

JOHNSON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MONDAY, JANUARY 16, 2017

Present:

Selectboard Members: Mike Dunham, Nat Kinney, Doug Molde, Kyle Nuse, Eric Osgood

Others: Brian Story, Rosemary Audibert, Brian Krause, David Butler

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. Call to Order

Eric called the meeting to order at 7:03.

2. Additions, Changes to Agenda

Nat asked to add a request from the Recreation Committee to spend money from its reserve fund. Eric asked to discuss Local Government Day and the board's voting delegate. Brian S. said an executive session would probably be needed for contract negotiations with regard to the compost facility. Mike asked to add discussion of bulletin board use response to the discussion the trustees had.

3. Review and Approve Minutes of Meetings Past

Mike moved to approve the minutes of December 14, 2016; December 19, 2016; January 3, 2017; January 7, 2017; and January 9, 2017, seconded by Nat.

Eric said in the December 19 minutes, the sentence "Eric said there would be more bang for the buck from working on roads than from improving sewer plants" should be changed to better reflect the intent of his comments. He said what he stated was that that sewer plants contribute about 3% and highways about 7-12% (depending on the source of data) of the total phosphorous contribution to Lake Champlain, so the greatest bang for the buck would be to go after the higher contributors and not highways or sewer plants.

Mike suggested going back to the video of the meeting to see exactly what Eric had said. Doug said Eric's proposed change is in line with what he understood Eric to be saying at the time.

Nat noted that two sets of minutes were dated January 9. Brian S. said he believed the set prepared by Donna were really from January 3. Donna said she had mistakenly assumed the recording she was working from was from January 9.

The motion to approve the minutes with the suggested corrections was passed with Mike opposed.

4. Treasurer's Report / Review and Approve Bills, Warrants, Licenses / Any Action Items

Rosemary said expenses to date are at 54% of budget and revenues are at 97% due to FEMA reimbursement.

The assessor submitted an Errors and Omissions Certificate requesting a change to the Grand List for a property that was taken out of current use. **Doug moved to approve the change to the Grand List requested by the assessor due to a change in current use, Nat seconded and the motion was passed.**

Rosemary said current taxes are 58% paid to date, slightly ahead of the past 2 years. Delinquent taxes all have been turned over to Angela Ross for collection. No tax sale date has been set yet.

Rosemary provided a draft warning for town meeting. She said it is the school's turn to go second at town meeting and that is what they would prefer. They think they might have a lot of questions about the modified district. They probably will only have 2 or 3 articles. Based on population, the BCA could have 12 members instead of 10. That could be something to discuss at town meeting.

Mike asked Brian K. if he is happy to pay \$75/hr for a welder. Brian said for the work that was done he was happy to pay that amount. The job was pretty tricky and the welder was willing to come to our shop and have town employees help him in order to cut down his hours. The cost was actually \$70/hr. The welder was very flexible about when he came to do the work.

5. ***Skate Park Committee Report***

Brian S. said the Skate Park Committee is requesting to add a couple of new members: Rick Aupperlee and George Swanson. Also George Agnew if his appointment hasn't already been approved by the board. **Kyle moved to appoint the new members to the Skate Park Committee as requested by the committee, Doug seconded and the motion was passed.**

6. ***Planning Commission Report***

David Butler said he was not at last week's Planning Commission meeting. It was reported to him that they made good progress on adjusting building envelope standards to what is said in the administrative portion. They voted to have a special meeting tomorrow night to continue that work.

The Planning Commission still needs one more member. Eric said normally at this time of year the board would hold off on appointing a new member until after town meeting. David said the Planning Commission has lost Lea. The advantage of having her was that she was knowledgeable about available grants. She has said she doesn't have time to come to meetings. If the town and village administrators could take turns coming to meetings the Planning Commission could be more in the loop about what is going on county wide. Brian said if it is the board's pleasure he could serve on the Planning Commission.

Kyle asked if we were we going to have the Planning Commission give a form based code update at town meeting. Eric said we need to talk about that tonight. David said his concern is the potential disruption of town meeting that could cause. Would the board want a verbal question and answer period? Eric said there was discussion about having different town groups talk about what their organizations do. There could be Q&A, but he doesn't anticipate it would take over town meeting. David said he believes the Planning Commission could have a written report on what they have done so far for people to pick up. Eric suggested that he give some thought to it. The selectboard will get back to him. Doug said when the selectboard was discussing town meeting participation the idea came up to introduce people on different committees and commissions to personalize it. Discussion of specific subject matter to him is something different. He thinks it is important to put a face on committees.

