

TOWN OF HIGHGATE

Selectboard Mtg.

July 7, 2016 @ 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 Chair Chris Yates @ 7:07pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Highgate Selectboard Members – Chris Yates, Chair; Paulette Tatro, Vice-Chair; Randy Connelly; Josh LaRocque; Sharon Bousquet

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

Public / Other – Daniel Nadeau; Joshua Aldrich; Andy King; Brian Rowell; Jim Cota – AOT; Evangeline LaRocque; Sarah Chevalier; Eric Chevalier; Richard Wilkens; Carlton LaFrance; Karen St. Lawrence; Della St. Lawrence; Judy Laroche; Debbie Roberts; Jean Chevalier; Lori Choiniere; Lori Olds; Sue Cota; George Greenwood; Mary Roy; Matthew Roy; Melissa Patnode; John Patnode; Steve Beyor; Penny LeClair; Nancy Oliver; Dean Fackler; Will Ruprecht – FCSO; Jerod Adams – FCSO; Betsy Fournier; Sandra Stone; Kevin Latuch; Eric Bessette; Jim Maskell; Skyler Messier; Chris Uzell; Martha Zweeres Derosia; Harold Derosia; Bethany Remmers – NRPC; Richard Noel; Henry Rainville; Nick Meltzer – AOT; Don Gilbert; Kellie Uzell; Robin Trushaw; David Desorcie; Nancy Rowell

B. Public Comment

Sue Cota wanted information on an ambulance call on the Durkee Road this past weekend. Chris Yates answered that we have not talked about emergency calls in public prior to now and he has no firsthand knowledge of a call on Durkee Road. It was clarified the call was on the Dunton Road. Sue then presented 136 forms to the board and wanted verification they had been received. She read from the forms aloud; *To: Town of Highgate E911 Coordinator From: Missisquoi Valley Rescue Inc. Missisquoi Valley Rescue, Inc. has agreed to provide emergency medical services to (blank) who resides at (blank) in the Town of Highgate. We have agreed to provide that coverage 24 hours per day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. We are licensed by the State of Vermont to provide Emergency Medical Services. We have agreed to provide Emergency Medical Services. If you should have any questions please call us at (802) 868-2352. Thank you, Joshua W. Ramsdell, Office Manager / Vice President, Missisquoi Valley Rescue, Inc.* Skyler Messier wants the AmCare contract torn up and tossed out, stating that Mr. Krul promised better response times and better care because they are in breach of contract. She stated that there will be a lawsuit coming down the pike that is larger than the 3-year contract amount and we can't afford it. She then referred to a call on Christina Drive the day prior and why mutual aid was not accessed. Mary Roy questioned why the board will not talk about specific calls in public, but they hand out sheets with response times and addresses on them. Janice thinks that is a violation of HIPPA. Mary's address was listed on that call sheet when her son broke his arm. Heidi attempted to clarify that she was the one who handed out that data, not the board, and it was given to her by central dispatch and is public record. Mary also added that Heidi is not a Highgate resident and she should just "sit there and be quiet." Daniel Nadeau wonders why Heidi is allowed to be involved when she is not a member of this board. Will Ruprecht from FCSO tried to calm the situation down. George Greenwood was rude to the officers with comments including "sit down and relax". Janice Smith asked if response times with AmCare are being monitored at all – no, the board will treat them the same way they treated MVR and will pull data quarterly and look at averages. If issues arise with the contracted party they will address them with the contracted party. Daniel Nadeau asked if they would void the contract with AmCare if, after the quarterly review. Jean Chevalier asked how many law suits the town is expecting due to lack of response time. Chris Yates ended the public comment period and tried to move on to our next presentation with Mr. Jim Cota from AOT. Eric Bessette threatened Chris Yates, stating he will come after him if anything happens to his family. Chris clearly stated that he does not take threats very well and we do not need behavior like that in this community. Janice Smith asked to add one

more thing, stating that she was on duty on Saturday July 2nd for MVR when AmCare was toned to the accident in Highgate Springs. She had concerns about the time frame involved and why MVR was not toned as the second unit.

