

# TOWN OF HIGHGATE

## Selectboard Meeting

Thursday, January 23, 2020 @ 6:30pm

### 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 @6:30pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Highgate Selectboard Members** – Sharon Bousquet - Chair; Joshua LaRocque – Vice-Chair (arrived @ 7:30pm); Bruce Butler; Richard Flint; Randy Connelly (arrived @ 7:28pm)

**Highgate Office Staff** – Wendi Dusablon – Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk; Heidi Britch-Valenta – Town Admin. & Grant Admin. *absent* – *Shelley Laroche*

**Public / Other** – Sheryl & Robert Wilkins; Alice (Sue) Cota; Woody Rouse; Lt. Jason Wetherby – SAPD; Chief Gary Taylor – SAPD; Ty Choiniere (arrived @ 7:17pm); Chris Uzell (arrived @ 7:17pm)

#### **B. Public Comment(s)**

- Sheryl and Robert Wilkins (Paws for Thought) were present. They brought large maps to share of the property they own on the corner of Gore Road and VT Route 78, which also borders the now Village Core Property. They are squeezed by the border on the Village Core side, which is owned by the town. There is presently only about 2' of space on that corner of the building. We don't know what the future holds for that property, so the Wilkins are asking the town to consider selling them .04 acres of property to give them a proposed 13' buffer zone around their building for plowing etc. The Wilkins have met with the VCMP Committee also. Sue Cota and Woody Rouse were both present and are both members of the VCMP Committee. Both agree this would be a good idea and beneficial for Mr. & Mrs. Wilkins and their business. The town has been a good neighbor, allowing them the space they need, but not knowing who could ultimately own that property concerns them. The town is currently under an obligation with NRPC regarding the Brownfield program. Richard Flint commented that the town should draft up a written statement that they will work with Mr. & Mrs. Wilkins prior to the property changing hands. Conveying any portion of the VCMP property would require voter approval at town meeting or at a special town meeting. There was discussion about setbacks and curb cuts with regard to the VCMP property. Bruce Butler agrees that a letter of intent or first right of refusal documents with Mr. & Mrs. Wilkins sounds like a good idea. Bruce would like to have a formal recommendation from the VCMP Committee also, stating their position on this. There was discussion on the former Machia home and potential entrances / exits to any commercial development coming off St. Armand Road. Bruce is strongly of the opinion that the former Machia home is not salvageable. Sharon's only concern is the Brownfield program piece of it. We don't want the Wilkins to be responsible for any clean up. This is a question we could run by our town attorney. The three Selectboard members present (Sharon, Bruce, Richard)

have no problem with a document being drafted. Motion by Richard Flint to look into the details involved with the Brownfield program at the VCMF property and draft a letter of intent between the Town of Highgate and Sheryl and Robert Wilkins with regard to a potential future conveyance of property, prior to any commercial development taking place. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED.**

**C. Treasurer Updates – Shelley Laroche**

- Check Warrants - Shelley was not present but prepared the check warrants in advance. Richard had questions on the Middlebury Dispatching and MVR payments. Middlebury is quarterly and MVR is monthly. Motion by Bruce Butler to sign the check warrants. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED.**
- Tax Sale - Wendi updated the board that the tax sale has been set and published for Thursday, March 5<sup>th</sup> @ 10am here at the Municipal Building.
- Town Report - A draft of the 2019 town report was reviewed today. Town Reports should be in circulation by early February. Our book is smaller this year, 66 pages, because our new school district will have their own book.

**D. Town Clerk Updates – Wendi Dusablon**

- Minutes - Motion by Bruce Butler to approve the minutes from *January 2, 2020*, as written. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED.**
- Town Meeting – Petitions for warned articles were due January 16<sup>th</sup>. Petitions and consent forms to run for positions on the ballot are due January 27<sup>th</sup> by 5pm. Absentee ballots can be requested at any time.
- Dog Licenses – We are off to a great start with almost 100 dogs licensed already. Please license by April 1<sup>st</sup>. Our annual rabies clinic will be March 21<sup>st</sup> from 10am – noon at Highgate Vol. Fire Department.
- Warning – The Town Meeting Day Warning for 2020 was signed by the board already so we could get it in to the Town Report on time to stay on schedule.
- Appointed Positions – We have several positions to be appointed by the Selectboard on March 5<sup>th</sup>. Lists are posted around town, on FaceBook, Instagram and on our website. Letters of interest are due by Feb. 28<sup>th</sup>.
- Liquor License Renewals for 2020 – Motion by Sharon Bousquet to enter into the liquor control board @ 6:55pm. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED.** Motion by Richard Flint to sign the 2020 renewals for Desorcie's Market, RL Vallee Inc. (Highgate Village Market) and Jolley Associates (Highgate Jolley). The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED.** Motion by Sharon Bousquet to enter back into the regular Selectboard meeting @ 6:58pm. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED.**

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

- AOT Mileage Certificate – This is on hold while the road list is cleaned up and edited. It should be resolved for the next meeting and we may also have a final draft of the traffic ordinance as well.
- Water System Permit Renewal – We have a water permit from the State at the arena, which is a transient non community water system. The permit needs to be re upped every couple of years. We pay \$100.00 annually for the operating fee to continue to

operate a public water system which we test on a regular basis, as required. Motion by Bruce Butler to sign the water permit. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED.**

