. Town Treasurer – Shelley Laroche

1. Pay bills

There were many invoices regarding legal fees, all relating to the upcoming tax sale on July 31st @ 10am. We started with 17 properties on the list, and as of today are down to 2 or 3. Some of the fees are passed on to the property owners.

2. Arena funding update

Tom provided some data for Shelley to present, but Tom is still working on this.

3. Appropriations policy

At the PC meeting on July 21st this was discussed some. Paulette was there as the chair of the to be formed finance committee. We need to look at policies as a whole, which is a big process. The PC will meet again on Aug. 18th, and they will be inviting the Selectboard to a meeting in September, followed by a public hearing at a Selectboard meeting in October. We need a way to determine what the maximum recommendation would be on an annual basis for funding projects outlined in the capital plan. The CIP will cover 2017 – 2022. The appropriations policy will be one that surfaces soon, as we deal with it every year during budgeting.

4. Tax rate

Motion by Jeff Towle to set the Town of Highgate tax rate for FY2016 as follows: Homestead Rate 1.4762 Non Residential Rate 1.5997. The motion was seconded by Paulette Tatro – **APPROVED**. Paulette asked about the local agreements, which are the exemptions for veterans. Shelley will get some clarification from Tom on the calculation.

Highgate, VT ★

★
2015-2016
★
Tax Rate ★

RESIDENTIAL		NON-RESIDENTIAL	
Education	1.2395	Education	1.3430
General Fund	0.0970	General Fund	0.0970
Highway Fund	0.1383	Highway Fund	0.1383
Local Agreements	0.0014	Local Agreements	0.0014
TOTAL RESIDENTIAL	1.4762	TOTAL NON-RES.	1.5997

★

CLA 112.62 %

Date published—July 24, 2015

5. Misc.

- Heidi added that Shelley has hit the ground running and is doing a great job. Shelley let the board know that Amber Baker from NEMRC will be here on August 5th for training.
- We have a new contract for our GIS mapping system. They guarantee all errors and omissions for one full year. Shirley confirmed that they are helpful and fix what needs to be fixed or show the listers how to work through it. The cost is \$3,995.00, which is the same as previous years. Motion by Paulette Tatro to renew our maintenance contract with CAI Inc. of New Hampshire for a one year period April 1, 2015 – March 31, 2016. The motion was seconded by Diana O'Hara – **APPROVED**.

F. Town Administrator – Heidi Britch-Valenta

1. Demo bids – Riverview Lane homes – revision

There has been an oversight that Mike Gosselin brought to our attention. The two wells at the Riverview Lane site need to be closed by a trained well technician, and there is an additional cost involved. He was not aware of this prior to his initial bid. The new bid from Mike Gosselin will be \$31,135.00 for both homes located at 38 & 70 Riverview Lane, and this includes the costs for the well technician. The next nearest bid we received was \$35,000.00. Motion by Diana O'Hara to accept the bid from Mike Gosselin which includes taking care of both wells, this is an amendment to his bid and the work will be performed by Chevalier Drilling. The amended bid amount will be \$31,135.00 for both homes. Motion was seconded by Jeff Towle – **APPROVED**. Both homes will be demolished, they will not be moved or relocated.

2. Violations update

Heidi has an updated list that she is working on. Paulette asked about structures without a permit and how those are resolved. The fees are now doubled for after-the-fact permits. Paulette also asked about structures that do not meet setback requirements. The best situation is that they apply for a waiver. If that is declined for whatever reason, the landowner would need to remove the structure.