C. AOT – Jim Cota – Class I Roads

Jim Cota and Nick Meltzer were here from AOT. Jim began with some background information and why we are here this evening. Heidi, as a representative of the town and the board, has reached out to him and dug out a lot of old studies of the Route 78 corridor in the village. Daniel Nadeau interrupted, making comments about Heidi being a non-Highgate resident. Mr. Nadeau was asked to stop being disruptive or he would be asked to leave. Jim Cota is the District Project Manager for District 8 out of St. Albans, and is a resident of Montgomery. There has been some discussion recently about the town taking over a portion of VT Route 78 as a Class I road. The town of Danville was given as a good example as well as the local towns of Enosburgh, Swanton, Richford, Morrisville and St. Albans City that have taken over a portion of a state highway. This gives the town / city more local control over what they are able to do, but is still a shared responsibility. The state would still pave every 15 or so years. This is optional for the town, we certainly don't have to do this. If you ask any of the towns that have gone through the process, most would say they would do it over again. Jim Cota went through the presentation on the overhead screen that went along with the handout provided. The town would be reimbursed based on the miles of road that we would take over, currently the reimbursement for Class I is \$11,200.00 per mile. If we want more control in our designated downtown and village center this would have to go through the legislature. Jim made mention of storm water issues and other issues that would be coming down the pike from the state. He also suggests taking over enough of the road to account for future expansion. Chris asked about use of pure salt vs. sand on these Class I roads and what other towns are doing. Bethany from NRPC noted that VTrans is working on a toolkit for towns to use to calculate if acquiring a Class I road is a cost benefit to them. Sharon asked if towns taking over Class I roads is a benefit to VTrans. Jim said as soon as you put in concrete islands it matters to them. He is here as a technical resource and it's hard to give technical facts when there is so much passion on an issue. Nancy Rowell had questions about the liability of the town taking over the road, and Jim was not sure but reiterated the shared responsibility. David Desorcie had questions about drainage and who was responsible for that. Richard Wilkens asked about time frames and time limits – there are none. Brian Rowell asked about town populations and if that plays any role. The legislature would speak up if they felt it did not make sense for a town to do this. If the town would need to build a new building or buy an extra truck just to take over a Class I road, it's probably not a good idea. Jim added that knowing what he thinks Highgate wants to do, we won't spend the amount that the state would give us. Some of the things Highgate could explore would be on street parking, diagonal parking, crosswalks, lights and more. Richard Noel had questions about rights of way and whether VT Route 78 is a four rod or three rod road. It was clarified to be a three rod road. Heidi touched back to the genesis of this topic. The board does not have an opinion on this topic and she has multiple projects to manage and is not personally vested in any of them. There were multiple studies done in the past and we can benefit from all of them. We received grant funds and in 2017 will have our first segment of sidewalk from St. Louis Church on Lamkin Street down to the municipal building. Heidi is now hearing a need for a crosswalk to safely get across Route 78. We can't have a crosswalk because we have no pedestrian facilities. Another study done spoke unanimously to the need for traffic calming islands on either end of the village to slow traffic. We can't do this without taking over that portion of road. One project essentially feeds into the next. We are on the cusp of change but we don't have to do anything if we don't want to – but we can if we want to. Betsy Fournier was also present from RISE VT and has been instrumental thus far helping to make Highgate more pedestrian and bicycle friendly and accessible. These are not Heidi's goals. She does not have children in our schools or elderly parents in our village. Nancy asked about grants we have received and if they were planning or implementation grants. Heidi gave some more history back to studies in 2000 and 2007. Lamkin Street is a high growth area and connected to the library and church. That area is likely to see the most residential growth based on open tracts of land. Richard Noel asked about speed feedback signs and the costs associated with them. Chris has data on this, for a single sign it's about \$4,500.00. Brian asked about maintenance of the sidewalks and if the town would be shorted if the state is low on funds for Class I

reimbursements. Jim has never seen that happen, and recommends talking to other Class I road towns. Whatever Highgate decides, Jim wants to be a good technical resource. Communication is key, and the state and town will always help each other out in a bind. Dean Fackler commented on his early morning commutes and how the state does a great job on Route 78 and he hopes the town would do the same that early in the morning. Jim did put out a disclaimer that there are a lot of really good people doing a good job in State and Town government, but he does not have all the answers with regard to Class I roads. Henry Rainville asked how this could / would impact the future if Highgate needed to add infrastructure like water and sewer. Randy asked if the process was completed and the town decided it was the wrong choice, is there any recourse? Jim believes that this would be a permanent thing, but any big issues could be addressed with our local representatives.

