

**TOWN OF HIGHGATE**  
**Selectboard Meeting**  
**Thursday, January 16, 2025 @ 6:30pm**  
**Approved Minutes**

NOTE: All actions taken are unanimous unless otherwise stated

**ZOOM LINK:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83670174676>

**A. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance**

The meeting was called to order by Vern Brosky III, Chair, @ 6:31pm, 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; Ben Lowell; Richard Flint *absent* – *Kyle Lothian*

**Highgate Office Staff** – Wendi Dusablon, Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk; Carrie Johnson, Town Administrator (interim) *absent* – *Shelley Laroche, Treasurer + DTC*

**Public** – Clarence Miller; Richard J. Noel; Alice S. Cota; Rebecca Manning; Raymond Laroche; John Ferland

**B. Public Comments**

- Sue Cota asked about early voting and if people could come into the office and vote. Yes, once ballots are available Wendi will advertise that absentees can be mailed, or folks can come in and vote at the office.

**C. Selectboard Items**

- **Town Meeting Day Warning – articles / discussion / clarifications / signatures** – Vern gave a brief preamble that this discussion is to finalize the warning, and that detailed discussion will take place at the informational meeting on Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>. Comments and questions are welcome but will be limited to two minutes. The Selectboard members read through the warned articles with brief questions and discussion along the way. A copy of the finalized and signed warning is attached to the end of these minutes. Article #3 (ATVs) and Article #7 (VNA/Hospice) were petitioned articles and Wendi confirmed that the requirements were met with regard to number of signatures required and meeting the deadline for submission. Ray Laroche and John Ferland were present in case anyone had questions about the ATV article. It is worded as an “advisement” to the Selectboard, because the Selectboard would be the only ones with the authority to change our ordinance. Article #4 was added because at the floor meeting last year it was voted on to hold the informational meeting within 5 days preceding Town Meeting Day. That timeline is extremely tight and does not give an opportunity to get the information out there for those that vote early to either watch the video or read the minutes before they vote. Article #5 was discussed as an option for the future home of Highgate Library and Community Center. No price has been added to that article but more information could be available by the informational meeting. Articles #7, #8, #9, and #10 are money articles involving the CIP, Highway Fund, and General Fund. Articles #11 and #12 are specific to which ambulance service we wish to contract with beginning July 1, 2025. These final two articles will appear on a separate ballot. The logistics of the ballot were discussed to make it clear to voters what is being asked. This will be done as it was done in 2022. It was noted that neither ambulance service bid includes dispatching fees. Motion by Merry Souza to approve and sign the 2025 Town Meeting Day warning with the changes suggested during this discussion. The motion was seconded by Ben Lowell – **APPROVED.**

