

TOWN OF HIGHGATE
Selectboard Meeting
Thursday, April 4, 2024 @ 6:00pm
Approved Minutes

NOTE: All actions taken are unanimous unless otherwise stated

5:45pm Executive Session – Vern Brosky III, Kyle Lothian, Merry Souza, Richard Flint met with a new prospective board member prior to the regular meeting.

ZOOM LINK: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86299727778>

A. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order by Vern Brosky III, Chair, at 6:00pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. **This meeting was a hybrid of in-person and Zoom video.** Participants were in-person unless otherwise noted.

Highgate Selectboard Members – Vern Brosky III, Chair; Merry Souza, Vice Chair; Kyle Lothian; Richard Flint; Ben Lowell

Highgate Office Staff – Wendi Dusablon, Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk; Sharon Bousquet, Town Administrator *absent- Shelley Laroche, Treasurer + DTC*

Public – Woody Rouse; Ryan Maskell; Clarence Miller; Mike Fontaine; James Wetherby; Pete Geraw; Amy Underwood; Ty Choiniere; Cindy Reid (via Zoom)

B. New Selectboard Member Appointment

Motion by Richard Flint to appoint *Ben Lowell* to fill the empty Selectboard seat until Town Meeting Day 2025. The motion was seconded by Merry Souza – **APPROVED**. Ben was sworn in to participate in this meeting. Welcome aboard Ben!

C. Public Comments

None

D. Vermont Community Development Grant Application

Cindy Reid from Cathedral Square participated via Zoom. Sharon explained that Cathedral Square and the Town of Highgate are asking permission to have a joint application to Vermont Community Development. The town would essentially be their sponsor. Cathedral Square would do the application and pay for the administration of it. Motion by Merry Souza to sponsor Cathedral Square as part of a joint application with Vermont Community Development. The motion was seconded by Kyle Lothian – **APPROVED**. A resolution was signed in support of this grant application. Cindy thanked the board and there were no further questions.

E. ATV Ordinance Public Hearing

This is a noticed public hearing to support the decision made at the last meeting. Sharon recapped the route that VASA had asked permission to use: Frontage Road to Carter Hill Road to Campagna Road to St. Armand Road to Parent Road to Tarte Road to Gore Road to Buck Road. VASA rules must be followed, visit www.vtvasa.org for more information. These roads will become effective with the 2024 riding season, which begins in May. Our ordinance will be signed and effective on June 5th. We will further be discussing opening all town roads on June 20th. Vern encourages folks to come to meetings and let us know how you feel about this topic. Woody would like the St. Armand Road to be opened up so riders can access gas stations and food. Gore Road had been opened up as part of the snowmobile trails, as a comparison. Jim Wetherby expressed concerns about noise and speed on Lamkin Street and VASA doing their part. Vern added to the discussion about state guidelines and decibel levels. Our Selectboard plans to hold

law enforcement accountable to help enforce it also. Our new contract with FCSO starts July 1st for 40 hours per week of coverage. The vast majority of ATV and side x side riders want to do the right thing and will police each other so that they do not lose the privilege to ride in our town. Wendi noted that several people here live on or just off from Lamkin Street, and while it is still a problem occasionally, the ATV issues have vastly improved from even just a few years ago. Mr. Wetherby agreed with that. Fines were discussed at the town level, as well as with law enforcement. Clarence Miller does not feel the potential fines are stiff enough.

F. Health Officer Updates

Merry Souza provided an update on activity in town with regard to her title as Health Officer. She reminded everyone that tenant inspections are now with the State and no longer under her jurisdiction. She has one location that was already in the process so she will do that final inspection. She has referred a few on to the State and can only refer rental situations. She has worked on several cases over the last few weeks, as far as property clean ups. Two are going well and the others have a long road and timelines have been put in place. There was discussion and questions on fines and also on programs that could possibly help some of these residents with clean up. Merry works closely with Shelby our ACO, and she does a great job for us.

G. Treasurer – Shelley Laroche

Shelley was not present but had prepared a check warrant ahead of time. Motion by Merry Souza to accept and sign the check warrants. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED**. Wendi reported that Shelley continues to work on the delinquent tax list and that a tax sale date has not yet been set but it is getting closer. It was noted that a few of the properties Merry is dealing with are on the tax sale list.

