

TOWN OF HIGHGATE SELECTBOARD MEETING

Thursday, June 15, 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 @ 7:02pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Highgate Selectboard Members – Sharon Bousquet, Chair; Josh LaRocque, Vice-Chair; Randy Connelly; Bruce Butler; Steve LaFar;

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

Public / Other – Rick Trombley; Woody Rouse; Alice S. Cota; Jean Chevalier; George Greenwood; Walt Krul; Keith Ploof; Kellie Uzell

B. Public Comment(s)

- Keith Ploof thanked the Selectboard for their help and support with Memorial Day. Sharon thanked Keith for all that he does as well.
- Kellie Uzell found information through the Humane Society of Chittenden County regarding feral cats and spay / neuter programs. She forwarded the information to Vonnie and Wendi.

C. AmCare Update- Walt Krul

Walt Krul was present and thanked the board for inviting him in for an update. He recapped the services they provide to the Town of Highgate. They provide 24/7 coverage to the Town of Highgate, with paramedics staffed always. There are at least 2 paramedic units on at all time. AmCare has a total of 8 paramedics on staff currently, with 4 more coming up through the program, 3 of which will be done in the next few weeks. AmCare provides community support at games and events, typically contact sports such as football, lacrosse and ice hockey. They also covered the HVFD sliding party in February and Memorial Day last month. They have been hosting events with scouting troops to interact with the public and to build confidence with youngsters in our community. There was a recent opportunity through the Highgate Library and Community Center to visit with pre-school aged children. This was a chance to introduce them to EMS and the equipment used in a non-threatening environment and to help alleviate fear. AmCare has also been working with the Tyler Place. They have one staff member who is an EMT and has recently passed the advanced EMT course, which is a first for TP to have in house, and is great for clients and staff. Mr. Tyler and all his staff are very proactive and supportive. Call volume has remained about the same, averaging 15-16 calls per month in Highgate. Response time is an average of 11-12 minutes. The First Responder program in Highgate is moving forward and this is very exciting! This has been in the works for almost a year now and some have tested already, with more yet to test in the future. AmCare has met with HVFD Chief a few times on the First Responder program to discuss the logistics of how this will work. Logistics are important to have things run smoothly. This is a first for Highgate to have a licensed First Responder team and we should be proud! Walt added that he and his staff sometimes get approached about calls in Highgate. They are not in a position to discuss these things. Peoples are well intentioned in asking, but they cannot share information. Sharon asked, without mentioning specific calls or names, how does it work when they are called to a scene that has the potential to be dangerous? Walt answered that they are trained to not enter a scene until it is safe to do so. Crews need to make a judgement based on the information they have available to them. It is hard to stay back, because it is counter intuitive and very difficult. If responders are disabled, they are not able to help others. It's a difficult concept, but an important one. Sharon added that we expect a lot from all responders, but sometimes it isn't the best of circumstances and safety has to come first. Josh asked about longer response times and ways for improvement. Walt responded that there are times when resources are stretched. Josh also asked if there were any plans to add another vehicle and crew. A rotation

schedule for vehicles is already in place and there are no plans to add another crew based on call volume data. It is a matter of keeping his crews in motion. Josh was asking questions he felt that residents might ask of Walt. Randy asked if Highgate's call volume is out of whack based on per capita. Walt hasn't looked at that data specifically, but he does not believe so. Sue Cota read aloud a letter that was mailed to the town last summer, the letter is dated July 2016. It is from Tonya Mason who resides in Milton and was regarding a call at her mother's residence in Highgate. Sue asked Tonya to write the letter to the town. Sue wanted Walt to explain and answer the concerns in the letter. Sharon did not feel that was fair, because Walt did not have the data for that date or call in front of him. She also stated that she is at the hockey rink all the time and has seen AmCare there, but not at every game. Sue further stated that MVR was always there. Kellie asked if First Responders were at the rink, Sue said that yes, they were. Josh said he did see AmCare at the rink whenever he was there for high school games and Wendi sees them at the rink as well. Sharon added that the board, prior to tonight, has seen this letter Sue is referencing and there have been questions raised as to which ambulance service was on scene. Sharon is not trying to defend anyone or negate anyone's testimony. Randy recalls this as well. Sue was not aware of this and again stressed that she is concerned about response time and has been from the start. Sharon is happy to look into this and address it at the next meeting. Josh said that overall he is hearing a lot of satisfaction from Highgate residents regarding service from AmCare. Jean Chevalier wants to know why they do not sit in the center of town all the time and why are they "hiding out" at the airport. She also questions why they are "joy riding" all over town and wasting gas instead of staying centrally located at the municipal building. Josh does not mind AmCare roaming around town. Jean has an issue with them hanging out at the airport. Walt encourages his crews to be mobile. He also stated they are not "hiding out" at the airport and they are not "joy riding". They use wifi access at the airport to do their electronic reporting, which is mandated for all ambulance services now. Josh stated that we don't know if when they are at the airport that there is not another crew in Sheldon. There is no right answer. Kellie Uzell added that HVFD is working with AmCare for them to use the fire station facility to come in and eat or use the restrooms, whatever they need. Jean would like them to park here and use the town's wifi and facilities as needed to keep them in the center of town, centrally located to all areas of Highgate. George Greenwood asked about an incident a month ago where two ambulances were on scene and no paramedic on duty. He added that he heard this through the "grapevine". Kellie said that every call has variables, including the nature of the call and seriousness of it. Walt clarified that they have 6 ambulances and typically 4 are on duty at one time. It is not uncommon to have more than one ambulance on a scene to help out if they are available. Jean would like to see another ambulance and crew added because AmCare is covering a very large area and several towns. The board thanked Walt for coming in this evening.

