

TOWN OF HIGHGATE

Selectboard Meeting

Thursday, December 6, 2018 @ 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 @ 7:00pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

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

Public / Other – Woody Rouse; Alice S. Cota; Evangeline LaRocque; Tom Conley; Clarence Miller; Richard Trombley; Kent Henderson; Roger Langevin; Ken Thompson; Michelle Monroe; Luc Dupuis; Ty Choiniere; Ryan Maskell

B. Public Comment(s)

- Steve LaFar provided an update on the Village Core Master Plan (Machia property). Everything is moving along nicely, and the café structure will likely be coming down in February or March of 2019. The committee has been working with BUILD (consulting firm) and concepts will be shared with the public on January 17th.

C. Friends of Northern Lake Champlain – Kent Henderson

1. Annual Allocation Request

Kent Henderson was present for this discussion and to provide information on what FNLC does in and around our community. He is looking for support with their allocation request in our upcoming budget cycle. A letter was sent to the town asking for the maximum amount without having to file a petition. He gave some history on FNLC and how their roots are in Highgate Springs when they were known as Friends of Missisquoi Bay. Shelley acknowledged receipt of the letter and allocation request which will be discussed as part of the board's budgeting process starting soon.

2. Village Storm Water Master Plan

Kent has worked with our Town Administrator, Heidi, and our Public Works Department to identify projects that need attention. Kent will be visiting four farms in Highgate tomorrow. He specifically identified the following areas in our town 1) Mill Hill Road 2) the junction of St. Armand and Ballard Road 3) the area of Route 7 along the interstate and 4) Monument Road along the river. The project along Mill Hill Road involves redirecting storm water that is channeling down from approximately 33 acres in our village area. The situation continues to get worse. Six years ago a storm water management plan was written up and Mill Hill was a priority at that time. A design was prepared and support was shown by the town to repair the issues. The final plan was put before the town 5 years ago and the Selectboard turned it down. A new grant opportunity for the project will require a 20% match from the town. Kent commended Heidi for the work she does for our town. Sharon

had questions about the State of VT and their part in the solution, with Route 78 being a state road. This is one of the things Kent is working on. Sharon does not want to take responsibility away from the state and put it on Highgate taxpayers. Sharon also asked Kent to give examples and more information on storm water. He referred to St. Armand Road where the water is sheeting across the road. A solution would be to redirect the water into rock lined ditches to slow it down and catch the sediment. The area in our village on Route 78 could involve a rain garden. This would involve digging down a few feet, depending on the water table and type of soil, and installing stone or geo mix along with attractive plants that can tolerate the winter salt on the roads. This would be just one component of the Mill Hill Road solution. There is more impervious surface than before because of the sidewalk project. The Mill Hill Road study is not done, but Kent will keep in touch as it moves forward. The town has another project coming up in 2019 on Mill Hill Road that involves the actual road. This will be adding sediment to the water due to that construction. The area by the Historical Society could benefit from something such as a vegetated swale, which is an indentation in the ground. Adjusting the height to which the grass is mowed would also be beneficial there. Kent would like confirmation of support before he goes back to ANR and begins the application for Mill Hill Road. They are very conscious of the decision our board made five years ago. Money was put into it and at the last minute the board dismissed the recommendations. Kent was forewarned by the basin planner that he needs to come in with support from the Selectboard. Sharon asked if there are ways that private citizens can help to do their part with water quality. Yes, and farmers have been doing their best to do their part also. Tonight, Kent is looking for a commitment from this board for the match. His application will be going in next week and he would like a general support commitment tonight. Motion by Randy Connelly to generally support the concept and provide a letter of general support and further Selectboard support once more information is made available. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**. Sharon thanked Kent for the work FNLC does. She is 100% behind the appropriation request and the project also has her support, but she would like more information as well. Kent will present more concrete information when it is available.

D. Planning Commission Update

1. RiseVT Recognition

Rick Trombley from the DRB was present. He attended the RiseVT banquet “Rising Tide Awards” during a snowstorm on November 16th. The Town of Highgate was recognized and presented with the ***GREATEST RIPPLE EFFECT AWARD***. The plaque reads: “*in recognition of the ripples you have created to transform an entire community through your tireless commitment to improve wellness.*” This award is presented to communities that are making the greatest ripples by trying innovative and inspiring actions in their communities to foster a healthy environment that leads to greater change in health outcomes. Rick presented the Selectboard with the plaque from RiseVT.