D. Franklin County Sheriff's Office Update – Will Ruprecht & Jerod Adams

Will and Jerod were here to report quarterly stats for the Town of Highgate. They also noted that a speed cart is available for the town to use as needed, just give them a call. As a whole for the 3rd and 4th quarters of 2015 and 1st quarter of 2016 (July 1, 2015 – March 30, 2016) the FCSO responded to a total of 745 calls for service including (in no particular order) motor vehicle complaints, DLS, burglaries, assaults, DUIs and domestic disturbances. During this time frame there were also 262 traffic stops. For the 2nd quarter of 2016 (April 1, 2016 – June 30, 2016) the FCSO responded to a total of 232 calls for service including (in no particular order) DUIs, ATV incidents, and included in this total for the 2nd quarter were 92 traffic stops. There was conversation about excessive speed in various areas of town, including Hanna Road, St. Armand Road and Gore Road. Our contract is shared with Sheldon. Highgate is a busy and growing town. Richard Wilkens asked about the number of FCSO officers and full time vs. part time and also if coverage areas could be dictated when and where. If the Selectboard requests enforcement for a known problem in a specific area they will adjust their shift schedules accordingly, except for Friday and Saturday nights when there is so much more going on. Kellie Uzell asked about Border Patrol and if they are utilized. Heidi had questions about no shooting zones within 500' of a school. Will Ruprecht reiterated that if they don't get a phone call they can't do anything about it. FCSO does some flexing with their schedule to offset property crime in the summer months, which seems effective. Chris asked about putting some numbers together to add four more hours per day three days per week to our coverage. Sheriff Norris mentioned he could put a proposal together for us and those numbers would be good to see. Henry Rainville asked some questions about ATVs and Sharon thanked them for their service.

E. Town Treasurer Updates – Shelley Laroche

1. Check warrants

There were questions on the NWSWD annual payment, the payment to the City of St. Albans and the stump removal on Shipyard Road. There were also questions on the turf rental at the arena and the cemetery fund.

2. Misc.

- Financial Management Questionnaire – this was filled out by Shelley and the board has to sign off on it. It is for the auditors regarding accounting procedures that we follow. Motion by Chris Yates to sign the Financial Management Questionnaire for FY2015-2016. The motion was seconded by Sharon Bousquet – **APPROVED**.
- Quotes on public announcement system – Randy has obtained quotes from Advanced Music and Contois School of Music, both are local. Contois offers training associated with the system, but Randy feels that any of these systems would work for us. Josh has experience with the Shure brand of microphone, Randy agrees they are a very good product. Jean Chevalier asked if online options such as Musicians Friend had been considered. Randy reached out to the Guitar Center, and did not get a response. Shelley confirmed there are funds left in the Memorial Day and Town Meeting Day budgets. Sue Cota suggested a local, Mike Raymond, could help too. Five wired and two wireless microphones will work for us as long as the mixing board is large enough for additions. We have a total of four quotes \$2,286.00, \$2442.00 and \$2320.00 from Advanced Music and \$2,227.00 from Contois. Motion by Chris Yates to approve the purchase of a public announcement (PA) system from Contois School of Music in the

amount of \$2,227.63. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED.**

- External Audit – Shelley is adjusting the general fund budget for FY2016-2017 that was approved by the voters for tax payer dollars raised and needs a motion by the board to lower it. Motion by Chris Yates to adjust the FY2016-2017 general fund budget amount from \$412,639.00 down to \$385,076.00, a difference of \$27,563.00. The motion was seconded by Sharon Bousquet – **APPROVED.** The lower amount is a result of the ambulatory line item, fish and wildlife line item, Franklin County assessment for taxes and the adjusted arena contract.

F. Public Works Department Director Updates – Andy King

1. Arena VT Gas hookup bid

VT Gas had recommended reaching out to KC Mechanical. We received a quote of \$6,192.45 from KC and Andy received another quote from Chuck's Heating and Ventilating for \$4,790.00. There are few companies that do work on commercial kitchens. KC has since wanted to charge us for giving the quote, which we aren't going to pay for. VT Gas was unaware that KC would attempt to charge us for giving a quote. Andy feels given the amount of the quotes and the limited number of people to do the work that an RFP should be issued. Josh will see what he can find out from VHV. We will need to budget for this, so this item is tabled until budgeting.

2. Arena hood fire alarm connect bid

Motion by Josh LaRocque to accept the bid from Tyco Fire & Security for \$550.00. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly. There was discussion on which fiscal year the funds were coming from there were comments from Don Gilbert and Josh regarding oversite on the part of Simplex Grinnell. Heidi elaborated some on the disjointed relationship the town has with Simplex Grinnell and that she and Shelley are figuring it out. There are two different companies in the mix with regard to the fire alarms and security systems at the arena. Judy Laroche was present and she and her husband will be operating the snack bar at the arena. As long as it is all tied in together by October 1st for them to open, she is fine with it being tabled for now. Don will reach out to Eric Rainville and Josh withdrew his earlier motion.

