

# TOWN OF HIGHGATE SELECTBOARD MEETING

Thursday, April 6, 2017 @ 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 @ 7:05pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Highgate Selectboard Members** –Sharon Bousquet, Chair; Josh LaRocque, Vice-Chair; Bruce Butler; Steve LaFar; Randy Connelly (arrived @ 7:08pm)

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

**Public / Other** – Faith Brashear; Alice S. Cota; Jean Chevalier; Anny & Grace Kinney; Jeff Towle; Andy King; Vonnie Lamotte; John P. Patnode; Eric & Sarah Chevalier; Patrick Loyer – PWD; Nicholas Scott

### **B. Public Comments**

- Grace Kinney was present on behalf of EF Tours. She is part of a group of students that is fundraising for a trip to Germany. They are asking for permission to have a yard/tag sale in the Municipal Park on Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup> or the first weekend in June. Grace provided some information about their group. Motion by Josh LaRocque to allow the group from EF Tours to use the Municipal Park on May 20<sup>th</sup>. The motion was seconded by Sharon Bousquet – **APPROVED**. Josh asked that there be no parking along Route 78, that they use the municipal parking lot, just not the fire department side.
- John Patnode expressed concern about the number of potholes on Rice Hill Road. Pat Loyer responded that the public works department will be up there tomorrow or Monday. John also had comments regarding town meeting and issues brought up where the board and treasurer referred to previous boards and/or treasurers. He suggests that the board investigate issues instead and come back with answers. He had questions about the transfer station fund and when / how it was renamed or moved. John is bothered by the fact that the board is “passing the buck” instead of looking into things. Bruce agrees with John, to an extent, but added that the fund simply was relabeled. Shelley further added that the fund was moved into capital reserve funds to stay allocated for what it was meant to be legally. Shelley invited John to come into the office anytime to go through everything.

### **C. Public Works Director – Patrick Loyer**

#### **1. Machia Road update**

We had a site visit today and input from AOT. They were here with their technical research department. Their advice is that we not close the road down to one lane at this time. They will return in five weeks to install monitoring equipment and to design a repair. There are no funds available right now. The public works department will be monitoring the situation weekly, which is located just past the guard rails across from the Young’s house on Machia Road.

#### **2. Durkee Road culvert project**

Pat spoke with the contractor and the work is scheduled for July when school is not in session. Matt Laroche also has an issue with timing and crop season. The road will be shut down for at least a week.

#### **3. Hardy Structural Design – fire department floor**

He will be getting back to us with more info on this. We need to get a green light on the grant and then figure out what the public works department can do to help out.

#### **4. Hiring update**

Nicholas Scott has been hired as a member of the public works department. Papers have been signed and his physical has been scheduled. His start date is April 17<sup>th</sup> and we are looking forward to working with him. Nick was present and was welcomed by the board to the Town of Highgate team!

#### **5. Transfer Station Geo Design bid**

They will be in Highgate on April 20<sup>th</sup> – more info to follow.

## 6. Ballard Road update

There is an issue with a culvert on Ballard road that keeps dropping and washing out, forming a sink hole about 2.5' around and 2.5' deep. Pat continues to fill it, and it is holding for now. We are applying for a structures grant. A hydraulic study needs to be done, which will be on April 13<sup>th</sup>, and the grant is due on April 15<sup>th</sup>. Associated documents are in the drop box. Motion by Bruce to give Heidi Britch-Valenta, Town Administrator, and Josh LaRocque, Road Commissioner, permission to apply for this grant. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**.