H. Town Clerk – Wendi Dusablon

- Motion by Merry Souza to approve the minutes from March 21, 2024, as written. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED**.
- The rabies vaccination clinic was held on March 23rd in a snowstorm, but we still had a very good turnout. 104 Highgate dogs were also licensed that day! Thank you to Sheryl Wilkins and her Paws for Thought crew – we miss them in town very much! Also thank you to Highgate Vol. Fire Department, Highgate Public Works, Sharon Bousquet, Richard Flint, Merry Souza, Shelby Barber, and to Libby and Allison, Wendi's daughter and daughter-in-law. Everyone chipped in for a job well done again this year!
- Dog licenses were due by April 1st and we had 628 done on time! Great job Highgate. Late notices will go out in the next week, prices are now \$22 or \$26 per dog and fines will start after May 1st, in addition to licensing fees. You can license by mail, at the office, use the drop box, or pay online. Proof of valid rabies vaccination is required. We still have about 250+ dogs left to license.
- The MVSD revote will be held on Tuesday, April 30th from 7am – 7pm and Highgate voters can vote at Highgate Sports Arena in the lobby. Anyone who voted absentee in March will automatically be mailed a ballot for the revote. The new budget amount is \$49,744,437.00 (compared to \$50,779,437.00 that was voted down in March).
- Motion by Richard Flint to sign the 2024 dog warrant. The motion was seconded by Merry Souza – **APPROVED**. This is state language, and we don't want to impound your dogs or destroy your dogs, we want you to vaccinate and license your dogs. This is the law in the State of VT.
- The town offices will be closed to the public on Monday, April 8th – Solar Eclipse Day! Staff will be working remotely.
- Household Hazardous Waste Day – April 27th from 8am – 2pm at the sand shed location on Transfer Station Rd.

I. Town Administrator – Sharon Bousquet

- Sharon shared a copy of the local emergency management plan with updates. She asked the board members to take it home and read it and get back to her with any further edits or updates.
- After months of waiting, we finally have a notice to proceed on the airport water and sewer project. That project went out to bid yesterday. In the next 30 days we will have a meeting and site visit and an open zoom link for opening of the bids. Engineers expect higher bids than anticipated and it will probably be September before the project actually starts.
- As an FYI – if we have a food vendor that operates on municipal property we need to send in a food event coordinator form to the VT Department of Health. This includes food trucks at our summer concerts, and the time frame is 30 days in advance. Sharon and Merry also explained that this applies to bake sales and our chicken BBQ at Memorial Day. Caterers do their own paperwork for contracted events. Sharon further explained that items brought to a bake sale need to have a home caterers license. There were further questions, confusion and comments on this – why does it have to be so complicated? Does this also include pancake breakfasts, church events, etc.? It applies to everyone and it was noted that farmers markets are different because that is agriculture.
- The Jedware property has had a final phase II report from the Brownfield program on the contamination on that lot. Fonda, the Sheldon Pulp Mill and Union Carbide all used that location as a chemical dumping ground and there were burn trenches. There is also an issue that half of the household garbage landfill is on someone else's land. There is a very large document that we have recorded in the land records with regard to this property. Sharon is meeting with NRPC and the Brownfield program as well as the neighbor to try and find out what is an appropriate action plan. Plans of action are suggested to be as high as \$32 million dollars. These are the reasons the town has not taken possession of the property. Sharon suggests that the board also meet with the parties involved. We have an interested buyer for the property who wants to make a deal. All these things should happen in executive session first, as a contractual discussion with the town. Wendi asked to clarify if this is the property with DECADES worth of back taxes? Yes – that is the property – Renewable Resources – and it is still on our grand list. Shelley had informed Sharon that the town has to pay the school portion of those taxes every year, even though the town has not recouped anything.
- Sharon had further bad news regarding the transfer station project. There was a pre-construction meeting, and all went well and the project was ready to start – BUT the town had applied for an extension back in October because we knew we would not make the deadline of April 1st. It is now April 4th and we have not received any documents for the deadline extension. We have no way to pay for this project until FEMA gets the paperwork signed and back to us. Wendi asked if FEMA has acknowledged receiving it – yes, they have. Sharon is in constant contact with VT Emergency Services. She also contacted Senator Sander's office. She was able to get the airport project moving by contacting Welch's office. She will go right to the top to get these projects moving. The problem is that the engineers and contractors are ready to go now. Last year we had the wetlands issue at the transfer station and the contractor is not going to keep waiting. They have people on their payroll to compensate and if we are not ok'd in the next week or so we will lose our place with the contractor. This has turned into a disaster. A simple date change and signature has taken nearly six months so far! This same contractor is going to look at the airport project as well to hopefully stay in town.
- Motion by Kyle Lothian to sign the VELCO document to use the right-of-way and compensate the town \$3,297.00 to cut down trees located on town property that threaten the transmission lines. The motion was seconded by Merry Souza – **APPROVED**.
- As part of the VCMP property and Cathedral Square project we have to do more Brownsfield testing. The parts per million of lead has changed at the state level and more testing is needed before a corrective action plan can be developed. Permission to access the property is required, each of the three lots has a spot for signing. The work is paid for by NRPC.