D. Town Treasurer – Shelley Laroche

- **Check warrants**

There were no questions on the check warrants.

- **Misc.**

The Finance Committee meeting for June was cancelled and they will meet next on July 10th @ 3pm to continue working on the accounting procedures manual and a few issues from the last audit. This past week we have had some grant monitoring audits. The AOT audit went very well. The FEMA audit was longer and they are asking for more information from us, but there should be no issues. Our year end is June 30th, so it is a busy time. The auditors will be here June 28th for a pre-audit meeting, and back at the end of August for the yearly audit. Josh asked about the stone budget. Shelley is waiting on a bill from Shelburne Limestone, but right now we are just about even. The public works department is stockpiling stone. Jean noted that Fortin Road is much better now. Josh stated that Swanton Lime will no longer be selling the driveway mix we put on our roads after this year. They will not even be supplying stone to Pike. Asphalt is going up and so will stone, so we need to figure out a different spot to get it from. Our new budget starts on July 1st.

E. Town Clerk – Wendi Dusablon

- **Approval of Minutes**

Motion by Josh LaRocque to approve the minutes from June 1, 2017, as written. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**.

- **Misc.**

As a follow up to the dog hearing on June 1st, we have a letter prepared to close the loop on this, which needs to be signed. Motion by Josh LaRocque to sign the letter addressed to Lucas and Rebecca Kane. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**. It was noted that Lucas may have found a home for one of the dogs, as he mentioned at the hearing.

F. Administrator Items – Heidi Britch-Valenta (*Heidi was not present*)

- **NRPC grant opportunity – letter of intent by July 5th**

This is a grant for \$9,200.00, with a town match of \$1,840.00 that can be cash or in-kind (total \$11,040.00). Josh checked with Heidi and this can be used for stone or culverts. Josh would like to choose back roads that need work and stock pile the materials until the projects can be done. All work needs to be completed by Oct. 31st. Motion by Josh to apply for this grant to get stone and culverts for any dirt road or ditch that needs it. This is for any hydrologically connected road that has been identified by the Department of Environmental Conservation already. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**. It was noted that Highgate has 25.55 miles of hydrologically connected road miles, per 2017 DEC data.

- **Grant update**

Sharon read through a list of grants and status updates.
 AOT Capital Funds Program; AOT Transportation Alternatives; AOT Structures Grant 2016; AOT Structures Grant 2017; AOT Class II Road Grant; AOT Park & Ride Grant; Better Back Roads Grant; NRPC Grant in Aid; FEMA Hazard Mitigation Funds; VCDGB – ADA Planning Grant; BGS Rec. Grant; VCDP Municipal Planning Grant; USDA Rural Development Critical Facilities Grant; VCDP ADA Modifications Grant; PACIF Safety Equipment Grant; Rise VT.