David said LCPC doesn't have funds to work with Johnson this year on an energy plan. But he doesn't think that necessarily stops us from rewriting that chapter of the town/village plan if we want to. He thinks we should look at it because it gives us party status. (*David left at 7:26.*)

7. Road Commissioner/Road Foreman Report and Action Items

Brian K. said our 2007 International truck is an example of why he believes we should try to shrink the replacement schedule. That truck was purchased 10 years ago. In the last year we spent \$9700 on the engine and chassis and more than \$2000 on the dump body. A lot of towns replace trucks after 8 or 10 years. A few replace at 12 years and a few run them into the dirt. He thinks it would be a good idea to shorten the period we keep them from 12 years to 11 or 10. We would get a better trade-in value and have less repairs. At this point he doesn't have a lot of data to support that recommendation.

Eric said it would be helpful to have some numbers going into town meeting. When we sold the town on going to a tandem axle truck part of the justification was that tandems hold their value better than single axle trucks and the thought was that with the loads we put on them we really stress a single axle truck. The thought was that tandems would last a little longer and 12 years would be manageable. We need data if that is not so. Brian K. said he can find some data. Mike said he thinks we need to stick with tandems. Brian K. said he would agree.

Brian K. said he was asked to be one of the members of a committee looking at the Municipal Roads General Permit related to reduction in phosphorus pollution.

8. Administrator's Report and Action Items

Brian S. handed out one draft budget version. He noted that he expects the amount to be raised by taxes to end up lower than what he has shown. There are a couple of line items he expects we will use to bring down the amount to be raised by taxes. He said this version of the budget includes all expenses to open the gravel pit and also the expenses we would incur if we did not open the pit. The budget allows for the possibility that we could try to reopen the pit and then for some reason find that we were unable to reopen it. This budget also speeds up the replacement schedule for tandem trucks. He left the next two replacements at 12 years but after that changed to 11 years. That requires a slightly larger contribution to the capital reserve fund than we had planned on.

He handed out a survey of other towns and their replacement schedules. For dump trucks, the average replacement is at 9 years. Twelve years is the maximum. He wants to eventually move it down to 10 years. He suggests finishing the round of replacements at 12 years that we budgeted for, but setting ourselves up to shorten the period in the future. Maybe the next round can be 11 years and then 10 the round after that. Eric said if this truck happens to be the lemon of the batch and the other two last 12 years with no major fixes needed, then we could go back to 12 years. Brian S. said if we have two bad experiences replacing trucks at 12 years maybe the third time we can replace a year earlier.

Brian S. said he changed the replacement schedule on a couple of pieces of equipment to be more in line with statewide norms. That will make it easier to pay for replacement of tandem trucks. He wants to replace the grader after 14 years, not 12. We are planning to buy a discer next year to help with berms on the side of the road, allowing reuse of gravel on the side of the

road and reducing erosion. The estimated cost is \$8K. He put the discer expense in capital reserve to get it on a replacement schedule.

Kyle said it looks like we are replacing pickup trucks a little more often than average. Brian K. said we will replace our current pickup truck at 6 years instead of at 5 as originally planned. He thinks that is good for that truck. We can talk about going out a little longer. We are moving to lighter duty pickup trucks. Last year we could have replaced the pickup truck for \$13,400 but since we waited until this year we will need to pay around \$7-8K more.

Doug said he thought the selectboard had said the new discer should be purchased out of the highway budget, not out of capital reserve, because it wasn't in the capital budget plan. Eric said he thinks that is correct. But when the board revisits the plan, which expires this year, we could put it in. Brian S. said he will move the expense for the discer out of the reserve fund and put it into the budget.

Board members agreed to the adjustments proposed to the replacement schedule.

Brian S. said because of increased work the highway department will have to do to comply, especially with the Municipal Roads General Permit, he thinks it would be prudent to hire a fifth highway department employee, maybe not this year, but soon. He thinks it would not be a bad idea to hire a fifth person for next summer. We certainly have enough work for them. That is a large driving force of this budget. It would be a full time person. He imagines it would be a relatively inexperienced hire. He budgeted for starting pay a little below Jason's current rate.

Mike asked if we will address the automatic overtime situation. Eric said prior boards have delegated the authority to manage overtime to the road foreman. A prior board decided that overtime is not only for winter but can be used as needed any time in the year. If employees had to come in at 2:00 am on Monday and there was no reason for them to be here on Friday, the foreman could give them that time off. He would hope the current board would reinforce the prior board's decision.