- Library Steering Committee (LSC) Appointments – The Selectboard asked for appointments from specific town boards to form the new Library Steering Committee: from the Selectboard – Richard Flint; from the Library Trustees – Amy Rainville; from the Planning Commission – Jack Pelkey; from the Village Core Master Plan Committee – their vote on 1/8/25 ended in a tie: 4 votes for Chris Shepard, and 4 votes for Rebecca Manning. It was noted that Chris Shepard was not present at that meeting. Had he been there it is likely he would have cast a vote for himself and received the nomination 5-4. The Selectboard has now been tasked with making the decision. Chris submitted a letter to be considered, Rebecca was present in-person at this meeting and provided reasons that the board should consider her. Carrie read Chris Shepard’s letter aloud. Wendi added that regardless of who is chosen, we have had an open seat on the Planning Commission for a year, there is an upcoming opening on the DRB, and so far, one Selectboard seat nobody is running for. There are opportunities to stay involved. Each Selectboard member cast a vote, aloud, with reasons why, with the exception of Richard Flint, who recused himself as a member of the LSC. Vern – cast his vote for Chris Shepard / Merry – cast her vote for Chris Shepard / Ben Lowell – cast his vote for Chris Shepard. All felt that his background with the school board and his construction background will be beneficial. Rebecca was fine with this, noting that she agrees he will be great on the LSC. She added that she wants to see professional engineers brought in and not have him providing his own cost estimations, etc. Motion by Merry Souza to appoint Chris Shepard to represent the Village Core Master Plan Committee on the newly formed Library Steering Committee. The motion was seconded by Ben Lowell – **APPROVED**. That still leaves a seat for an “at large” member on the LSC. Residents are encouraged to submit a letter of interest to Carrie to fill that seat so we can get things rolling.
- Certificate of highway mileage – No new town roads have been added, but Carrie explained that .02 miles were adjusted at the “Y” (green space) located on Park Street. Motion by Richard Flint to approve and sign the certificate of highway mileage for the year ending February 10, 2025. The motion was seconded by Ben Lowell – **APPROVED**.
- COAL - Motion by Merry Souza to sign the Certificate of Approved Location (COAL) for Ray’s Salvage for the term of one year. The motion was seconded by Ben Lowell – **APPROVED**.
- SASA ice rental contract – Motion by Merry Souza to approve the sign the ice rental contract with St. Albans Skating Association for the 2024-2025 ice season in the amount of \$185.00 per hour. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED**. It was noted that this was delayed in being returned to us, but Wendi confirmed that SASA has been getting billed, and invoices have been getting paid. We are still waiting on the signed contract to be returned from Milton High School also and that will be all of them for this season. They have also been getting billed, and invoices have been getting paid.
- Liquor control board – Motion by Richard Flint to exit the regular Selectboard meeting @ 7:10pm and enter into the liquor control board. The motion was seconded by Merry Souza – **APPROVED**. Motion by Merry Souza to approve the 1<sup>st</sup> Class Liquor License request for The Highgate Manor. The motion was seconded by Ben Lowell – **APPROVED**. Motion by Merry Souza to exit the liquor control board and reenter the regular Selectboard meeting @ 7:12pm. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED**.

**D. Town Treasurer – Shelley Laroche**

Shelley was absent but had submitted the check warrants for approval:

- Motion by Ben Lowell to approve and sign the check warrants. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED**.

**E. Town Clerk – Wendi Dusablon**

- Motion by Merry Souza to approve the minutes from January 2, 2025, as written. The motion was seconded by Ben Lowell – **APPROVED**.
- Motion by Merry Souza to approve the minutes from January 4, 2025, as written. The motion was seconded by Ben Lowell – **APPROVED**.

- Wendi viewed and shared via email an updated video from the SOS office on Open Meeting Law. Highgate is doing very well overall with compliance – she encourages people to stay informed and watch the video as well.
- HLCC will be hosting a winter carnival at the library on Feb. 8 from 10am – noon. A flyer with full information is at the end of these minutes.
- The recreation department will host a March Meltdown 3 vs. 3 tournament on March 8+9. Registration is open now – see flyer at the end of these minutes.
- Dog licensing is going well – we have licensed 58 dogs as of today. Please license by April 1<sup>st</sup> to avoid late fees and possible fines. Our vaccination clinic will be March 29<sup>th</sup> at the arena from 9am – noon. More info will be available as that gets closer.
- We have received a letter from Vermont Land Trust with regard to the farm owned by Ed Choiniere on Gore Road. This is in the very preliminary stages and requires a letter of support from the Selectboard. It was noted that our town and regional plans all indicate support for the continued use of this property for agriculture and is in compliance with our local and regional planning and zoning requirements. Carrie will prepare a letter of support to be put before the board on Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>. Richard Noel noted that this property is in between two properties already in Land Trust.
- Wendi will prepare the list of positions for appointment by the Selectboard and advertise for letters of interest to be received by Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>. These appointments take place after town meeting day. It was noted that the Village Core Committee is being dissolved and that there are other positions available for appointment for those that wish to stay involved. We thank the VCMP committee for their very important work over the years.
- Today, January 16<sup>th</sup> by 4pm, was the deadline for warned article petitions with a minimum of 5% (126) registered voter signatures. We did receive two: ATV article and VNA / Hospice article, as discussed earlier, both met the criteria and the deadline, and are included as part of the Town Meeting Day warning. Wendi has asked both groups to have someone present at the informational meeting on Feb. 27<sup>th</sup> to answer questions.
- The 2024 Town Report will be going to the printers tomorrow morning – Jan. 17! Wendi will deliver the draft to REPRO so we should have books by the end of January. They will be at the following locations: Town Office (entryway and drop box location); Desorcie’s Market; OC McCuin’s; Highgate Library & Community Center; Highgate Arena; Martin’s General Store. There will also be a digital copy on our website and a link on our social media pages. Please contact Wendi to have a town report mailed to you, 802-868-5002 or wdusablon@highgatevt.org. There will also be town reports available at the informational meeting at Highgate Elementary School on Feb. 27<sup>th</sup> @ 6pm.
- Polls will be open on town meeting day, Tuesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, from 7am – 7pm at Highgate Sports Arena. **FULLY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT VOTING – WE NO LONGER HAVE A FLOOR MEETING.** We have to really push this information, this is a big change for us, so there is nothing happening at the school on March 4<sup>th</sup>. The information meeting, however, is at the school on Feb. 27<sup>th</sup> at 6pm – see the flyer at the end of these minutes. The deadline to run for a position on the ballot is Monday, Jan. 27<sup>th</sup> by 5pm. A minimum of 25 registered voter signatures is required, along with the consent of candidate form. Please see the list of positions at the end of these minutes. Ballots will be available in early February, Wendi will post information once they are available. Absentees can be requested any time, contact Wendi to get on that list, or you can request your ballots through the My Voter Page through the VT Secretary of State’s Office. There will be **THREE** ballots this year: Town / School / Ambulance. Voter registration is available at the office, online through the My Voter Page, or, same day voter registration is available at the polls.

