

TOWN OF HIGHGATE Selectboard Meeting

Thursday, October 4, 2018 @ 7pm

Approved Minutes

NOTE: All actions taken are unanimous unless otherwise stated

5:00pm – Public Works Department Interviews (present: Josh LaRocque, Sharon Bousquet, Butch Brosseau, Nick Scott, Richard Noel, Donald Bessette, Joe Rainville)

6:30pm – Village Core Master Plan (VCMP) conference call

A. Call To Order & Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order by Sharon Bousquet, Chair @ 7:04pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Highgate Selectboard Members – Sharon Bousquet, Chair; Josh LaRocque, Vice-Chair (arrived @ 7:10pm); Bruce Butler; Randy Connelly; Steve LaFar (arrived @ 7:28pm after VCMP conference call)

Highgate Office Staff – Wendi Dusablon – Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk; Heidi Britch-Valenta – Town Administrator (arrived @ 7:28 after VCMP conference call);

Absent – Shelley Laroche – Town Treasurer

Public / Other – George Greenwood; Alice S. Cota; Michael Casella – Casella Waste Management; Robert Ostermeyer – CVOEO; Pam McCarthy; Woody Rouse

B. Public Comment

- George Greenwood asked about the possibility of ledge being blasted or the road widened in the area of Fortin Road. He has mentioned this to the Public Works crew already and Sharon will discuss this with Butch as well.

C. CVOEO – Robert Ostermeyer

Robert was present to educate us on what CVOEO (Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity) does for the residents of Highgate and Franklin / Grand Isle County. There are many agencies within CVOEO and he works with Franklin / Grand Isle Community Action based out of St. Albans. He touched on the many services offered there including fuel assistance and assistance with repairs to heating systems, housing programs, food shelves, help with Medicare / Medicaid, or help preparing taxes. If they don't have the services you require, they can point you in the right direction. Their services are for anyone who needs a helping hand that qualifies. The majority of folks that use their services aren't coming in regularly, but on an as needed basis. They try to help people with issues before they become a catastrophic failure of events. Sue Cota thanked him for the assistance she received this past winter after the flooding. The board thanked him for coming in and sharing information on their very important services in our community.

D. Transfer Station Update – Michael Casella

The board thanked Michael for being here for an update. Michael first touched on events taking place that Casella is a part of. Wheels for Warmth on Oct. 25 & 26 in Williston takes in used tires, working with DMV inspectors, if the tires are good they are resold and if not, they can be disposed of for \$4.00 per tire. Funds raised go to CVOEO (above)

for heating assistance. Last year they raised and donated \$50,000.00 to CVOEO. Also there are tires sales coming up in Middlesex and Rutland. There was great discussion on pricing and recent changes to recycling charges. Michael explained why the changes were necessary and that the change of standards with recycling in China was a big part of now having to charge for recycling. Tipping fees are also seeing big changes, the biggest reason being that the domestic markets are flooded with material. Michael went over the laws with regard to recycling and touched on the State of VT enforcement and inspections associated with recycling. There was also discussion on plastic bags, smaller plastics and anything contaminated with food causing difficulties with equipment. Michael offered a tour any time if the board is interested. The cardboard market is stable. We will know within three years what the fate will be of the Coventry landfill. Casella is always looking at investing in equipment and procedures to improve what they do. He spoke about landfills around the country and NorthEast that are closing at a very rapid rate. They are difficult to permit and trucking is also an issue, they are always hiring drivers. Burn plants are another issue and huge expense. Tipping fees usually go up once per year. Tipping fees this year were increased due to the recycling increase. George Greenwood expressed frustration with this and not being notified by mail. There was signage up at the facility. It was suggested to post these things in the local paper as well. The Transfer Station site is seeing some sliding. Sharon asked Michael how Casella can help and what they are willing to do to work together to fix the issue. The message was clear from the Selectboard to Mr. Casella – HELP US. He agreed, working together will provide the best possible outcome for everyone. The town is heading into the next phase of the process so we need an open dialogue with Casella. The Highgate Transfer Station is a huge asset to both the town and Casella. Josh doesn't want to see fees go up in order for them to help the town. FEMA is funding the first phase (design) and there won't be a need for construction for close to a year when we look at putting this out to bid. Michael's brother can also be very helpful with regard to this. The banks need to be stabilized on three sides. George asked about gases coming from the capped landfill. We have twenty years of testing on the capped landfill and switched to custodial care a few years ago. Methane gas was not found to be an issue. The reports are available if anyone wants to see them. The town is in a contract with GeoDesign who is working with Cross Consulting on this project.

E. Town Treasurer Updates – Shelley Laroche

1. Check Warrants

Shelley was not present at this meeting but had prepared the check warrants in advance. Randy had questions on the \$113.00 for trophies associated with a cornhole tournament and if this was a MAHA event. The board did not sign the recreation portion of the check warrant but did sign the other sections, as there were no further questions.

F. Town Clerk Updates – Wendi Dusablon

1. Minutes

Motion by Josh LaRocque to approve the minutes from September 20, 2018, as written. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**.

2. General Election – Nov. 6th

Absentee ballots are available now. Call, email, stop by or request your ballot through the "My Voter Page" (MVP) <https://mvp.sec.state.vt.us/>. Polls will be open 7am – 7pm on November 6th at Highgate Elementary School. 128 absentee ballots have been requested already.

