

TOWN OF HIGHGATE

Selectboard Meeting

Thursday, November 1, 2018 @ 7pm

Approved Minutes

NOTE: All actions taken are unanimous unless otherwise stated

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 @ 7:05pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Highgate Selectboard Members – Sharon Bousquet, Chair; Josh LaRocque, Vice-Chair (arrived @ 7:22pm); Bruce Butler; Randy Connelly (arrived @ 7:31pm); Steve LaFar
Highgate Office Staff – Wendi Dusablon – Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk; Heidi Britch-Valenta – Town Administrator; Shelley Laroche – Town Treasurer
Public / Other – Richard J. Noel; Nick Scott; Chris Shepard; Clarence Miller; Greta Brunswick – NRPC; David Roddy; Ty Choiniere

B. Public Comment

- Chris Shepard, Highgate School Board Chair, was present with a brief update. The State Board of Education has preliminarily ruled to merge Franklin, Highgate and Swanton. Sheldon remains undetermined at this time. Nothing is finalized yet but he doubts the State will change their mind at this point. Our School Board will be meeting next week for further discussion on the topic. Highgate has recently joined a lawsuit with approximately 22 other towns, which is still very early in the process. Funding could be an issue, and if so, Highgate would have to back out. If nothing else, many towns are trying to send a message. If a merge is coming then we need to make it what we need and want it to be. Issues such as equal representation on the district board, for example. We would want that written in to the agreements. How budgets will be voted on remains unclear. MVU and Swanton vote by ballot, whereas Highgate and Franklin vote from the floor. There was discussion on the Cassidy property and the Nadeau property and how we will deal with that. It has been suggested to the School Board that those parcels are separated out and are not under the School Board or the Selectboard's control. A separate entity of trustees could be set up to oversee those properties and keep them as our assets. Steve would like the school and town to work together and meet jointly. Once we have a final decision from the State Board of Education we can ask concrete questions and stop speculating. Chris noted that the School Board is also in the early stages of discussing a bond for parking lot issues / roof issues / etc. The school's roof project has taken much longer than expected due to rain and cold temperatures. Chris will try to be here on Nov. 15th for another update.

C. Village Core Master Plan (VCMP) Update – Steve LaFar / Greta Brunswick

Steve has spoken to Luc Dupuis on the Planning Commission and he will be attending their meeting on Nov. 20th with regard to the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The Steinhour Café building will be taken down, possibly in February 2019. There is also a meeting coming up to share preliminary sketches with the public on Nov. 27th. Greta

Brunswick from NRPC was also present to discuss the Brownsfields process. A decision has been made to move forward and abate the Steinhour Café property. Abatement is the process of removing the materials containing asbestos and properly disposing of them according to the Vermont Department of Health laws. Greta has been very helpful to us on several projects and she does a fabulous job. A motion is needed to use funds already set aside in the CIP for the grant application fee. The town will be applying for \$13,333.00 which has a match of \$2,667.00. Motion by Steve LaFar for this grant process to move forward and to use funds already set aside in the CIP in the amount of \$2,667.00. This amount covers the town match for the asbestos abatement only, not the actual demolition of the building. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED.** Heidi will work with Greta on applying for this grant.

D. Treasurer Updates – Shelley Laroche

1. Check Warrants

Sharon had a question on the gaskets purchased for HVFD, which was clarified. There were no other questions.

2. Misc.

Taxes were due today by 5pm and it has been a very busy month. We billed out (school & town) \$6,716,742.89 and collected \$6,525,627.08, leaving a delinquent amount of \$191,115.81. This delinquent amount is lower than in years past. Shelley will be issuing delinquent notices soon. The Public Works Department would like to change-up their uniforms and get sturdier Carhartt jackets and jeans. They will wear reflective vests in place of the high-vis gear that they wear now which is more expensive. The change will cost less than what we currently pay Cintas (formerly G&K). We currently pay \$102.00 weekly which will change to \$98.00 weekly. Motion by Josh LaRocque to sign the new rental agreement with Cintas. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.** It was noted this is a three year agreement that we are already one year into. Ty is here from the Recreation Commission with a tractor recommendation purchase. They are recommending the John Deere 3033R \$35,520.00 and we are still able to do 0% financing for 60 months. The tractor does include a snow blower for the sidewalks. The tires are loaded so chains are probably not needed. We budgeted for the payment and the down payment last year, so the funds are in their budget. Motion by Josh LaRocque to approve the purchase of this John Deere tractor. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.** There was discussion on storage of the tractor. It is too large for the doors at the Machia property. Nick and Butch feel if things are moved around in their bays it will work out. Motion by Randy Connelly for Shelley to work with Harvest Equipment on finalizing this purchase. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED.** This will be added to the towns insurance policy as well. Ty noted that the sub-committee that worked on this purchase got three quotes and looked at them all closely before making their recommendation.