**F. Interim Town Administrator – Carrie Johnson**

- The airport water and sewer project has been going well. They just wrapped things up for the winter and will resume in March. There will be a meeting here next week to discuss their winter shutdown. Carrie is working on getting reimbursements for that project.

**G. Other Business**

- Vern gave an update on landings at the Franklin County Airport at night. This has been worked out and it will be going back to a 24/7 open runway.
- Motion by Merry Souza to appoint Vern Brosky as the town's liaison for the Ethics Committee. The motion was seconded by Richard Flint – **APPROVED**. A brief online course needs to be taken by September. The link has been forwarded around to all via email.
- Clarence Miller asked the board to keep their eye on the prize, with regard to the Village Core property. He feels the library can wait, and that for now we need to get the wastewater / water / elderly housing project done. We don't want to lose any of our funding or miss any deadlines along the way.
- Vern noted that the Paws for Thought property issue is time sensitive and that the sellers need to know if the town is truly interested – referring to Article #5 on the warning discussed earlier.

Motion by Richard Flint to exit the regular Selectboard meeting @ 7:35pm. The motion was seconded by Ben Lowell – **APPROVED**. The motion was seconded by Ben Lowell – **APPROVED**.

**H. Executive Session**

Motion by Vern Brosky III to enter into executive session @ 7:35pm with Carrie Johnson and Wendi Dusablon to discuss contracts, personnel, and legal, 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**. Wendi exited executive session @ 7:45pm. Carrie exited executive session @ 8:27pm. Motion by Richard Flint to exit executive session @ 9:20pm. The motion was seconded by Ben Lowell – **APPROVED**.

**I. Adjournment**

Motion by Richard Flint to adjourn the meeting @ 9:20pm. The motion was seconded by Ben Lowell – **APPROVED**.

Respectfully submitted by:



2/16/25

Wendi Dusablon  
Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk

Minutes Approved by:



2/16/25

Vern Brosky III  
Selectboard Chair



# HIGHGATE WINTER CARNIVAL

**WHEN:** Saturday, February 8th  
from 10 AM - 12 PM

**WHERE:** Highgate Library  
& Community Center

Join us for our annual Winter Carnival at Highgate Library. We will be joined by the Siber Sled Dogs and offering bonfires with s'mores, a story time, and loads of fun winter activities. Make a craft and grab a hot dog while you're with us. For more information, call 802-868-3970.



Visit Our Website  
[www.hlccvt.org](http://www.hlccvt.org)





HIGHGATE RECREATION

2025

MARCH

MELTDOWN

3 V 3 TOURNAMENT



HOME OF MILTON JACKETS HOCKEY



Registration  
now  
open!