Eric said he suggested a few years ago that there would be benefit to having highway department employees working four 10-hour days in the summer. But he got pushback from the board and the highway department. If the crew worked 4 days instead of 5 there would be less time spent on setting up, transporting equipment, picking up and cleaning equipment. Additional hours could be spent doing work. Mike said he thinks that is a great idea. Especially in summer, employees like getting a 3-day weekend. Brian K. said he is all for a 4-day week. We would have to change the policy that overtime starts after 8 hours. Eric agreed we would have to modify the policy. He proposes that we think about doing this. He thinks it would increase productivity. Brian K. agreed.

Doug said we have been on the verge of hiring a fifth employee for a while. But he thinks by the time we get to the bottom of the budget we may find the money for a fifth employee has disappeared. Eric said we have been on the verge for years. What may finally tip the scale is the stormwater runoff work that has to be done. Doug asked when that work will start. Brian K. said some has already started. Our roads are not in compliance with the new regulations that will be

coming out. In years past most of our work has been just to maintain roads, not to improve them, but to be in compliance we will have to not just maintain but improve. At the current rate of improvement progress would be very slow.

Mike said he believes if any requirement comes from Montpelier the financial burden should not be on the town. He thinks every town ought to refuse to meet new requirements until they are paid for it. He feels it is criminal to put unfunded mandates on towns.

Doug asked if we need additional equipment if we get a fifth person. Eric said we probably wouldn't need to hire a part timer in winter if we had a fifth full time person. There is equipment used by the part timer that would be available. Brian said in summer there is enough equipment.

Eric said the amount to be raised by taxes in this budget is up by about \$117K, which is a little less than 6 cents on the Grand List. That will be a huge amount to swallow. This budget represents all we would do if money were no object. We need to decide where to make adjustments.

Nat asked if hiring a fifth employee would reduce the amount of overtime paid. Mike said we have built-in overtime already in the system. We will open Pandora's Box by changing that. Employees expect so many hours per year. If we hire another employee and others think they are losing their overtime because of him, they won't be happy with him. Brian K. said he thinks that is about how it would play out. Brian S. said if we reduced the overtime hours employees could work they would take home less money. It would be difficult for a new person coming into that situation. Reducing overtime is not an unreasonable request. Any private industry would want hiring a new person to help reduce overtime hours and would see overtime hours as a reason to hire another person.

Eric said we currently allow 300 hours of overtime for each employee and overtime for the foreman is built in. That is 1200 hours of overtime a year. He believes a full time position is about 1900 hours per year once you take out vacation and sick time. If we added that much labor it is reasonable to think we could cut back on the 1200 hours currently being used for overtime.

Brian S. said insurance cost is increasing but due to changes in coverage the total amount paid will drop by a small amount. Mike said he would like the budget to show a breakdown of what types of insurance are included in this line item. He feels we need to know what everything is costing the town and should not lump them all into one item. Brian S. gave the cost for each type of insurance (health, dental, long term care.) The bulk of it is health care. Nat said he thinks Mike makes a good point. Kyle and Doug said they don't feel a breakdown is necessary. Eric agreed. Doug suggested it would be good to have an asterisk and break it down somewhere else. The board agreed to do that.

Brian S. said the uniform budget dropped by almost 50%. The new vendor is cheaper. There are no projected changes for heating, electricity, phones, etc.

Brian S. said he is proposing to budget \$100K for paving and blacktop. This year \$95K was budgeted. Our actual paving expense this year was \$144K, but that was offset by grant funds. He budgeted \$10K for stone, allowing for the worst case scenario where we are not able to get into the gravel pit. He budgeted \$5K more for construction projects. That includes boring and testing for the new gravel pit. He thinks he can bring in a consultant for the closure plan with money from the general fund. He included a line item for Municipal Roads General Permit expenses.

There was discussion about the amount budgeted for winter parts and supplies and whether it could be decreased based on actuals for this year. Eric asked Brian S. and Brian K. to follow up on that. They said they will and they will reduce it if they can.

Brian S. proposes keeping the amount budgeted for winter salt the same. The hope is that the new additive will allow us to keep up with inflation. Brian K. said he has only had a chance to test the additive once. It does melt ice at lower temperatures when salt would not. He wants to test it further when we get more cold temperatures. Nat said after Brian has done testing he would like to have a conversation before Brian decides to start using it regularly. He has some real reservations about it. He thinks it is very hard on equipment and infrastructure because it works at colder temperatures.