Motion by Merry Souza to sign the document for the three lots. The motion was seconded by Ben Lowell – **APPROVED**.

- Asbestos has been found in the library during work being done by an electrician. While in the basement the ceiling was opened up and some fell out. Sharon called Clay Point Associates and they came today to look at the situation. The asbestos is not in the ceiling, it is in the eaves of the attic and has fallen down through the walls. We were advised that the best option is to have somebody come in and clean up the basement and properly abate was disturbed and to leave the rest alone. If it remains undisturbed it is fine, but the disturbed area in the basement must be dealt with. Richard had questions about disclosing the information and any other places we need to report this to. Sharon stated that with any luck we will receive the grant to build a new library and now have to worry about it.

J. Selectboard

- Vern provided a PSA about eclipse glasses and to look for the code on them to see if they are legit for coverage. He also noted that your iPhone camera can be damaged, so put a filter on it or you can use the glasses on your camera also. Vern asked everyone to be patient as we expect to have visitors to our region. Be safe and enjoy the day on April 8th.
- Pete Geraw is here to discuss something in executive session, as well as members of the Recreation Commission.

Motion by Vern Brosky III to exit the regular meeting @ 6:55pm. The motion was seconded by Merry Souza – **APPROVED**.

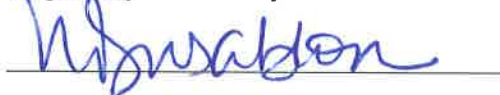
K. Executive Session

Motion by Merry Souza to enter into executive session @ 6:55pm with Sharon Bousquet, Pete Geraw, Amy Underwood, Ryan Maskell and Mike Fontaine to discuss contracts / legal / personnel, where premature general public knowledge would place the town and / or the individuals involved at a substantial disadvantage. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED**. Motion by Kyle Lothian to adjourn executive session @ 8:04pm. The motion was seconded by Merry Souza – **APPROVED**. Shout out to HVFD for a very busy week – they have done a great job! Motion by Kyle Lothian to have the Town Administrator act on behalf of the Selectboard with regard to the personnel matter discussed during executive session. The motion was seconded by Merry Souza – **APPROVED**.

L. Adjournment

Motion by Kyle Lothian to adjourn the Selectboard meeting @ 8:07pm. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED**.

Respectfully submitted by:



Wendi Dusablon
Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk

Minutes Approved by:



Vern Brosky III
Selectboard Chair

WARNING ANNUAL MEETING
MISSISQUOI VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

The legal voters of the Missisquoi Valley School District, consisting of the Towns of Franklin, Highgate, and Swanton, are hereby notified, and warned to meet to transact the following business by Australian ballot in their respective polling places hereinafter named for each of the above referenced towns on April 30, 2024 at the polling places and times hereinafter listed.

ARTICLE I Shall the voters of the Missisquoi Valley School District approve the School Directors to expend \$49,744,437 which is the amount the School Directors have determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year?

ARTICLE II Shall the voters of the Missisquoi Valley School District authorize the Board of Directors to borrow money to pay the current expenditures in anticipation of taxes pursuant to Title 16 V.S.A. 562(9)?

Said persons and voters warned are further notified that voter qualification, registration, absentee voting, and voter procedures shall be in accordance with Chapters 43 and 51 of Title 17 VSA.

The legal voters of the School District are further notified that an Informational Meeting will be held in person at Missisquoi Valley Union High School Library and electronically via Zoom on April 29, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. for the purpose of explaining the budget items to the voters. The link to access this virtual meeting will be posted on the MVSD Website, mvsdschools.org and MVSD social media prior to the meeting.

