

TOWN OF HIGHGATE

Selectboard Meeting

Thursday, August 1, 2019 @ 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 @ 7:02pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Highgate Selectboard Members – Sharon Bousquet, Chair; Bruce Butler; Richard Flint *absent – Randy Connelly and Josh LaRocque*

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

Public / Other – Steve LaFar; Woody Rouse; Evangeline LaRocque; Ty Choiniere; Dick Harper

B. Public Comment(s)

- Steve LaFar asked about the listers office and vacancies in that office. We currently have two listers, Aimee and Peter. The third position has never been filled and no one ran for the position at Town Meeting. Steve stated that Richard Wilkens is willing to help out if needed. There was discussion on Peter St. Germain wanting to retire and what that means for the listers office. Shelley stated that Mr. Wilkens is in the office frequently and he should express interest himself if he is serious about it. Sharon would like Mr. Wilkens to drop off a letter of interest to the Town Clerk if he is seriously interested and we will take it from there.

C. All Arts Council / Summer Sounds Concert Series – Dick Harper

Dick Harper gave some history on the Summer Sounds Concert Series, which began in Highgate in 1990. It has grown over time, with this year being the 29th season! The concerts have traditionally been held on Sunday nights because bands are available and cost less on a Sunday. The town provides funding, as well as the sponsors for each show. Non-profits have been doing fundraisers during the shows as well. The range of music is vast: Bluegrass, Country, Folk, Gospel, Pop, Opera, Cajun, Tribute Bands, Funk, etc. Many other towns in our county have also started up their own concert series as well. Dick would like to retire after next season and work with his replacement so that Highgate can continue to celebrate the arts and music with our community. He feels it's time for fresh ideas and acts/performers and wants to hand over the reins for season #31 in Highgate. The skills he sees needed for the job are 1) organizational and 2) the ability working with sponsors for the funding needed. The board thanked Dick for the wonderful job he does and has always done with the Highgate Summer Sounds Concert Series.

D. Community Celebration Update – Steve LaFar

Steve gave an update and summarized the events taking place as part of the Community Celebration on Aug. 17th from 11am – 8pm. There will be music, food to purchase, free ice cream and events for people of all ages. Volunteers are still needed – please sign up

at the town office. Tshirts will be given to volunteers and some shirts will be given away as prizes and will also be for sale at the event. Evangeline LaRocque spoke about the historical cafés that will also be on display. A meeting took place earlier today with Hank and Ray Lambert. They will be joining us that day as part of the panel. The event is coming along nicely and will be a great day for the community to enjoy. Richard Flint has a vendor that is currently at Franklin County Field Days that would like to sell cold drinks and other things but needs electricity. Heidi would like him to look at the site first. Electricity isn't being offered to other vendors, but the committee did want to have cold drinks offered. Power can be offered to this vendor but he will be limited on where he can locate due to the extension cord(s) he will need for his equipment.