3. 2018 Dog Licensing Update

We still have not closed out the year, even though the deadline was April 1st. We are still pursuing two dog owners (total of three dogs) to finalize the year. To date, we have licensed 870 dogs in the Town of Highgate. Vonnie has issued fines (fourth round) in the amount of \$250.00 per dog, per the ordinance. Wendi will keep the board updated if Vonnie needs to pick up any dogs.

4. Misc.

Wendi put a sample policy from VLCT on social media in the drop box. This is becoming more and more necessary, as this is how people are accessing information the most. Currently the town has a FaceBook page, and other departments also have FB pages, and some use Instagram, Twitter or Snap Chat. It would be beneficial for the town to have some protocol and boundaries with regard to social media accounts associated with the Town of Highgate.

G. Administrator Items – Heidi Britch-Valenta

1. Project Updates

Due to the recent rain, Abe anticipates a few more weeks (minimum) before his crew can get over here to replace the roof. The grant for the ADA construction is allowing us to expend the administrative costs for the additional testing. This will happen on Oct. 25 & 26. The GeoDesign contract is not complete and is a draft. The gentleman on the other end is on vacation. We will want to execute this soon, so if the board acknowledges the contract it can be signed when it's ready. This will keep us on track to get the soil tested at the site and get the surveying done. This is all for phase one and has nothing to do with the phase two piece or any commitments on the town's part to go through with the design. Motion by Randy Connelly to allow Heidi to execute the revised version of this contract with GeoDesign. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**. There is a site visit on Oct. 30th at 8:30am at the canoe portage site to see if we can get a storm water design grant. There is also a site visit tomorrow morning on Hanna Road to go over the project with the landowner. The extension into 2019 was granted for the project on Mill Hill. The paving contract with Pike was discussed previously and needs to be signed. Pike's bid for Mill Hill was \$244,825.00. There was a lengthy discussion on checking with Pike to see if next year's paving could be included at this year's price. Josh would like to discuss with Butch and Nick as well as check in with Pike to see if this is possible. Sharon questioned if this would need to go out to bid, per the purchasing policy, and if another RFP would be needed. Motion by Steve LaFar to table this discussion until Oct. 18th. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**. The project list is in the drop box, which now has the leash law added (which came up at the last meeting) and the social media policy is also added. Vonnie Lamotte, ACO, and Merry Souza, Health Officer, will both be here on Oct. 18th as well for updates. The board signed a thank you letter for Dick Harper. Heidi reminded everyone about the aviation meeting here on Oct. 15 @ 6pm and the PC will be hosting an Efficiency VT workshop here on Oct. 16 @ 6pm. New grant opportunities have opened up including two fire truck grants, a water quality grant for the canoe portage area, an animating infrastructure grant and an electric vehicle charging station grant.

2. MVR Contract – Dispatching Discussion on Oct. 18th

MVR is now using Middlebury for dispatching services. They want the Town of Highgate to switch to Middlebury also. Heidi has invited St. Albans dispatch to the Oct. 18th meeting and MVR will be here as well. Sharon will reach out to legal

counsel about this. This is a contractual issue, so it can be a public discussion and then go into executive session for negotiations.

H. Selectboard Items

Sharon and Heidi attended a leadership conference on Monday hosted by Rural Development. There were many great ideas presented and information shared on how to increase tourism and other things we can do to put Highgate on the map. There are few we can try to get more people interested in what happens in our town. Sharon noted that "if everybody has a voice, there will be less bitchin'."

I. Upcoming Events

| | | |
|---------|---------|---|
| Oct. 8 | | Columbus Day – Town Offices are CLOSED |
| Oct. 11 | 6pm | DRB Mtg. |
| Oct. 15 | 6pm | State Aviation Presentation |
| Oct. 16 | 6pm | Planning Comm. Mtg. – Button Up Workshop |
| Oct. 16 | 5:30pm | Recreation Commission Mtg. @ arena |
| Oct. 18 | 7pm | Selectboard Mtg. |
| Nov. 1 | 7pm | Selectboard Mtg. |
| Nov. 1 | | Property Tax Payments are due by 5pm – NO POSTMARKS ! |
| Nov. 6 | 7am-7pm | General Election @ Highgate School |

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to end the regular meeting @ 8:15pm. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED.**

J. Executive Session

Motion by Josh LaRocque to enter into executive session @ 8:16pm to discuss legal, contracts and personnel where premature general public knowledge would place the town and / or individuals involved at a substantial disadvantage. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.**

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to exit executive session @ 9:05pm. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED.**

Motion by Randy Connelly to accept Richard Noel as a temporary driver and have him complete the necessary testing. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.**

Motion by Bruce Butler to decline the offer to negotiate on the Yates BCA appeal. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.** Randy Connelly and Josh LaRocque recused themselves from this vote.

K. Adjournment

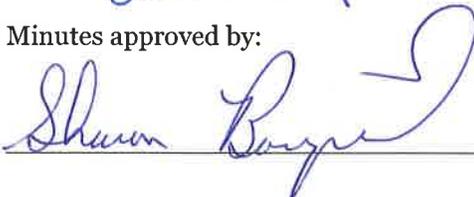
Motion by Steve LaFar to adjourn the meeting @ 9:20pm. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by:



Wendi Dusablon – Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk

Minutes approved by:



Sharon Bousquet – Chair, Highgate Selectboard