There was discussion about how much to budget for parts and supplies for equipment. Brian S. will add \$8K to small equipment for the discer. Board members asked if it is needed before July 1, in which case it should be paid for out of the current budget. Brian S. said he and Brian K. hadn't planned on buying it this fiscal year.

The board discussed when to meet next and decided to try for Friday.

Brian S. said the estimated cash on hand balance for the end of this year is \$206,006. Rosemary said that figure seems high. Board members agreed. Eric asked Rosemary and Brian to review it carefully.

Brian S. said we have a draft copy of the rules for the Municipal Roads General Permit. He and Brian K. are going to have to get familiar with it. It will be a big cost driver. We have to do an assessment and inventory of all hydrologically connected road segments. We have a lot of them and a lot are on Class 4 roads we don't currently maintain at all. There are some that are inaccessible by car. There is a lot of work we are potentially going to be required to do on parts of Codding Hollow Road that aren't accessible by car. Eric said the board may be forced to throw up some Class 4 highways because of the expense of the required work. Brian S. said we would do more damage to rivers by accessing the inaccessible road than if we left it alone. Brian K. said if we improved to allow access then more people would drive on it, doing more damage and necessitating more repairs. Brian S. said he will talk to state officials and LCPC to learn more about interpreting the rules. We will have to adopt a plan. If we adopt the state standards there might be more grant opportunities.

Brian S. said we did an erosion assessment in 2014. LCPC thinks that probably can serve as our inventory so we might not need to do an inventory but we still need to develop a plan and

submit it by 2020. The state is going to be flexible about when we do improvements and they say they will be understanding about things like inaccessible sections of road. We will have to report on it twice a year and we will have to pay for this permit. This will be a cost driver for the next several years. Brian S. said he attended a training on this last week. Brian K. is on the advisory committee. They will go to more trainings and try to stay on top of it. If we don't have to redo the inventory that will buy us more time.

Doug asked if it is possible we would find it to our advantage to actually do maintenance on Class 4 roads. Brian K. said there will be fines after 2020. They have no idea yet what they will be. There are penalties for not complying. Brian S. said we probably will end up doing some maintenance on Class 4 roads. Doug said we will have to think about encouraging development we may not want through infrastructure development.

Brian S. said the first mechanism we would use to discharge any Class 4 roads we no longer want to own is the Certificate of Highway Mileage, so the board may not want to sign it tonight. He will first try to get exemptions for any roads that are too difficult to maintain. Eric asked if Brian thinks we will be in a better position to make a decision on the certificate a month from now or if we should just approve what we have and wait until next year to make changes. Brian said we should be in a better position but maybe not a good enough position. Doug said he thinks there are landowner and development considerations. He doesn't see that we will be in any better position next month. He thinks it will take 8-12 months or even 2 years to make a decision. He thinks we should sign the certificate now. Eric said he would recommend that as well. He doesn't think we will know next month what we would want to change.

Doug moved to sign the Certificate of Highway Mileage with the current classifications, Kyle seconded and the motion was passed with Mike opposed.

Brian S. said the current reserve fund plan goes from 2012 to 2016. We will probably want a couple of meetings specifically on this plan. We will want to write a new one.

Brian S. said we did not actually receive a contract for fire service this year. We were just asked to indicate our intention to accept the terms or not. Rosemary said she thinks we will probably receive a contract signed by the trustees later. She thinks what we received was just to tell contract towns how much the contract will be.

Brian S. will work on applying for the branding and marketing grant. He thinks we should do a local match for a portion of the funds. That is in our budget. The village has indicated they would provide matching funds. He is looking at a total project amount of \$20K with a contribution from us of \$5K. There would be two phases – first, hiring a marketing consultant, then next year the implementation phase.

Mike asked if this will be money well spent. Brian S. said it comes from what was discussed at the community meeting – branding, marketing, and advertising for the town, a new website for the town, trying to unify our identity and do more cross-promotion. Kyle said she thinks it is money very well spent. Eric said all the groups at the community meeting felt there should be a brand for the whole community. The Studio Center has its identity, the village has its own logo.

There are disjointed silos that are not connected. Somehow all should be under one umbrella. The school has hired a consultant to do similar work just for the school.

Brian S. said the selectboard had felt it was a little early to have a subcommittee working on branding and marketing ideas. The board wanted to get a consultant in first and not be too prescriptive to the consultant. Brian had a request from the Johnson Arts Council. If we develop a logo they would like to involve the community in the design through something like a logo design contest. He wanted to bring that to the board. He thinks it is a really good idea, but it is different from what the board had instructed him to do with the consultant. Should we instruct the consultant that we want that?