E. Recreation Update – Ty Choiniere

- Registration is currently open for fall soccer for ages 4 – 4th grade. Visit <http://highgatevt.myrec.com> to register for soccer and any of the other programs Highgate Recreation has to offer. Pelkeys Archery was at the arena this week for two full sessions, which went very well. August 5th is the women's self-defense course for ages 14 and up, beginning at 6:30pm. Cost is \$20.00 per person, Highgate Recreation covered the other \$15.00 per person. Other programs currently happening at the arena are: pickleball; floor hockey; roller blading; and MAHA dryland training. Dan Beauregard, Rec. Director, will work with Richard Flint on the Cross Country program. We are still looking for an XC coach. Richard has already lined up a meet at Richford Country Club on Oct. 2nd. Shelley's brother may be interested in the XC coaching position. Megan Flint is interested in helping out also. Ty is waiting to see if the library will be offering CPR and babysitting courses. There was discussion on the new storage building at the arena / ballfields site that will be for Little League / MAHA / Parks & Rec. The town permit has been filled out but needs to be signed by Ty and also by Sharon as the Selectboard Chair. Samantha, Zoning Administrator, let Ty know that there may be state permits required as well. Heidi noted that typically the contractor acquires the permits. In this case, Ty said it would be more of a community project. Heidi will reach out to the state and see what we need to have. The rafters at the VCMP property were discussed to see if they were usable for this project. Bruce asked who would be acting as "foreman" for this project. Ty stated that Ryan Maskell does this for a living, and he is on the Rec. Commission. Richard asked about the budget for this project. \$30,000.00 has been put aside in the CIP. The size will be 28' x 40'. Motion by Richard Flint to sign the permit for the Recreation Department. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**. If the project goes over \$30,000.00 they will have to figure out how to raise the difference. Ty reminded everyone they are always looking for volunteers and to visit the website or call Dan at 868-4406.
- Bylaws – The bylaws were presented a long time ago, but never officially adopted. Richard has questions on the section about attending a certain number of meetings to remain eligible to be on the Recreation Commission. Richard commented that the leaders on the Town Selectboard are not required to attend a certain number of meetings, so why should the Recreation Commission? There was discussion on appointed vs. elected and if that had anything to do with it. The Library Trustees have it in their bylaws also, and they are elected officials. Recreation Commission members are appointed. Bruce would like the wording to be changed with regard to the number of members (minimum of 5, maximum of 7), and he had another edit suggestion with regard to vacancies on the Recreation Commission. Motion by Bruce Butler to approve the bylaws as amended. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED**.

F. Treasurer Updates – Shelley Laroche

- Motion by Bruce Butler to sign the check warrants. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED**.
- The board tabled the discussion on Scott Martin's iPad last meeting. He wants to keep the one he was issued and purchase a new one for the town. Motion by Richard Flint to approve this request by Scott Martin. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**.
- Laz Scangas, architect, just got us the payment requisition for Millbrook on the ADA project. It missed the check run so Shelley would like permission to cut the check for Millbrook in the amount of \$36,757.78 and get it in the mail. It will show up on the next check run. Motion by Richard Flint to approve Shelley mailing this check. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**. Funds for this project are set aside. Everything passes through Laz first and then on to us.
- Auditors are planning to be here on Aug. 9th and Aug. 16th.
- Shelley has one other quick item for later in executive session.

G. Town Clerk Items – Wendi Dusablon

- Motion by Bruce Butler to approve the minutes from July 18, 2019, as written. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED**.

H. Town Administrator Items – Heidi Britch-Valenta

- There is a grant update in the packet.
- Aug. 10th RiseVT has organized a bike tour starting in St. Albans with Gov. Scott. Any experienced bikers are invited to participate. He will be in Highgate, briefly, around 11:15am to look at our village and see all we have accomplished.
- We received one bid on the bollard project, which was discussed on July 18th. We have budgeted and set aside \$10,000.00 for this already. Motion by Bruce Butler to sign the PACIF grant application. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED**. The additional PACIF funds will give us the ability to also install bollards on the inside of the public works department.
- Motion by Richard Flint to sign the contract with Goodhue Excavation for the Frontage Road box culvert project. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**.
- There will be a presentation on Aug. 15th on the Machia Road stabilization project. DeWolfe Engineering Associates will be here and Sharon would like to see the information prior to Aug. 15th.
- Heidi hopes to have the design from Geo Design by our Sept. 5th meeting with regard to the Transfer Station slide. Heidi has reached out to Casella also and has not heard back. Sharon wants Casella to be involved.

I. Selectboard Items

- Motion by Richard Flint to sign the letter to the state for the reclassification process of the Hanna Road. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**. This letter was modified to include information about the potential for increased traffic after the bridge project is complete.
- We have always plowed the Highgate School parking lot in years past. Now the town no longer owns the school, it is owned by our new district "Missisquoi Valley School District" (MVSD). Ty had asked them to consider budgeting for snow removal,

because Swanton and MVU already were contracting that work out. Richard would like to check in with Butch to see if he wants to put in a bid. The town should not be doing this for free, the board was in agreement about that. We just passed a \$37 million budget, so if Butch does not want his crew to put in a bid, it is the responsibility of MVSD to find someone to do the snow removal at Highgate Elementary School.