3. Misc.

- Workstrong - Heidi Joyce from VLCT Workstrong was here today, which added to the chaos, it was a busy day here all around.
- BBR project – We will be hiring a consultant to work with the road crew regarding water quality issues. They will assess road issues that are contributing to water quality problems. It will break roads out into various sections and rank each one for how well it is paved, culvert issues, etc.
- New road maps – Heidi has the official maps effective July 1st. We would like to have them framed for the meeting room. Shirley's husband might be able to assist with framing.
- Route 78 study – We will have a dedicated GMTA stop as of Aug. 15th at the park & ride. We need to get striping down on the ground. Diana asked about space issues and if AOT was using the park & ride as a weigh station. There will only be safety inspections there, no weighing. We will wait for Randy and Chris to be here before we make any decisions.
- Sidewalk committee – The town of Swanton has been doing a lot of work to enhance their community and looking at ways to improve recreational access. They have asked neighboring towns to pool resources and obtain a national speaker to come to our area. Mark Fenton is a highly respected sidewalk consultant, and he will be here on October 8th and 9th. NWMC sponsored his visit to our community for these two days. He will visit towns, make recommendations and counsels those who work on different projects. There will be site visits through towns as well as a breakfast and a day long workshop. This is a great opportunity for our sidewalk committee and Heidi would like to see PC members there as well as any representatives from our community to get momentum going.

G. Town Clerk – Wendi Dusablon

1. Minutes

Motion by Jeff Towle to approve the minutes from July 9, 2015, with one correction. Motion was seconded by Paulette Tatro – **APPROVED**.

2. Misc.

- Hockeyville – Our check for \$20,000.00 has arrived and been processed. Kraft is looking to do an official presentation at some point in the next few weeks with Wendi and Karen, but we don't have the date yet.
- Painting – The main office area will be painted this weekend. We will have a delayed opening on Monday, July 27th @ 10am to put the office back together. The entryway, listers office, hallway and bathrooms will be painted the following weekend.
- Dogs – We have licensed 815 dogs to date. Ben and Vonnie did ticket some dog owners, but there are still 10 owners left to follow up with. Wendi is hoping to have this cycle closed before tax bills go out – which is set for Friday, August 14th.
- Office closed – the municipal offices will be *closed* for the day on Thursday, August 13th. This is so we can print, prep and stuff tax bills so they can go out on Friday, August 14th. The office closure has been posted around town, on FB, the town website, St. Albans Messenger, all entry doors, and emailed to our regular researchers.

H. Selectboard items

1. Route 78 alternatives

The consultants are asking for opinions on the best course of action. David Desorcie expressed concern regarding curbing at the location of his store (he was not comfortable with that presentation), and Joey Russo submitted a letter that he would support slowing down traffic near his business at his end of the village. Jeff is not prepared to issue an opinion, and we have two board members not present tonight. Paulette was also not prepared to make a firm recommendation, and noted she would be more likely to support a sidewalk on the south side of Route 78 where the municipal complex is. Jeff also wants clarification on if Route 78 is a 3-rod or 4-rod road. Heidi will try and find out. Paulette would also like to hear a recommendation from the sidewalk committee. Shirley agrees that the sidewalk should be on the south side of the road leading to the municipal complex, and that it should align with the other proposed sidewalk by the library and up Lamkin Street. Rick Trombley noted that if the library were to someday possibly relocate to the current highway department site, that is even more reason to have a sidewalk on the south side of Route 78. Heidi feels that raised medians on either end of the village are needed to slow the traffic down. This topic will be back on the next agenda on August 6th.

2. Paving locations

We need to come up with a final selection of paving locations and put it out to bid. We have enough money in the budget to do two miles of paving. Paulette asked for a list of roads under consideration. We will need input from Andy when he starts on August 3rd to get on the paving schedule before it is too late in the season.

3. Truck transmission

Chris isn't here tonight for this discussion.

4. Demo bids

Was discussed earlier under the Town Administrator section.

I. Other business

- Vonnie has submitted her ACO report for the Selectboard to review.

J. Upcoming events

August 6	7pm	Selectboard Mtg.
August 13	6pm	DRB Mtg. – with site visit @ 5pm
August 18	6pm	PC Mtg.

K. Executive session

Motion by Jeff Towle to enter into executive session @ 8:26pm for contracts and personnel. Motion was seconded by Diana O'Hara – **APPROVED**.

Motion by Jeff Towle to exit executive session @ 10:43pm. Motion was seconded by Paulette Tatro - **APPROVED**.

L. Adjournment

Motion by Jeff Towle to adjourn the meeting @10:45pm. Motion was seconded by Paulette Tatro - **APPROVED**.

Respectfully submitted by,

_____ Wendi Dusablon, Highgate Town Clerk

Minutes approved by,

_____ Jeff Towle, Chair – Highgate Selectboard