

# TOWN OF HIGHGATE

## Selectboard Mtg.

December 15, 2016 @ 7:00pm

### 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 @ 7:02pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Highgate Selectboard Members** – Chris Yates, Chair; Sharon Bousquet, Vice-Chair; Randy Connelly; Joshua LaRocque; Bruce Butler

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

**Public / Other** – Jean Chevalier; Faith H. Brashear; Alice S. Cota; Ray Jablonski; Andy King; Patrick Loyer; Jeff Towle

#### **B. Public Comments**

- Chris thanked and offered thoughts to all our of service members who have recently deployed overseas. May they have a completed mission and return home safely. This is a hard time of year to be away from their families. This was followed by a moment of silence.
- Sue Cota presented a letter to Chris on behalf of the Highgate Concerned Citizens. Sue is asking for this letter to be part of the town report. Chris will share it with the rest of the board.
- Sue again asked about the town clerk's office hours and the closure for lunch break. Chris made it very clear that the Selectboard has no authority over the town clerk or the office hours that are set. This issue will need to be discussed with the town clerk directly, not the Selectboard. Shelley commented that we are open the same hours every day, five days per week, which is more than most offices are open already and if someone is out sick or on vacation it means that no one would get a lunch break. Wendi or Shelley need to be present in the office to have the vault open. Sue would like to see the hours changed, at least on a trial basis.

#### **C. Public Works Director Updates – Andy King**

- Plowing has been busy with lots of small storms.
- Water tests at the arena are complete and clear. The nitrate test was also clear.
- Andy went and looked at the end of Monument Road and there is a recommendation for three additional street lights. Yellow flyers have been printed and will be put out on the poles for residents to comment.
- Chris read aloud from a letter submitted by Andy King regarding his resignation as the Public Works Director. Chris thanked Andy for all he has done in his short time here. This change is what he needs to do for him and for his family. Due to worsening health conditions, Andy will no longer be able to fulfill the physical requirements of the job. Great progress has been made here and we are pointed in the right direction and hope to continue. Andy will always find ways to give back to his community. He is happy to continue helping with the water sampling at the arena if the Selectboard would like him to do that. Chris prepared a letter in response to Andy's resignation letter, which he also read aloud. Patrick Loyer, Public Works Department employee, was also present. He is here to discuss filling in for the interim, which will be discussed later.

#### **D. Treasurer Updates – Shelley Laroche**

##### **1. Check warrants**

Sharon had a question about the Bridge 25 commitment. Shelley addressed concerns about the town covering our expenses related to dogs. Even with the increase that Vonnie is asking for and taking into account all other expenses (tags, postage, ACO fees, paper), we are still about \$2,000.00 to the good based on last year's fees. That does not include our annual fee to FCAR or kennel fees associated with dogs that are picked up. Shelley's suggests that the

delinquent fees be raised by \$1.00 from last year. The motion can be seen under the Town Clerk section of these minutes, below.

**2. Misc.**

- The payroll and retirement audit went very well with no issues. Shelley is still having a hard time reaching Amber from NEMRC regarding the other audit.
- All stipends have been cut with the exception of seven people who have not filled out their paperwork for Shelley. Sharon thanked Shelley for her work.

**E. Town Clerk Updates – Wendi Dusablon**

**1. Minutes**

Motion by Chris Yates to approve the minutes from December 1, 2016, as written. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**.

**2. Moderator appointment**

Wendi received a letter dated 12/5/16 from Kyle Lothian, which Chris read aloud. Motion by Chris Yates to appoint Kyle Lothian as Town Moderator. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**. Wendi will be in contact with Kyle about a training being offered through VLCT on February 8<sup>th</sup>. Sharon thanked Kyle and Wendi.

**3. Dog licensing fees for 2017**

Motion by Chris Yates to set the 2017 dog licensing fees as follows. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**.

January 3 – March 31, 2017	\$12.00 spay / neutered	\$16.00 not spay / not neutered
Starting Monday, April 3, 2017	\$21.00 spay / neutered	\$25.00 not spay / not neutered

**4. Arena usage request – liquor license request**

Ray Jablonski was present to discuss this request, as well as Josh LaRocque as a member of the MAHA Facilities Board. Ray is associated with White Tails Unlimited / Franklin County White Tails. They have a banquet every year, and are looking for a larger facility so they don't have to turn people away. Alcohol would be served, so the proper licenses would be needed for the arena facility. Security would also be needed to keep the alcohol in the building as well as making sure people aren't bringing any in. Events like this have taken place at the arena before, like the Hick Town event back in 2008. White Tails Unlimited has their own insurance and can provide that info to the town. The caterer they have used in the past is Sue Leclair. Parking overflow would need to be addressed with the school. The event will either be September 9<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup>. The mission of Franklin County White Tails is to work through White Tails Unlimited and fundraise for "Hunt of a Lifetime". This is to raise funds for terminally ill kids and send them out on the hunt of their dreams. There will also be a silent auction and they also give away firearms. This is done through someone with a federal firearms license and taken care of separately. The board thanked Ray for being at the meeting and they look forward to working with him.