Kyle said she thinks it is a good idea but in logo design there are little things to consider that can make the logo good or bad. Brian said we would make it clear that we wouldn't take the winning logo as is. A professional graphic designer would finalize it. Mike asked if the Arts Council would take the lead. Brian said they would like to.

Doug said the village is proud of their logo. He thinks there should be consistency. He thinks the village and town and maybe other entities have to be on board. The village is the heart of this town. They have to be involved. We can't just address this ourselves. Eric said he thinks it was left that the town would take the lead on this work because everything is connected to the town. Kyle said her understanding is that the village's logo is really a utility logo. It is not intended to encompass businesses. She has noticed that all towns with villages have a village utility logo but also a larger town logo. Brian S. said we do currently have a town logo, but it is not in any easy to use format. It is on our sign. It is a covered bridge with a scroll that says "Johnson, Vermont." He thinks we do want to involve as many people as possible but he thinks the idea is that the town will be an umbrella group that will connect all the groups. Groups would still have their own identities and could have their own logos. We could pursue trying to get something more inclusive, but it might be hard to get all to agree.

Mike asked Donna her opinion. She said her opinion is that most people are not going to notice or care what logo the town has so this is largely wasted effort. Kyle said she disagrees. When you think of Stowe, what do you think of first? Their logo. Donna said that is not what she thinks of. She doesn't know what Stowe's logo is. Doug said when he tells people where he lives, he says he is 20 miles from Stowe. We will never get the recognition Stowe has, but it would be nice to have the unified vision Stowe has. Its name encompasses the ski area, town and village. Brian S. said all use the same official way of writing "Stowe." We are looking for something like that. Kyle said it is iconic.

Brian S. said we will work closely with Johnson Works to reach the business community. We will bring in the consultant and form a working group and we will instruct the consultant that we want to see community involvement in developing the logo as part of the plan. Mike said hopefully we will not spend too much on the logo. Brian said most of the money will be spent on the website.

Eric asked if the board wants an article about having 12 BCA members. Nat asked if there is any quorum issue. Would we be required to have more people at our meetings? Eric said usually

only selectboard members are required to be there. Any others are gravy. They are not good at showing up. Nat said in that case it would be good to have more. Eric said it would be the number of Justices of the Peace that would increase to 12. Doug asked why we want more. Nat said we have a hard time getting them to show up so if we have more on the board probably we will have more people show up to meetings and for counting votes, which is helpful. The board agreed to put this before the voters.

The board agreed to go first at town meeting and let the school go second.

Eric said he had asked the Secretary of State's office about the idea of offering a discount on taxes to those who attend town meeting. They replied that to their knowledge no one has ever done that before. They recommended getting opinions from VLCT, the tax department and our attorney. Does the board want to have an article on this? There would be the question of what it would mean if a husband and wife both showed up at town meeting.

Nat said a lot of people can't make it to town meeting for really legitimate reasons and this shifts the tax burden onto them, so he is not in favor of it. Eric asked what legitimate reasons. Nat said they may have to work or may not have transportation.

Mike said he thinks this would be more trouble than it is worth.

Doug said he agrees with Mike. He thinks this will be a problem when it is time to collect taxes. There will be questions about whether someone was or was not at town meeting. There is the husband and wife issue. People who are at town meeting will be happy to vote for it, but they are not truly representative of the whole town. It will benefit people at a certain economic level, who are the people who tend to be at the meeting. He is leery of it being viewed as economic favoritism.

Kyle said she personally doesn't think there is any harm in bringing it up for discussion. She feels passionate about community participation. Maybe the discussion will draw more people out. She doesn't see anything wrong with discussion about it that doesn't go anywhere.

Mike said he doesn't think we should even discuss or warn it. People will bring up the same things that have been mentioned here. We will find at the end of the day that it won't happen. And there are the hurdles mentioned in the letter Eric got from the Secretary of State's office.

Doug said there are a lot of people who own property in town who couldn't qualify because they are not residents. Rosemary said there are also a lot of people on the checklist who don't own property.

Eric said he will withdraw the idea.

Doug said he would like to encourage participation by advertising a discussion item about whether the town should take over the town clock tower. There is good reason to think that legally we shouldn't take it over and good reason to think that we should for community benefit. We should say that we are looking for guidance from the community. Eric said he would think

would want it as an article. Mike said he believes a lot of people will show up for that discussion. There was general agreement that this would be a good item for town meeting.