POLLING PLACES AND TIMES

- FRANKLIN- Franklin Town Hall, 5336 Main Street, Franklin; from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- HIGHGATE- Highgate Sports Arena, 243 Gore Rd, Highgate Center, from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- SWANTON-Swanton Village Municipal Complex, First & Elm Streets, Swanton; from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Dated this 28th day of March

Board of Directors

<u>Jero Chretien</u>	<u>Mark Malby</u>
<u>Paul Dejeu</u>	<u>Stephanie Page</u>
<u>Donald E. Collins</u>	<u>Charlote Bouchard</u>
<u>Joanna Joubert</u>	
<u>Ernest Rute</u>	

Received and Recorded this 3/29/2024

DocuSigned by:
District Clerk Nora Gilbert
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MVSD REVOTE
4-30-24

MVSD REVOTE
TUESDAY, APRIL 30, 2024
7AM - 7PM @ HIGHGATE ARENA

Monday, April 8, 2024



**THE HIGHGATE
TOWN OFFICES
WILL BE CLOSED TO
THE PUBLIC**

**ENJOY THE SOLAR ECLIPSE
AND PLEASE BE SAFE**



Options For Managing Food Waste



Reduce waste. Save money & minimize the scraps you have to manage by using tips from scrapfoodwaste.org.



Feed animals. Chickens love food scraps! Pigs can eat scraps too, with restrictions. Visit our website for details.



Home composting. Simple & inexpensive. Pick up an at-home composting guide from our Georgia facility.



Drop off. All NWSWD drop-off sites accept food scraps. They can also be dropped off at Hudak Farm and St. Albans Co-op Store.



Curbside pickup. Ask your hauler if they collect food scraps. NWSWD also offers a food scrap collection service for St. Albans City residents. Read more about our Close-The-Loop Compost Pickup program!



Remember to keep PLU stickers and compostable products out of the compost bin!

NWSWD's **Close-The-Loop Compost Pickup Program** currently operates a food scrap pick-up route for over 400 residential customers and 80 commercial customers, such as schools, restaurants, healthcare facilities, and grocery stores. This service diverts over 12,000 pounds of food waste each week from the landfill! Call (802) 524-5986 or email info@nswd.org to sign up today!



Household Hazardous Waste Disposal

We collect Household Hazardous Waste from District member community residents by **appointment only** at our Georgia Recycling Center year-round. Visit nswd.org to schedule your appointment! Check our website for a full list of what materials are accepted and what materials are not.

2024 Household Hazardous Waste Saturday Mobile Collections Schedule

Town	Location	Date	Hours
Highgate	Salt Storage Shed	April 27, 2024	8AM-2PM
Grand Isle	Transfer Station	May 11, 2024	8AM-2PM
Swanton	Town Garage	May 18, 2024	8AM-2PM
Montgomery	Town Garage	August 3, 2024	8AM-2PM
St. Albans	Town Garage	August 10, 2024	8AM-2PM
North Hero	Transfer Station	August 17, 2024	8AM-2PM

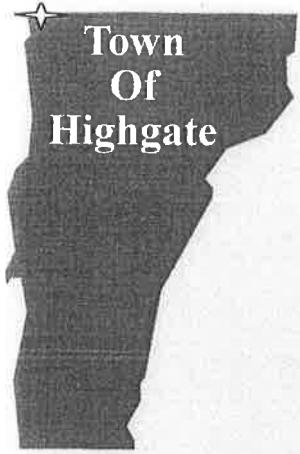
How To Reduce Your Household Hazardous Waste

Buy only what you need instead of buying in bulk. When possible, use a multi-purpose product that can be used for several tasks.

Share products with neighbors or other community members rather than store them.

Choose the least toxic products available. Avoid products labeled "WARNING", "DANGER", or "POISON".

Try a DIY recipe for common household products such as cleaners, detergents, bug sprays, and more!



Town
Of
Highgate

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Shelley Laroche
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Spencer Potter
ASSESSOR
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802-496-9689

Nick / Luke / Cody
Public Works Dept.
publicworks@highgatevt.org
Ext. 207

Richard Flint
Vern Brosky III
Merry Souza
Kyle Lothian
Highgate Selectboard

WARRANT

State of Vermont;
Franklin County, ss.