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There was discussion on some of these, mainly the Machia Road Bridge grant which is the largest at \$4,923,404.00 and our match being \$259,126.50 (total project amount \$5,182,530.00). Our town portion for this has already been set aside. The bridge has been reopened. The town spent \$8,000.00 to reopen it and hopefully keep it open until the new bridge is in place. Josh stressed – NO TRAFFIC OVER THE 5 TON (10,000 POUND) WEIGHT LIMIT! Keith said that today at 2pm he saw two fertilizer trucks cross the bridge. Josh said if he sees it, we will close the bridge again. He will not hesitate to close it if necessary. Jean would like the town to set up a trail camera. George Greenwood asked about the sidewalks and feels it's a waste of money. Our share of that project was put aside back in 2013 and it is happening. Jean asked about the timeline for work at the town office for the roof and mold remediation. There were also questions about the fire department floor. The original bids came in too high, so we are now looking at it as two separate projects, excavation work and concrete work. Josh spoke to Tim Hardy yesterday and he suggests we hire a local contractor and have them come in to demo, put fill back in and tamp it. Our own PWD could help with this portion then hire a concrete contractor. We could cut 3-4' past the drain and have the concrete contractor form a concrete drain and reuse the grates on the top. Woody Rouse asked if the concrete contractor would guarantee the work if our crew is doing the prep work. If done to specs, they should.

G. Selectboard Items

- **B-25 inspection report response for signature**
 We have to respond to the letter from the State that was received regarding the Machia Road bridge. We are telling them that we have repaired and reopened the bridge and given a timely response. The PWD cleaned the bridge and filled the holes, which was also a requirement. The letter states that the Town of Highgate has done it's due diligence. George asked what repairs had been done. Josh recapped the work completed by St. Onge for a total of \$8,000.00, which came from the public works department diesel line

item budget, not from the bridge reserve fund. Motion by Josh LaRocque to sign the B-25 inspection report. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**. Rich Wilkens thanked the board for not touching the reserve fund, which is set aside for our match for replacement, not repairs.

- **FEMA maps – local flood area input requested**

We are tasked with looking at these maps and making recommendations. Our PWD has highlighted some areas (Jones Road, Parent Road, part of Rollo Road, part of St. Armand Road and part of Campagna Road) in addition to what was already noted on the maps.

- **Misc.**

The FEMA hazard mitigation grant letter needs to be signed. This is based on GeoDesign, who we have worked with previously, so we don't have to put it out to bid. The town has a match of 25%. FEMA will decide if they will fund phase two at the same percentage. Motion by Steve LaFar to sign the letter. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**. We are looking for one more NorthWest Regional Planning rep from Highgate. There are monthly meetings, and any interested persons can see Wendi or Heidi. Keith would like FCSO to patrol St. Armand Road more. With the new pavement and the bump lowered near the old rail crossing, the speeding has increased. Josh will call FCSO tomorrow about this. We are receiving great comments about the fence being removed at the Machia property. Woody asked about the committee formed for that project and plans going forward. Taking the fence down was the first step, so people could see the property and the potential it has. Woody would like to be on the committee as a member of the DRB. Bruce feels this is a matter for the Planning Commission to take on to get public input. Jean asked for an update on the sale of the properties that were approved at town meeting and also for an update on the Jedware property. There are no updates on the sale of the town parcels yet and the Jedware property is in a holding state, caught up in bankruptcy court in the State of Florida. We do not currently own the Jedware property, and that is all Sharon can tell us at this point.

H. Upcoming Events

June 20	6pm	Planning Commission Mtg.
July 3 & 4		Town Offices are CLOSED
July 6	7pm	Selectboard Mtg.
July 13	6pm	DRB Mtg.

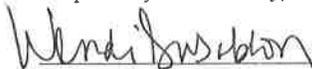
I. Executive Session

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to enter into executive session with the town treasurer and chair of the DRB @ 8:12pm to discuss personnel, legal and contracts, where premature general public knowledge would place the town or the individuals involved at a substantial disadvantage. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**. Motion by Sharon Bousquet to exit executive session @ 10:13pm. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**. Motion by Bruce Butler to accept the Frontage Road Land, LLC draft deed for the land donation, contingent upon a clean title search. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**.

J. Adjournment

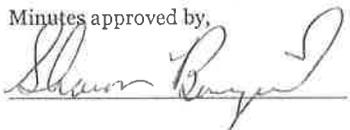
Motion by Josh LaRocque to adjourn the meeting @ 10:15pm. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**.

Respectfully submitted by,



Wendi Dusablon, Highgate Town Clerk

Minutes approved by,



Sharon Bousquet - Chair, Highgate Selectboard