3. Paving bids

Motion by Chris Yates to accept the bid from ECI in the amount of \$23,700.00 for paving the areas at the arena, municipal building and Tanglewood Drive entrance. The funds will be coming from the FY2016-2017 budget. The motion was seconded by Paulette Tatro – **APPROVED.** Josh had some questions about the water line at the arena. Andy noted we need to bury the bollards as well.

4. Fire Department floor bids

Six firms attended the mandatory site visit, but only one bid was received from Gosselin Construction and Excavation. The bid is to replace the entire floor, and that was the recommendation from all those at the site visit. The quote from Gosselin is \$52,958.00 + \$6,200.00 for soil boring tests = \$59,158.00. This issue is tabled until funding has been secured.

5. Tree removal bids

No action required this evening.

6. Misc.

- Paulette asked Andy about street lighting with VT Electric Co-Op that had been discussed earlier. Andy said there is more discussion to be had.
- The loader is complete and we have it back. TDI did a phenomenal job on the repainting and it looks brand new.
- Grader blades have been received and installed.
- Josh asked Andy to get some pricing to seal the arena parking lot.
- The RFPs for road sand bids and 2016 paving work (St. Armand Road 2.41 miles, School Street .1 miles, Rollo Road .43 miles, Hanna Road 1.16 miles and Frontage Road .6 miles) are due July 21st.
- BBR grants will be fully funded and looks like we will be awarded the structures and paving grants as well. These grants will help to fund the Shipyard Rd. drainage project, Tarte Road culvert failures, Durkee Road culvert failure, and paving projects listed above.
- The RFP for drainage restructuring and upgrade on Shipyard Road as well as the RFP's for the culvert upgrades on Tarte Road (2) and Durkee Road (1) are due on August 4th, with mandatory site visits on July 18th @ 9am.

G. Town Clerk Updates – Wendi Dusablon

1. **Minutes from June 16th**

Motion by Chris Yates to approve the minutes from June 16, 2016, as amended. The motion was seconded by Sharon Bousquet – **APPROVED**.

2. **Map storage in the vault – bid from Kofile**

We are almost at capacity for storing mylars in the vault. There is the option to start over with #1 and hang multiple sleeves on one hanger, but that is like stuffing too many clothes in a closet. We have the space in the vault, and Wendi has plenty of funds in her preservation account that is raised from recording fees. Total cost of the cabinet \$1,768.00, hangars (200 double sided) \$1,638.00, clear envelopes (200) \$1,300.00, divider paper (200) \$200.00, and approximate shipping \$350.00 = \$5,256.00. Motion by Chris Yates to purchase the mylar cabinet and all supplies from Kofile to house 400 recorded mylars at a total of \$5,256.00 with the funds to come from the preservation account. The motion was seconded by Sharon Bousquet – **APPROVED**. It was noted by Paulette that this is a unique purchase with a company that sells unique products, so per the purchasing policy it is not necessary to get more competitive bids. This is a good example of that.

3. **1st Class Liquor License Application – Joey’s Junction Bakery & Cafe’**

Motion by Chris Yates to recess the regular Selectboard meeting and enter into the liquor control board @ 8:35pm. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**. Motion by Chris Yates to sign the first class liquor license application for Joey’s Junction Bakery & Cafe’. The motion was seconded by Paulette Tatro – **APPROVED**. Motion by Chris Yates to reenter the regular Selectboard meeting @ 8:37pm. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**.

4. **Parks & Rec. Forms**

Ty asked if all previous registration forms for Parks & Rec. need to be archived or can they be discarded. He will check with Linda at Swanton Recreation and it’s also an option to scan them and just keep an electronic copy.

H. Town Administrator Items – Heidi Britch-Valenta

1. **FEMA Pre-Award Expenses**

Heidi provided some back story to this. The town applied to FEMA in 2014 for \$180,000.00 grant for haz mat funds to stabilize the transfer station parcel. There have been two site visits and they are now asking for further engineering. We paid Geo Design \$2,000.00 to firm up what we had submitted for a concept, FEMA now wants further information, some information we already have, some we need more information on and some we cannot answer without paying a consultant more money. Geo Design has provided pricing for soil borings, and it adds up. Based on the questions being asked by FEMA it looks like they are ready to award but need more defining. It is likely an award will result, but there are no guarantees. If so, the pre award costs would be covered 75%. We are kicking this back to them. Heidi is letting the board know that a decision will need to be made on how much more we want to put into this. Paulette clarified that the grant amount we could receive is \$180,000.00 – yes. No decision is needed tonight. Heidi will come back to the board when she hears back from FEMA definitively. A special meeting might be necessary to deal with this in a timely manner.