March 8th & 9th

U8-U11-U14-U18

\$65/player - Must register with a team  
of 3-6 players

Limit of 8 teams per age group  
No Goalies - Pond Hockey Style

[www.highgaterec.org](http://www.highgaterec.org)

# Highgate VT

## Town Meeting 2025

Consent of Candidate forms & Nominating Petitions are available for the following positions to be voted on by Australian Ballot on Town Meeting Day - March 4, 2025

Consent of Candidate forms & Nominating Petitions are due to Wendi Dusablon, Town Clerk, no later than Monday, January 27, 2025 @ 5:00pm in order for your name to appear on the ballot

*minimum signature requirement is 25 registered voter signatures on petitions*

<b>CEMETERY COMMISSIONER</b>	<b>5-YEAR TERM</b>
<b>LIBRARY TRUSTEE</b>	<b>5-YEAR TERM</b>
<b>MODERATOR</b>	<b>FOR THE ENSUING YEAR</b>
<b>SELECTBOARD MEMBER</b>	<b>2-YEAR TERM</b>
<b>SELECTBOARD MEMBER</b>	<b>2-YEAR TERM</b>
<b>SELECTBOARD MEMBER</b>	<b>1 YEAR REMAINING ON 3-YEAR TERM</b>
<b>SELECTBOARD MEMBER</b>	<b>3-YEAR TERM</b>
<b>TOWN TREASURER</b>	<b>3-YEAR TERM</b>

*Consent of Candidate forms & petitions will be available starting Monday, December 9, 2024 by visiting our website, stop by the office during regular business hours, or contact the office to have paperwork mailed or emailed to you:*

- Town website [www.highgatevt.org](http://www.highgatevt.org) - look for the "TOWN MEETING DAY 2025" LINK
- Office Hours are Monday - Thursday 9am - 4pm (excluding holidays / holiday schedule)
- Call or email Wendi @ 802-868-5002 [wdusablon@highgatevt.org](mailto:wdusablon@highgatevt.org)
- Town drop-box (rear entrance) is also available for returning paperwork





# PUBLIC NOTICE



## The Town of Highgate

### **2025 TOWN MEETING** **INFORMATION SESSION**

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2025 @ 6:00PM**  
**@ HIGHGATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (GYMNASIUM)**

*PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON OR USE THE ZOOM LINK:*  
*<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86492134232>*

**REMINDERS.....**

- ✓ *Town Meeting Day is Tuesday, March 4, 2025 – polls will be open at Highgate Sports Arena from 7am – 7pm @ 243 Gore Road. WE NO LONGER HAVE A FLOOR MEETING ON TOWN MEETING DAY – FULLY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT VOTING – AS VOTED ON LAST MARCH*
- ✓ *Absentee ballots will be available in early to mid- February and can be requested by contacting the Town Clerk, Wendi Dusablon, at 802-868-5002, [wdusablon@highgatevt.org](mailto:wdusablon@highgatevt.org), by stopping by the office, or through the “My Voter Page” <https://mvp.vermont.gov/>*
- ✓ *Voter registration is available at the town office, through the “My Voter Page”, or same day registration is available at the polls*

## 2025 Town Meeting Warning ~ Highgate Vermont

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The legal voters of the Town of Highgate, Vermont, are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Highgate Sports Arena (243 Gore Road) in the Town of Highgate on Tuesday, March 4, 2025 between the hours of seven o'clock in the forenoon (7:00am), at which time the polls will open, and seven o'clock in the evening (7:00pm), at which time the polls will close, to vote by Australian ballot upon the following Articles of business:

**ARTICLE #1:** To elect the following town officers:

- a) One Cemetery Commissioner for a term of five (5) years
- b) One Library Trustee for a term of five (5) years
- c) One Moderator for the ensuing year
- d) One Selectboard Member for a term of one (1) year remaining on a three (3) year term
- e) One Selectboard Member for a term of two (2) years
- f) One Selectboard Member for a term of two (2) years
- g) One Selectboard Member for a term of three (3) years
- h) One Treasurer for a term of three (3) years

**ARTICLE #2:** Shall the voters of the Town of Highgate set the final date of payment for FY2025/2026 property taxes to be **Thursday, October 30, 2025**, with payments to be received in the town office by 4:00pm?