## 7. Misc. updates

- Paving – Pike will be here to do the work that was supposed to happen last year. For the small amount of work to be added for this year, Pat would like to have Pike do that work also (for 2017 - sections of Morey Road, Charles Circle, St. Armand Road and Hanna Road). Frontage Road needs base work before paving. On St. Armand Road, the area of the rail crossing needs to be dropped for improved site distance. Heidi added that by locking down last year's pricing and adding this year, we could make a case for not putting it back out to bid and ask Pike if they will extend the price to the rest of this year's paving. All were ok with this, as long as it is legal to do so. Motion by Josh LaRocque to pave what we need to for 2017 off last year's pricing with Pike if we can, and it is legal to do so. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**. Pat will approach Bob at Pike regarding this.
- Radio North was here on Monday and retested our radios and equipment for the public works department and fire department. The radios in the backhoe and the loader will need to be replaced, we can budget for those. They are outdated but are working.
- The air tank on the '14 Western Star was replaced. Pat would like to use the funds (\$6,000.00) that we received for selling the road side mower to update a few things, like the tamper and a new laser transit. He has quotes \$4,100.00 for a tamper through Milton Rental and \$725.00 for the laser transit, there are also a few tools they need. Josh and Randy would like to see more quotes first, but don't see any problem with Pat's proposal. We might be able to get \$500.00 for our current tamper if we clean it up.
- Chris Yates and Pat had gone through the building previously with regard to lighting. The outside has already been updated to LED. We have a quote from GMES for the interior work, \$13,000.00 with a \$10,000.00 rebate. Josh would like more quotes on this also. Eric Rainville will be back to put the outside lights on timers. The change to LED will save us money on our electricity bills very quickly. Josh asked about a photo eye vs. timers for the outside lights.
- Sharon let Pat know that when the arena lot was plowed that one post was broken and the cable is down. Parks & Rec. would like the PWD to replace the post and the cable and they will do the work. There was discussion on whether the cable should come down for the winter months in the future.
- There was an issue with a private driveway culvert that the homeowner wanted the town to fix. Our policy states that we do not maintain individual driveways and culverts. Josh read aloud from the section of the road acceptance policy "...in all cases, driveways must have sufficiently sized culverts installed and forever maintained by the homeowner or developer". Pat has spoken with the property owner previously and Josh called them today also. Pat noted this is a touchy topic for all towns, he just attended a workshop and it was talked about. There are lots of deep puddles on the roads right now. There is a road culvert on Boucher Road that Pat is keeping an eye on (road culvert, not driveway culvert). He reminded everyone, we live in Vermont, it is mud season, and they are trying to get to everyone and everything in a timely fashion.

## D. Treasurer Updates – Shelley Laroche

### 1. Check warrants & misc.

Sharon thanked Shelley for the budget information they received. Shelley reminded everyone that she puts monthly reports in the drop box of revenues and expenditures which are there for review. Sharon thanked all town committee members. Everyone is on budget and being conservative with tax payer dollars. Sharon asked about the health officer section of the warrant. Those are all expenses associated with the Elwood property so they are easy to see and track. The audit is back from the auditors. It's not perfect and never will be. The auditors said if it was perfect, then they aren't

looking hard enough. The finance committee meets on Monday @ 3pm. There are a few policies not in place that the auditors want to see. We have a full committee of Sharon, Luc, Shelley, Heidi, Ron and Jean. These meetings are open to the public for input. Shelley will add the auditor's report to the drop box tomorrow.