2. Board Appointment

Ken Thompson has volunteered to serve on the Planning Commission. The PC made a motion at their last meeting to bring this recommendation to the Selectboard. Ken was at the last PC meeting and is here tonight as well. Motion by Randy Connelly to appoint Ken Thompson as a member of the Highgate Planning Commission. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**.

3. Capital Budget – DRAFT

The PC met prior to Thanksgiving on the CIP and two Selectboard members were also present at that meeting. Decisions were made with input from department heads. Luc Dupuis went through the draft proposal with the Selectboard. Municipal Complex \$10,000.00; Parks & Recreation \$22,500.00; HVFD \$50,000.00; Public Works \$215,000.00; In & Around Town Capital Projects \$152,500.00 = Total Draft CIP of \$450,000.00. Sharon recapped the proposal, noting this is a significant jump from last year's CIP. It is likely this will get chopped at town meeting. Ty Choiniere understands the increase, and knows the town is playing catch up. He expressed concern about the new fire truck noting the current age of our engine being a late 80's model. There is criteria to meet with regard to HVFD vehicles and we also have two grant opportunities in the works right now. We do have funds set aside currently towards replacement, with another \$50,000.00 in the upcoming CIP, as well as possible grant funding, so we are getting close to replacement. Clarence Miller expressed concern for new firefighting equipment and vehicles with the airport expansion project. Motion by Steve LaFar to accept the draft CIP presented by the Planning Commission. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler. There was further conversation regarding the increase in the updated bid for the new truck, due to steel prices rising. Heidi would like to see a cushion in the CIP, so if we don't receive a grant we will be ready to purchase sooner than later. Shelley noted that the CIP is already heavy this year. She knows it will likely get chopped in March, so cautioned against raising it further. The revenue from Swanton Village was higher than anticipated this year so we do have a surplus there, which possibly could be used towards a fire truck without raising the CIP. Sharon agrees that adding more would not be wise. Steve LaFar **WITHDREW** his earlier motion and the issue was **TABLED**. This will be further discussed during budgeting.

4. Misc.

The PC meeting on December 18th is being cancelled. Instead there will be a pot luck gathering @ 6pm for all town employees, committees, boards, etc. Spouses and significant others are welcome to attend as well.

E. Town Treasurer Updates – Shelley Laroche

1. Check Warrants

There were no questions on the check warrants. The tax sale was cancelled for today. Taxes continue to come in steadily. Budgeting meetings were scheduled for Jan. 2 & Jan. 10, both at 6pm. Shelley will continue to meet with department heads and work on their upcoming budgets.

2. Grant Management Policy

During our FEMA audit with the Department of Public Safety, it was noted that we do not have a Grant Management Policy in place. A good base policy has been drafted and going forward there will be guidelines in place. Motion by Randy Connelly to accept and adopt the Grant Management Policy. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**. The policy was signed by those board members present.

F. Town Clerk Updates – Wendi Dusablon

1. Minutes

Motion by Bruce Butler to approve the minutes from November 15, 2018, as written. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.

2. Set Dog Licensing Fees for 2019

Wendi is proposing no change in fees for 2019.

<i>On or before April 1, 2019</i>	<i>spay/neutered</i>	<i>\$13.00 per dog</i>
	<i>not spay/not neutered</i>	<i>\$17.00 per dog</i>
<i>Beginning April 2, 2019</i>	<i>spay/neutered</i>	<i>\$22.00 per dog</i>
	<i>not spay/not neutered</i>	<i>\$26.00 per dog</i>

Motion by Randy Connelly to approve the fees as presented for 2019. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED.**

3. 2019 Meeting Schedule

Motion by Randy to approve the 2019 Selectboard Meeting Schedule, with one meeting in the months of July and December, all other months will have two scheduled meetings on the first and third Thursdays of the month, unless otherwise noted. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED.**