- The Machia Road bridge (B25) construction is coming along nicely. The new bridge is open temporarily while the old bridge is taken down. The plan is to keep traffic on the new bridge through next week. August 12th the bridge will be shut down until all the approach work is finished and paved. This could take up to one month. The VTrans digital displays will be changed on Aug. 2nd to advertise the closure starting on Aug. 12th. The old bridge is already starting to be dismantled. They are chopping up the concrete and sending it away on trucks. There will also be a slight realignment of the intersection with Pines Plains Road. Motion by Richard Flint to give the board's seal of approval on the changes at the intersection. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**.
- Many people have asked what the town is doing about the property located in the corner of the town park (28 Mill Hill Road). This is a long and slow process of getting them to clean up the property. A solid waste ordinance notice of violation letter has been prepared. Motion by Bruce Butler to sign the notice of violation. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED**. This will be sent certified mail on 8/2/19 to both the owners of the property and the tenants.
- We have been kicking the video surveillance policy around for months. The hold-up has been who will monitor and maintain the system. We had asked Matt Bouchard, but he was not interested because he did not install the system for us. Sharon would like to have the Selectboard Chair and Vice-Chair be listed as who will be monitoring the system as necessary. Ty had questions about the system at the arena, and also at the library. This will be back on the next agenda for finalization and signature.
- Shelley let the board know that we will be setting the tax rate on Aug. 15th. All indications are that our education rate is up ten cents. Sharon added that no one should be ticked off at town employees because their taxes went up. Did you vote on June 11th for our new district budget? If not, don't complain. And we know less than 200 people voted from Highgate on June 11th.
- Richard Flint asked about the HVFD tower. He doesn't want the old one put back up on the new roof. There are issues with Radio North, so Joe is looking at other possibilities for who can complete the job.
- Bruce asked for a progress report on the roof. It has been slow and then they ran out of materials, so hopefully they will be able to finish up next week. Ty hopes the town learned a lesson from this roof project. The ADA project is moving along nicely and Millbrook has been great to work with. There is a possibility that the offices will need to be closed for 1-2 days as part of the ADA project. Wendi will notice to the public accordingly.

J. Upcoming Events

Aug. 1 – 4	Franklin Co. Field Days
Aug. 6	VCMP Mtg. 6pm
Aug. 8	DRB Mtg. 6pm
Aug. 10	Gov. Scott bike ride 11:15am arrival in Highgate
Aug. 15	Selectboard Mtg. 7pm
Aug. 17	Community Celebration 11am – 8pm
Aug. 20	Planning Comm. 6pm
Sept. 5	Selectboard Mtg. 7pm

Motion by Bruce Butler to exit the regular meeting @ 8:18pm. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED.**

K. Executive Session

Motion by Bruce Butler to enter into executive session @ 8:18pm with Heidi Britch-Valenta, Shelley Laroche and Ty Choiniere to discuss contracts, legal and personnel, where premature general public knowledge would place the town and/or the individuals involved at a substantial disadvantage. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED.**

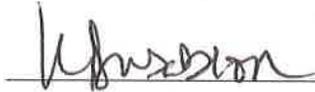
Ty Choiniere exited executive session @ 8:25pm.
Shelley Laroche exited executive session @ 8:30pm.

Motion by Richard Flint to exit executive session @ 8:45pm. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED.**

L. Adjournment

Motion by Richard Flint to adjourn the meeting @ 8:45pm. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by:



Wendi Dusablon – Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk

Minutes approved by:



Sharon Bousquet – Chair, Highgate Selectboard