#### **E. ACO Updates – Vonnie Lamotte**

##### **1. FCAR**

The town has received two letters from Franklin County Animal Rescue on 3/24/17 and 3/29/17. They will be closing their doors on April 1<sup>st</sup>, hopefully to reopen this summer, but that is yet unknown. Vonnie is proposing that we open our own holding kennel for dogs and cats here in Highgate. She has done the math and we have a location that is heated and has lights. We pay a yearly contract fee to FCAR of \$500.00, plus fees each time we have them board a dog for us (total 2015 & 2016 was \$1,060.00). We would save money by doing this and at this point we don't have a choice but to figure something out. We have a town fine that needs to be paid, and now boarding fees can also stay with the town instead of FCAR. Vonnie and Kristy Brow will continue to rehome animals as necessary, and Potter's Angels Rescue in Fairfax is also there to help with rehoming animals. Vonnie did not want to publically disclose the location of the kennel, because we do not want drop offs or people trying to get to impounded animals. If we have dog bites, they are on quarantine for 10 days, mostly in the home, but sometimes not. On average, dog owners claim their animals within a day or two. Vonnie would bring animals to a mutual location for pick up. Sharon expressed concern about staffing and if Vonnie will have enough help. Vonnie is not worried, it will be her responsibility, with the help of Kristy when and if she is away. There was some discussion about insurance and liability. Shelley will contact VLCT in the morning to address any concerns. There is also the issue of feral cats, Vonnie can trap them, but what do we do with them? FCAR had a spay/neuter program at one time for these cats, and that is no longer an option, at least not right now. Vonnie will be walking the animals several times per day. Randy asked about injured animals. We have a local vet, and if incidents occur after office hours she has to take injured animals to BEVS. Vonnie is here for the animals and is confident that between she and Kristy that they have this covered. Top of the Hill can help with animals that are properly vaccinated for longer term stays. Vonnie has a list of things they will need to get started such as cages, beds, dishes, litter box, litter and food. Motion by Josh LaRocque to approve the animal holding facility and start-up expenses of \$190.00 contingent upon a positive report from the lawyer on liability and verification of appropriate insurance coverage from VLCT, effective immediately, and to give the ACO the latitude to do what needs to be done in any given situation until we can formulate a more concise policy. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**. Bruce added a few points with regard to the FCAR closure. He would like to see state representatives and senators get involved in the solution. There is a Go-Fund-Me campaign in progress to raise money to keep FCAR open. The board will discuss a possible contribution. Vonnie pointed out that she rehomed 11 dogs last year and all but two of them came from Highgate. Shelley is concerned if a donation is made and they don't reopen, what happens to those funds? Eric Chevalier would rather see the money put towards our set up here in town.

#### **F. Town Clerk Updates – Wendi Dusablon**

##### **1. Minutes from March 16<sup>th</sup> and March 30<sup>th</sup>**

Motion by Randy Connelly to approve the minutes from March 16, 2017, as amended. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**. Motion by Randy Connelly to approve the minutes from March 30, 2017, as written. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**.

##### **2. Dog licensing update**

We are ahead of last year's schedule with licensing and are currently at #655 and climbing. Late fees are now in effect \$21 or \$25 per dog and late notices went in the mail 4/3/17.

##### **3. Finance Committee and Parks & Recreation Committee appointments**

We recently appointed Jean Chevalier to the FC and Randy Connelly to P&R. The current members of each committee need to be reappointed for another year. Motion by Sharon Bousquet to reappoint the following members to

the Parks & Recreation Committee; Ty Choiniere, Danielle Pothier, Karen Gagne-Fortin and Brian Spears. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**. Motion by Sharon Bousquet to reappoint the following members to the Finance Committee; Shelley Laroche, Heidi Britch-Valenta, Ron Nye, Luc Dupuis and Sharon Bousquet. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**.

**4. Memorial Day Committee – volunteers needed!**

Anyone interested in joining the committee to help organize the parade and ceremony in the park, please contact Liza at the library. The BBQ is run by the fire department, but more help is needed with the parade and ceremony. Steve LaFar was asked to consider, but he declined.

**5. PTKO request to use Municipal Park – flea market**

Wendi received an email request for the PTKO (Parent/Teacher/Kid/Organization) to use the municipal park on Saturday, May 27<sup>th</sup> from 9am – 3pm for a flea market / fundraiser. They will arrive early to set up. Motion by Josh LaRocque for the PTKO to use the municipal park on Saturday, May 27<sup>th</sup> for their flea market / fundraiser. The motion was seconded by Sharon Bousquet – **APPROVED**. Wendi will let Elaine Nester know they have been approved for May 27<sup>th</sup> and also no parking along Route 78, as with the earlier request from EF Tours to use the park the weekend before.

**6. Community Events Board – bids accepted until April 18<sup>th</sup>**

Wendi has advertised that our former community events board (that we no longer use) is up for bid. Any bids received will be put before the Selectboard on April 20<sup>th</sup>.

**7. 2017 Liquor License Renewal Application – My-T- Fine II**

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to enter into the liquor control board @ 8:25pm. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**. Motion by Sharon Bousquet to sign the 2017 renewal for My-T-Fine II. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**. Motion by Sharon Bousquet to enter back into the regular Selectboard meeting @ 8:27pm. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**.