4. Misc. Information – Community & Holiday Events

- Dec. 7 & 8 Polar Express @ Library
- Dec. 16 10am-2pm Santa Day at Highgate Vol. Fire Department
- Dec. 14, 15, 16 A Christmas Carol (musical) @ MVU
- Dec. 14 4:30-6:30pm Highgate Methodist Church Ham Dinner
- Dec. 22 2:30-4pm Skate with Santa @ Highgate Sports Arena
- Dec. 30 5:00 & 6:30pm MVU Mens Alumni Hockey Games @ Arena
- MVU is also holding a coat and toy drive. Drop items off at MVU by Dec. 14th.
- Thank you to Kevin Loomis for the beautiful framed collage of photos showing the many stages of the Highgate Falls dam project. Kevin is Wendi’s neighbor and this was a very thoughtful gesture. He also made a collage for Reg at Swanton Village. Wendi will ask Kevin if he is willing to photograph the B25 replacement project for us also.

G. Administrator Items – Heidi Britch-Valenta

1. Grant / Project Updates

There is an update for the board in their packets to review.

2. USDA Rural Development Fire Truck Grant – for signature

Motion by Randy Connelly for Sharon Bousquet to sign this grant. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED.**

3. VCMP Update

This took place under public comment.

4. VCDP Planning Grant – Conditions of Award

This is a \$40,000.00 planning grant to research extending infrastructure to the Franklin County State Airport. A letter is in the packet outlining what needs to be done. Motion by Randy Connelly to sign this document. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.**

5. Gardening Workshop

This goes along the same lines as what Kent Henderson from FNLC was speaking about earlier. This workshop helps homeowners learn how to keep water on their own property. Hosted by NRPC, one was held at North Western Medical Center on December 5th, and the next one is Dec. 11th from 6-8pm at the Enosburgh Emergency Service Building. This is a free workshop.

H. Selectboard Items

1. VELCO Easement

We should have these documents soon, but they were not available for tonight’s meeting.

2. Selectboard Report

Sharon is working on this for the town report.

3. Misc.

- January will be a very busy month, with two budgeting sessions and two regular Selectboard meetings. There has been a request to cancel our regular meeting on December 20th. Motion by Randy Connelly to cancel the December 20, 2018 Selectboard meeting. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.
- Sue Cota brought us some delicious fudge tonight – thank you Sue!
- Sharon wished everyone a happy holiday season. Enjoy your time with family and friends and be safe!

I. Upcoming Events

Dec. 8 & 9		Polar Express @ HLCC
Dec. 13	6pm	DRB Mtg.
Dec. 16	10am – 2pm	Santa Day @ HVFD
Dec. 18	6pm	Planning Comm. Mtg. – CANCELLED
Dec. 20	7pm	Selectboard Mtg. - CANCELLED
Dec. 24, 25, 26		Town Offices are CLOSED
Dec. 31 & Jan. 1		Town Offices are CLOSED
Jan. 2 & 10	6pm	Selectboard Budget Sessions
Jan. 17		VCMP Presentation of Concept Plans @ Selectboard Mtg.

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to exit the regular meeting @ 8:22pm. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.

J. Executive Session

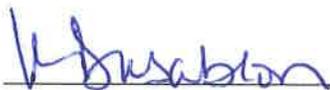
Motion by Sharon Bousquet to enter into executive session @ 8:23pm with Heidi Britch-Valenta, Shelley Laroche, Ty Choiniere, Ryan Maskell, Karen Gagne Fortin and Mark Gilbert to discuss personnel where premature general public knowledge would place the town and/or the individuals involved at a substantial disadvantage. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**.

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to exit executive session @ 9:44pm. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.

K. Adjournment

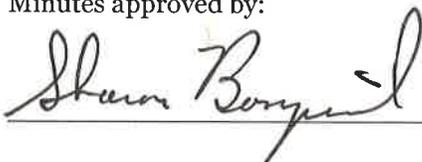
Motion by Bruce Butler to adjourn the meeting @ 9:45pm. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:



Wendi Dusablon – Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk

Minutes approved by:



Sharon Bousquet – Chair, Highgate Selectboard