**ARTICLE #3:** Shall the voters of the Town of Highgate advise the Selectboard to allow the legal use of ATVs (All Terrain Vehicles) on all town roads? ATVs must be registered, insured, have a valid VASA (Vermont All Terrain Vehicle Sportsman's Association) registration sticker affixed, as well as wear approved helmets and seatbelts.

**ARTICLE #4:** Shall the voters of the Town of Highgate request the Selectboard to hold the Town Meeting Day Informational Meeting within the 30 days preceding Town Meeting Day, as is allowed per statute 17 V.S.A. § 2680?

**ARTICLE #5:** **As a non-binding advisory opinion:** Shall the voters of the Town of Highgate purchase the property located at **5 Gore Road** (formerly known as Paws for Thought), owned by Robert & Sheryl Wilkins, as an option for the future home of the Highgate Library & Community Center?

**ARTICLE #6:** Shall the voters of the Town of Highgate vote to raise, appropriate, and expend the sum of **\$7,423** for the support of the **VNA & Hospice of the Southwest Region** to provide services to residents of the Town?

**ARTICLE #7:** Shall the voters of the Town of Highgate reallocate **\$30,000** within the **Capital Improvement Plan** from the indoor turf / field house line item and move it to the 72" zero turn mower line item?

**ARTICLE #8:** Shall the voters of the Town of Highgate appropriate **\$590,000** to meet the expenses and liabilities of the **Capital Improvement Plan**, with an estimated **\$590,000** to be raised by taxes?

# 2025 Town Meeting Warning ~ Highgate Vermont


**ARTICLE #9:** Shall the voters of the Town of Highgate appropriate **\$1,153,171** to meet the expenses and liabilities of the **Highway Fund**, with an estimated **\$982,171** to be raised by taxes?

**ARTICLE #10:** Shall the voters of the Town of Highgate appropriate **\$1,600,822** to meet the expenses and liabilities of the **General Fund**, with an estimated **\$710,352** to be raised by taxes?

**ARTICLE #11:** **As a non-binding advisory opinion:** Shall the voters of the Town of Highgate contract with **AmCare Ambulance Service** for all ambulance services, in the amount of **\$269,262.97**, with such services beginning on July 1, 2025, for a term of three (3) years?


**ARTICLE #12:** **As a non-binding advisory opinion:** Shall the voters of the Town of Highgate contract with **Missisquoi Valley Rescue** for all ambulance services, in the amount of **\$268,936.11**, with such services beginning on July 1, 2025, for a term of three (3) years?

Dated at Highgate Center, Vermont this 16<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2025

  
Attest: Wendi Dusablon, Highgate Town Clerk

  
Richard Flint, Highgate Selectboard Member

  
Vernon Brosky III, Highgate Selectboard Chair

  
Kyle Lothian, Highgate Selectboard Member

  
Merry Souza, Highgate Selectboard Vice Chair

  
Benjamin Lowell, Highgate Selectboard Member

- **NOTE:** The Town of Highgate no longer holds a floor meeting, as voted on in March 2024. Voting is fully Australian ballot between 7am – 7pm on Tuesday, March 4, 2025 @ Highgate Sports Arena, located @ 243 Gore Road.
- Register to vote by contacting the Town Clerk 802-868-5002 or [wdusablon@highgatevt.org](mailto:wdusablon@highgatevt.org), or visit the My Voter Page at <https://mvp.vermont.gov/>. Same day voter registration is also available.
- Absentee ballots are available upon request – contact the Town Clerk directly, stop by, or request through the My Voter Page (info above).
- Return ballots at the polls on March 4<sup>th</sup>, by mail, during our office hours 9am – 4pm Monday – Thursday, or by using our secure drop box at the rear entrance of the Municipal Bldg. Ballots must be received by the Town Clerk by 7pm on March 4, 2025 in order to be counted.
- The Town Meeting Informational Meeting will be held on Thursday, February 27, 2025 @ 6:00pm in the gymnasium @ Highgate Elementary School. Attend in-person or participate via Zoom with the following link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86492134232>
- Ambulance RFP responses are available at the Town Clerk's Office during regular business hours, by contacting the town office, or by visiting the town website [www.highgatevt.org](http://www.highgatevt.org).