E. Town Clerk Updates – Wendi Dusablon

1. Minutes

Motion by Bruce Butler to approve the minutes from October 18, 2018, as written. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED.**

2. General Election – Nov. 6th

Absentee ballots have been very busy this election season – to date 277 have been requested and 199 have been returned. The polls will be open from 7am – 7pm on Tuesday, November 6th at Highgate Elementary School. School for students at

Highgate Elementary School has been cancelled. MVU students do have school. Same day voter registration is available at the polls, or contact Wendi to register in advance or vote early, 802-868-5002 or wusablou@highgatevt.org. Our office will be CLOSED on November 6th, as we will be at the polls. The office will open late on Wednesday, November 7th @ 10am.

3. Misc.

The 2018 animal licensing season is officially closed. We were successful working with the last few dog owners and having their animals vaccinated and licensed. We ended the year with **873** licensed dogs. Dog licensing will start all over again in January.

F. Administrator Items – Heidi Britch-Valenta

1. TA / Grant Update

There is an update in the drop box.

2. Rural Development Application & Letter of Support

This will be in the packet for next time.

3. Electric Vehicle Charging Station Budget

The budget is in the drop box and the State will be covering the 10% so we don't have to worry about it. This is for two charging stations at the park & ride location. The estimate is \$17,694.00 and our match will be covered. Motion by Steve LaFar for Heidi to apply for this grant with the State providing our match. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**.

4. Municipal Officer List

This is an updated list of municipal officers for the purpose of issuing municipal tickets. Some have been deactivated and some have been added.

5. Misc.

Sue Cota is not here but wanted the board to know that funding has been found for the bank repair on Monument Road. As a reminder, the PC will be working on the CIP at their Nov. 20th meeting. Public Works, HVFD and Parks & Recreation will be attending. The VCMP group will host a meeting on Nov. 27th to look at preliminary sketches. We also have a proposal coming from Jon Young on the Animating Infrastructure Grant. Ty added that we have had other projects looked at as well and may have a proposal coming from another individual. Ty asked Heidi about the RiseVT grant for \$1,500.00. The deadline has passed for that opportunity but they will chat about others.

G. Selectboard Items

The town continues to look for more volunteers, as we have positions open. Stop by the office for more information! Sharon gave an update on Bridge 25 on Machia Road. The steel has arrived and they are ready to go. This project will continue into 2019. The Machia Road slide bank stabilization project has turned into more than expected. There was discussion about trees in our town that are located within the town's right of way and who is responsible for removal and any problems arising from downed limbs causing damage to property. Heidi will follow up with VLCT for guidance and we will discuss at the next meeting. Nick Scott stated that grading has been a disaster with all this rain lately, but they hope to get back at it when the weather dries out. Nick also let the board know that salt & sand are ready to go and plow fronts are one. The new PWD employee, Luke Choiniere, will start on Nov. 5th. They are also still looking for part-time help. Richard Noel suggested paying a higher wage for part-time help.

H. Upcoming Events

Nov. 5	5:30pm	Recreation Commission Mtg. @ arena
Nov. 6	7am – 7pm	General Election @ Highgate Elementary School TOWN OFFICE IS CLOSED
Nov. 7		Town Office opens @ 10am
Nov. 7	6:30pm	Library Trustee Mtg. @ library
Nov. 8	6pm	DRB Mtg.
Nov. 12		TOWN OFFICE IS CLOSED – Veterans Day
Nov. 15	7pm	Selectboard Mtg.
Nov. 20	6pm	Planning Commission Mtg.
Nov. 22 + 23		TOWN OFFICE IS CLOSED – Thanksgiving Holiday
Nov. 27	6pm	VCMP Mtg. – preliminary sketches discussion

Motion by Josh LaRocque to exit the regular meeting @ 8:05pm. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.**

I. Executive Session

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to enter into executive session @ 8:06pm with Heidi Britch-Valenta and Ty Choiniere to discuss contracts, personnel and legal, where premature general public knowledge would place the town and/or the individuals involved at a substantial disadvantage. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED.** Motion by Steve LaFar to exit executive session @ 9:49pm. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED.**

J. Adjournment

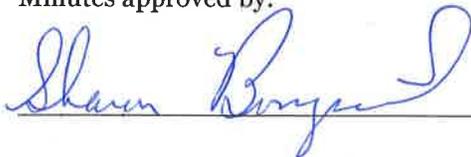
Motion by Josh LaRocque to adjourn the meeting @ 9:50pm. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by:



Wendi Dusablon – Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk

Minutes approved by:



Sharon Bousquet – Chair, Highgate Selectboard