2. **Park & Ride Grant Application**

This application is now open with a deadline of August 31st. This grant would cover a very nice bus shelter as well as the green space needed at the park and ride location. Heidi will have it ready for review at the next meeting.

I. Selectboard Items

1. **VHV Discussion re: Arena Dehumidifier**

Steve Shaw, engineer, came back with a price of \$800.00 for him to review this situation. Josh got a range of \$3,700.00 - \$3,900.00 from Eric Rainville, but no hard number yet. Josh stated the fix for this is adding a coil to heat the air going into the unit, and he questions if Steve Shawn knows enough about the unit to make a recommendation. There was further discussion on the issue and \$800.00 is worth the peace of mind with regard to the dehumidification system. Motion by Josh LaRocque to hire Steve Shaw for consulting engineer services of the dehumidification unit at the arena for an amount of \$800.00. The motion was seconded by Sharon Bousquet – **APPROVED**. Paulette asked about funding for this and the possible funds required for work in the future. The complete fix of \$4,000.00 +/-, if that is agreed upon to be the

answer, should be split between the town and MAHA, just as the original unit was. But for now we can say the town will pay the \$800.00 for Steve Shaw's services.

2. Digital Message Board Bids

Vermont Display was the only company that showed up to the site visit and submitted a bid. We asked for a bid that would include everything start to finish with everything broken down in between. That is what we received and the total came in at \$27,500.00 for everything done for us with and all the extra options. There are plenty of areas that the town can trim down this quote by doing the work ourselves or reaching out to people in our community with electrical or masonry expertise. Shelley knows someone in our community she will connect with and Wendi will get with Andy on what the PWD can do to offset some of the costs. Our total budgeted amount for this project is \$17,455.00 and it was approved at town meeting. Deb at Vermont Display also sent us a list of ways we can trim down the cost and still end up with a very nice product.

3. ACO Report

Vonnie has provided an update for the board for the months of May and June.

4. Electronics Communications Policy

The state has put out some guidance on this, so at some point we will need to have an electronic communications policy for the town. All the town boards now have town email addresses (first initial, last name) @highgatevt.org. We need to have disclaimers on our website that the website can't be used as a legal form of communication to the town and on our email accounts that any email could be part of a public records request.

5. Selectboard Rules & Procedures

There are documents in the packets that should be read and feedback given on issues like structuring of the public comment section of our meetings and how motions are made, etc. We can revisit this issue at our next meeting.

6. AT&T and Verizon Letters

Heidi has prepared letters to both AT&T and Verizon about our cell tower and maps of our village with regard to our lack of cell coverage. Motion by Chris Yates to sign the letters to AT&T and Verizon regarding the cell tower in Highgate. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**. There is information on the town's website on what people can do to help @ www.highgatevt.org under announcements.

7. Misc.

- Josh Aldrich thanked the board for use of the park on June 25th. His meet and greet went well and they fed over 40 people.
- FYI – the state of Vermont fireworks statute is included in the packet.
- An article from the St. Albans Messenger is in the packets regarding a convoy of big rig trucks riding through Swanton on July 9th in memory of a Swanton resident and to bring awareness to drug addiction and the effects of it in our community.

J. Upcoming Events

July 14	6pm	DRB Mtg.
July 19	6pm	Planning Comm. Mtg.
July 21	7pm	Selectboard Mtg.
Aug. 9	7am-7pm	State Primary Election @ Highgate Elem.
Sept. 20		Open House – info to follow !

K. Executive Session

Motion by Chris Yates for the Selectboard and Town Administrator to enter into executive session @ 10:10pm to discuss contracts, personnel and a legal issue where premature public knowledge could place the town or the individuals involved at a substantial disadvantage. The motion was seconded by Paulette Tatro – **APPROVED**. Motion by Chris Yates to exit executive session @ 10:45pm. The motion was seconded by Sharon Bousquet – **APPROVED**.

L. Adjournment

Motion by Chris Yates to adjourn the meeting @ 10:46pm. The motion was seconded by Paulette Tatro – **APPROVED**.

Respectfully submitted by,

_____ Wendi Dusablon, Highgate Town Clerk

Minutes approved by,

_____ Christopher Yates, Chair – Highgate Selectboard