**5. Liquor license renewal 2017 – Jolley Associates**

This came in the mail just after the agenda was published. Motion by Chris Yates to enter into the liquor control board @ 7:27pm. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**. Motion by Chris Yates to sign the liquor license renewal for Jolley Associates located at 60 Gore Road in Highgate. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**. Motion by Chris Yates to exit the liquor control board and enter back in to the regular Selectboard meeting @ 7:29pm. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**.

**6. Misc.**

- Petitions for nomination of elected offices and consent of candidate forms are due to Wendi by 5pm on Monday, January 30, 2017. A minimum of 21 (1%) registered voter signatures is needed. Petitions for warned articles are due to Wendi by 5pm on Thursday, January 19, 2017. A minimum of 105 (5%) registered voter signatures is needed.

**F. Town Administrator Items – Heidi Britch-Valenta**

**1. MPG grant agreement**

Heidi has forwarded this to Karen Fortin, library trustee, and also to Bethany at NRPC. Bethany has confirmed the numbers are correct. This municipal planning grant award is for the library in the amount of \$12,750.00 to determine the library's current and future needs. The town match amount is

\$2,375.00. Motion by Chris Yates to allow the town administrator to sign the MPG for the Highgate Public Library study. The motion was seconded by Sharon Bousquet – **APPROVED.**

**2. Energy planning Workshop**

Heidi and Rick Trombley, DRB Chair, attended this workshop. Heidi will put more information before the Planning Commission in January.

**3. Misc.**

- Fire Department floor update, Andy King – The floor was excavated and the section dug up was 24' x 20'. They went down approximately 6' and found a very distinct cause for the issues we have been having. There was construction debris buried from a previous structure. Things like wood and brick that do not compact for long periods of time. The engineer is in the process of designing some options for us. Temporarily it was filled in with good fill, compacted and then cold patch asphalt was used. We can reclaim the cold patch and reuse it when we are done.
- Chris thanked the Public Works Department and Fire Chief, Joe Depatie, for installing the lights on the outside of the municipal building. The lights look great and so do the snowflake lights on the poles throughout the village.

**G. Selectboard Items**

**1. Thank you Enosburg**

Enosburgh has sent us a donation for the Highgate Sports Arena. Chris signed a thank you letter and the construction committee also signed one at their last meeting. **THANK YOU ENOSBURG!**

**2. Personnel policy**

The only employees eligible for OT are members of the public works department. Shelley noted that our policy contradicts itself. This conversation has been going around on the town clerk & treasurer list serve as well. This is where clerks and treasurers from around the state can communicate with each other on different topics. There needs to be clarification on whether holiday and vacation time can count as worked hours. There are also questions on what is considered to be outside of regular worked hours. Shelley wants to be fair, but from a payroll standpoint she doesn't want it to be abused either. Chris is willing to sit with Shelley and the public works department to come up with an agreement and present it to the rest of the Selectboard.

**3. Misc.**

- Shirley Fecteau, assessor, submitted a letter to the town on 12/5/16 regarding her resignation effective 12/31/16. She and her husband have some traveling they would like to do in their retirement years. The Selectboard has prepared a letter back to Shirley. Chris read both letters aloud. Shirley's last working day will be 12/30/16. The board thanked Shirley for all her years of service to our town.
- Chris thanked the Highgate Fire Department for the invitation to their holiday dinner. Chris and Bruce were able to attend with their wives. It was a great meal catered by Jean Gagne.
- Chris met with the school and public library regarding memos of understanding for each site. The school was with regard to parking lot maintenance. The library was with regard to plowing, shoveling, sand, salt, mowing and preparation of the library before the winter months.
- Connie Beyor stopped by the office. The Highgate School Board will be in for an update at the January 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. They will have more information on their budget and we can plan for the pre-town meeting joint informational session.

**H. Upcoming Events**

Dec. 18	10am – 2pm	Santa Day @ Highgate Volunteer Fire Dept.
Dec. 20		Planning Commission CANCELLED
Dec. 22	6pm	Selectboard Budgeting Session
Dec. 23	6:00pm - 7:30pm	Skate with Santa @ Arena
Dec. 26		Municipal Offices CLOSED
Jan. 1	12pm & 1:30pm	MVU Alumni Hockey Games @ Arena
Jan. 2		Municipal Offices CLOSED
Jan. 5	7pm	Selectboard Mtg.
Jan. 12	6pm	DRB Mtg.

**I. Executive Session**

Motion by Chris Yates for the Selectboard to enter into executive session @ 7:51pm with the Town Administrator, Andy King and Patrick Loyer to discuss a personnel issue where premature general public knowledge would place the town and the individuals involved at a substantial disadvantage. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**.

Motion by Chris Yates to exit executive session @ 8:23pm. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**.

Andy King & Patrick Loyer exited the meeting @ 8:24pm.

Motion by Chris Yates to enter into executive session @ 8:25pm to discuss legal items and a possible real estate transaction where premature general public knowledge would place the town and the individuals involved at a substantial disadvantage. The motion as seconded by Sharon Bousquet – **APPROVED**. Also attending was the Town Agent, Jeff Towle.

Jeff Towle exited the meeting @ 8:55pm.

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

**J. Adjournment**

Motion by Chris Yates to adjourn the meeting @ 9:45pm. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**.

Respectfully submitted by,

\_\_\_\_\_ Wendi Dusablon, Highgate Town Clerk

Minutes approved by,

\_\_\_\_\_ Christopher Yates, Chair – Highgate Selectboard