To: *Shelby Barber, Animal Control Officer of the Town of Highgate*

By the authority of the state of Vermont, you are hereby commanded forthwith to impound and destroy in a humane way or cause to be destroyed in a humane way all dogs and wolf-hybrids not duly licensed according to law, except as exempted by section 3587 of 20 V.S.A.; and you are further required to make and return complaint against the owner or keeper of any such dog or wolf-hybrid.

Hereof fail not, and due return make of this warrant, with your doings thereon, within 90 days from the date hereof, stating the number of dogs or wolf-hybrids destroyed and the names of the owners or keepers thereof, and whether all unlicensed dogs or wolf hybrids in such town (or city) have been destroyed, and the names of persons against whom complaints have been made under the provisions of subchapters, 1,2, and 4 of chapter 193 of 20 V.S.A., and whether complaints have been made and returned against all persons who have failed to comply with the provisions of such subchapter.

Given under our (my) hands at Highgate aforesaid, this **4th day of April, 2024.**


Highgate Selectboard



Vern Brosky III




Merry Souza



Richard Flint



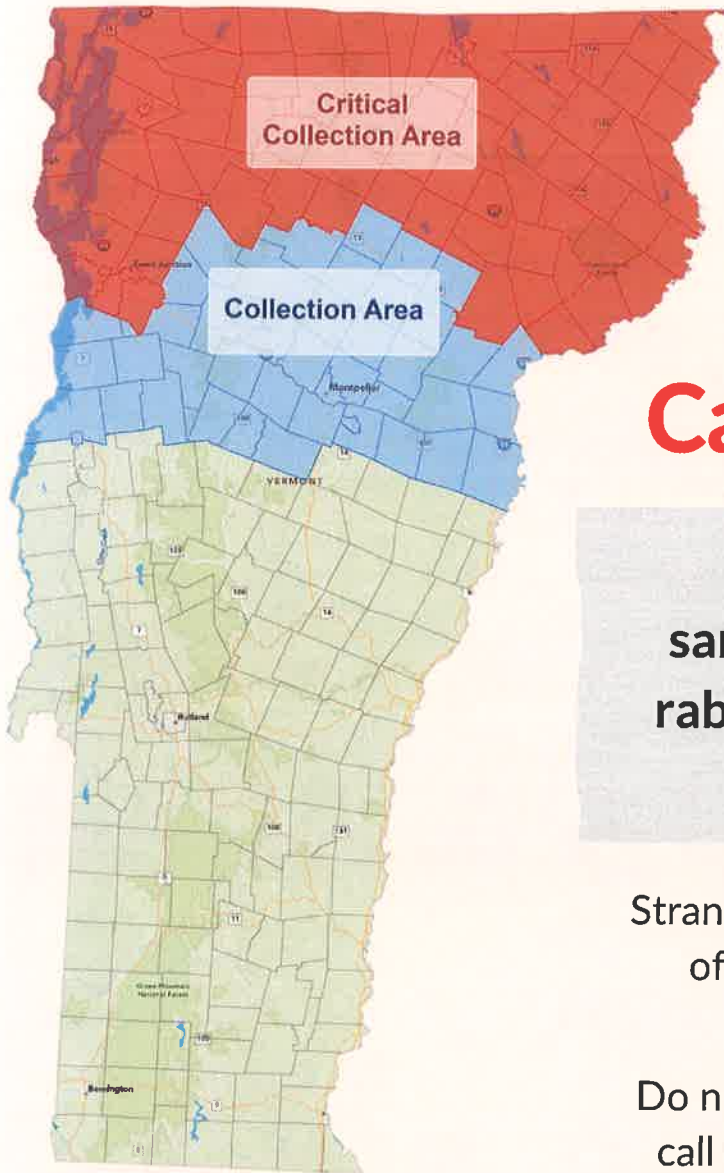
Kyle Lothian



Benjamin Lowell

RABIES ALERT!

YOU are critical to the success of rabies surveillance
in Vermont!



If you see raccoons, skunks,
foxes, coyotes, or bobcats:

- ▶ Acting strange
- ▶ Found dead

Call (802) 223-8697

**Wildlife Services is collecting
samples to directly monitor wildlife
rabies in Vermont. You are critical to
the success of this project!**

Strange acting includes aggression, loss of fear
of humans, excessive salivating, circling,
lethargy, or paralysis.

Do not touch wild animals, alive or dead. Please
call the Vermont Rabies Hotline to report the
location and species. Samples will only be taken
within the collection areas.



United States Department of Agriculture