**8. Misc.**

- Sharon updated everyone that the Highgate Public Library has changed their name and is now Highgate Library and Community Center. They would like to bury a time capsule in Flat Iron Park on April 22<sup>nd</sup> @ 1:30pm. Motion by Randy Connelly for the library to bury a time capsule in Flat Iron Park, to be reopened in 50 years. Pat Loyer will monitor where it is placed and will contact dig safe. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**. Heidi added to the conversation that she suggested to them that they produce a map of where it is buried and have it recorded in the land records as a lasting record.

**G. Administrator Items – Heidi Britch-Valenta**

**1. PACIF grant**

This is due on April 30<sup>th</sup>. The arena facilities board has a meeting on Monday night. By the next Selectboard meeting we will want those decisions to be made in order to submit. There was some discussion on the PWD getting an eye wash station and a standing desk for Shelley.

**2. Fire equipment update**

FireProTec has been here and done some preliminary things and some additional work that was approved. Eric Rainville will be taking care of the emergency lighting. We are still having issues with the contract pieces that involved Simplex, to be discussed in executive session.

**3. Project list**

This is in the drop box for all to review and is a little frightening! Spring and summer will be intense getting some of these rolling. Sharon read aloud from the list, which includes; Machia Road bridge, Durkee Road culvert, Machia Road slope failure, Mill Hill slope failure, Park & Ride grant, paving, FEMA and transfer station project, arena bleacher project, sidewalk installation phase one, Charlie Circle, Fire Department floor, ADA modifications, library study, repairs at the municipal building and the Machia property. FEMA will be here on April 20<sup>th</sup> @ 10:30 and anyone is welcome to attend. Jeff Towle had questions about the Machia property, and if it was still in phase one. Yes, it is still in phase one, which is a process of getting the history of the property. This process is expected to take about four weeks, at which time the Selectboard will need to make a decision on

how to proceed. NRPC expertise is on our side, as well as funds available through NRPC programs to assist with any possible clean up. Phase two will involve core samples and ground water studies, etc. We have a committee appointed to work on this project as it moves forward. Eric Chevalier had questions about the agreement and more about what phase one and phase two entail. John Patnode also had questions about where the purchase agreement lies. The board has leeway to renegotiate and has the backing of NRPC for both phases. It is very unlikely there will not be a phase two. John asked for clarification on who would be responsible for the cleanup. Jean Chevalier also had questions. The contingency is there to give us an out if that is what we decide.

#### **H. Selectboard Items**

##### **1. Emergency Operations Plan**

As a reminder, this is in the drop box for review and Heidi will be plugging in a few missing names.

##### **2. Misc.**

- Sharon attended the library trustees meeting on April 5<sup>th</sup>. Our library is being recognized on a national level on July 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> for the gardening work and programming at the Highgate Library and Community Center. John Patnode added that there were two ladies that worked with the children on the yard and the different foods that were grown and they should be recognized. Shelley believes they are Virginia Holiman and Leah Britch. Kudos to all involved with the gardening program at our library and congratulations on this honor!
- Parks & Recreation Committee is still looking for one more volunteer to join their committee.
- The library is also considering adding trustees to their membership. Sharon thanked everyone for their service on all our various boards and committees.

#### **I. Upcoming Events**

April 11	5:30pm	Arena Construction Committee Mtg. @ arena
April 13	6pm	DRB Mtg.
April 18	6pm	Planning Commission Mtg.
April 20	10:30am	Rural Dev. Site Visit CF Grant
April 20	7pm	Selectboard Mtg.

#### **J. Executive Session**

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to enter into executive session @ 8:52pm to discuss contracts and legal where premature public knowledge would place the town and the individuals involved at a substantial disadvantage. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**. Motion by Sharon Bousquet to exit executive session @ 9:55pm. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**. Motion by Sharon Bousquet to schedule a negotiation with appellant Andy Leduc with attorneys present. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**. Motion by Sharon Bousquet to include the municipal property adjoining the Machia property in the phase one assessment through the Brownsfield program. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**. Motion by Sharon Bousquet to approve the MEI contracts for security systems monitoring at the library and municipal complex. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**.

#### **K. Adjournment**

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to adjourn the meeting @ 9:55pm. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**.

Respectfully submitted by,

\_\_\_\_\_ Wendi Dusablon, Highgate Town Clerk

Minutes approved by,

\_\_\_\_\_ Sharon Bousquet - Chair, Highgate Selectboard