- RiseVT Amplify Grant – This is a wonderful and easy small grant that we have utilized in the past for improvements. The library is working on one on their own also. The VCMP Committee would like to use these funds, if awarded, in a similar way as this past summer, to host another community event with a historical panel. This was a hit with the older residents in town and the feedback was that they would like to see it happen again. The grant we received last year from from Ben & Jerry's. This is a different grant, for the same amount. Motion by Bruce to apply for the RiseVT Amplify Grant. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED.**
- Rural Dev. Business Opportunity Grant Letter of Intent – Heidi submitted three letters of intent and the applications will be due in March for Rural Business Enterprise grants to help small communities keep things rolling. One was for consultant funds to work with the PC and DRB to create an impact fee structure and/or a TIF district for the town, perhaps focusing on the airport area. The second was for the VCMP Committee for the next stage of study or review that they might need. The last one was for technology. Heidi has spoken with Rob Fish who is a technology specialist with the State of VT. He will be here on March 5<sup>th</sup> to talk to us about what small towns can do to improve cell service and broadband. He has suggested applying for a WIFI zone in the village. Richard Flint had questions about the impact fees. If the grant comes through we would have a consultant to take us through the entire process. There was discussion on new residential development and how that impacts communities (schools, roads, emergency services, etc.) and how impact fees could help offset costs to the town.
- ANR WW – We did not qualify for this, because funding was targeted toward growth areas. Swanton went through a process of creating a growth area. If we wanted to, we could look into designating an area, such as the VCMP property or the airport. Richard Flint asked for clarification on ANR – Agency of Natural Resources.
- NRPC Contract – Heidi intended to have a contract from NorthWest Regional Planning. The VCMP Committee met and reviewed proposals for wastewater support services for the study funded with an ANR planning advance. NRPC was selected and the contract will be ready for next meeting. This was funded with a municipal planning grant in the amount of \$12,845.00. A kick-off meeting with the VCMP Committee, Otter Creek and NRPC is happening on Jan. 28<sup>th</sup> @ 6pm. Motion by Richard Flint to move forward with the process to have the contract ready for next meeting. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED.** Bruce would like to see this move in an expeditious manner to get things moving at the VCMP property.
- Feb. 6<sup>th</sup> Presentation – Thursday, February 6<sup>th</sup> as part of the regular Selectboard meeting there will be a presentation of the airport infrastructure study report to the Selectboard and community members. This will be a joint meeting with the Swanton Village Trustees and representatives from the State as well to talk about the airport upgrade.

#### **F. Selectboard Items**

- Hanna Road Reclassification Update – Our request to the State of VT, in conjunction with the Town of Franklin, to upgrade the Hanna Road to a class II road did not meet their criteria. Hanna Road will remain a class III road.

- SAPD Dispatching Contract – Chief Gary Taylor and Lt. Jason Wetherby were present from St. Albans Police Department to discuss the dispatching contract. Chief Taylor stated that they have simplified the formula for billing and we are now billed a per capita rate of \$12.00 per person. Because our HVFD calls account for approximately 25% of our overall dispatch call volume, we are paying 25% of the \$12.00 per person per capita amount. Our dispatching for EMS with MVR is through Middlebury and billed separately through them. Chief Taylor spoke to some upgrades in progress. SAPD kicked in \$6,000.00 towards our new tower here. We now have greater elevation than we have ever had before. He spoke about a new tower on Georgia Mountain as well as one behind the police station. SAPD is not yet on our tower here, but hopefully soon. Motion by Richard Flint to sign the dispatching contract with St. Albans Police Department in the amount of \$10,905.00. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**. Chief Taylor and Lt. Wetherby are also here to discuss the policing contract, which will happen in executive session.

**G. Upcoming Events**

Feb. 3	5:30	Rec. Commission	Feb. 17		Presidents Day – Offices CLOSED
Feb. 6	6:30	Selectboard Mtg.	Feb. 18	6:00	PC Mtg. - CANCELLED
Feb. 13	6:00	DRB & PC Mtg.	Mar. 3	10am	Town Meeting – polls open 7-7

Randy Connelly arrived @ 7:28pm.

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to exit the regular Selectboard meeting @ 7:28pm. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**.

Josh LaRocque arrived @ 7:30pm.

**H. Executive Session**

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to enter into executive session @ 7:30pm with Ty Choiniere, Heidi Britch-Valenta, Chief Gary Taylor and Lt. Jason Wetherby to discuss personnel and contracts where premature general public knowledge would place the town and/or the individuals involved at a substantial disadvantage. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**.

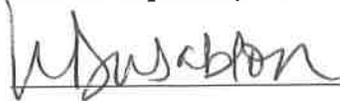
Ty Choiniere exited executive session @ 7:38pm.

Motion by Richard Flint to exit executive session @ 9:10pm. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**.

**I. Adjournment**

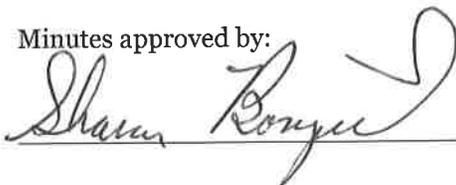
Motion by Richard Flint to adjourn the meeting @ 9:10pm. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:



Wendi Dusablon – Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk

Minutes approved by:



Highgate Selectboard