Eric said the proposed articles on increasing the number of Justices of the Peace and on the clock tower should be run by our attorney.

Mike asked if there would be a vote on the clock or just discussion. Eric said he not sure what the article would stipulate but we would be asking if the voters want us to go forward. Mike asked, it would not be an Australian ballot vote? Eric said no, it would be from the floor. Nat asked if the question would be whether to assume ownership of the clock tower. Eric said we would be asking for guidance about whether the voters want us to take over ownership of the tower or not. Doug suggested they might authorize us to negotiate with the Masons about ownership of the tower.

Kyle said people will need a lot of information to make that decision. Mike said it will cost \$50-75K to bring the tower up to snuff. Eric said he thinks that is a conservative figure. Brian said he thinks the cost would be at least double that.

Nat asked if we can we get Steve Engel's input. Brian said he will talk to him. He will show him the draft warning and the final copy.

Eric said we will see a draft of the warning at the next meeting.

Nat asked if the selectboard needs to do anything about childcare at town meeting. Kyle said she reached out to Dave Manning and Katie Orost. Her neighbor who does babysitting certification courses has committed to do one before town meeting. Her graduates would participate in the childcare part of town meeting. She is thinking there would be a back corner of the gym where children could be. Other board members said they didn't think that would be a good idea. Mike said he thinks childcare should be in the after school program room. Kyle said David Manning is going to get back to her to discuss how it could work.

Kyle said she reached out to a number of volunteer boards about the idea of setting up information booths. A few have gotten back with great enthusiasm. They are open to doing introductions and giving a synopsis of what they have been up to. The Historical Society has a display they want to put up with old pictures of past town meetings and they have brochures. They could possibly sell pie by the slice but the PTA has to give the green light for that. The PTA often includes dessert with lunch so we don't want to step on their toes and interfere with their fundraiser.

Brian said after the budget is done he plans to put a survey on Front Porch Forum asking what it would take to get people to town meeting. He thinks that is a good way to get a conversation going about what we do at town meeting and why it is important. He is thinking of hosting discussion groups about the town report and budget in advance of town meeting. Even if participation is low it gives us an opportunity to advertise and talk about town meeting. He thinks indicating that town meeting is important to us can increase support.

Doug asked if we can pay the PTA for the food and advertise that lunch at town meeting is free. Brian said we would have to get an estimate of the cost from the PTA. Rosemary said the \$5 per person they charge won't even pay for the food. A lot of it is donated. Eric said if we are paying for the food and offering it for free they may not get as much donated. Mike said he thinks the only way it would work would be to pay a caterer. Nat thinks it would be a disincentive for people to bring donated food. Doug suggested that Kyle ask the PTA about this. She said she will.

Brian S. said he may ask board members each to post something on Front Porch Forum encouraging people to come to town meeting so people are not just hearing from him. He also suggested selectboard members could make a point of being at town meeting early to talk to people before it starts. Nat said he thinks that is a good idea.

Eric said another idea that had been mentioned was having a selectboard meeting on a Friday night at the Hub for questions. A few years ago he had asked the owners of the Hub about using their stage. Maybe we should consider something like that. Kyle said she thinks that would be a good idea to humanize the board. Doug also said he likes this idea.

Brian said Manchester Mill is closing. He is looking at redevelopment. A suggestion has been made to look more closely at forestry products. He is not sure about that. He thinks that is a tough industry. Mike said he thinks Brian should have talked to the Manchesters before even bringing this up at a public meeting. Doug said before this meeting Brian didn't have direction or authorization from the board to talk to the Manchesters. He thinks we should ask them about their plans for the site and whether there is anything we can do to help. The board agreed. Brian said he will reach out to them.

The Act 250 permit has been granted for the development of 8 additional mobile home units in Highland Heights.

The state denied the extension request for the natural resource inventory. They want it completed by the original date, which is this May. The Conservation Commission and Arrowwood will determine whether the scope of the project needs to change. Does the selectboard want to weigh in?

Nat asked Brian to remind him why we requested an extension. Brian said it was taking longer than anticipated to do site surveys. Doug said they were having trouble getting landowner permission. Brian said Arrowwood has not said for certain that the scope will change. They said they would try to complete everything on time, but the Conservation Commission will talk about priorities if things need to get cut. Doug said he thinks there are highly competent people on the Conservation Commission and looking over their shoulder doesn't help. The board could spend its time elsewhere. Others agreed.

The sheriff's monthly report for November was sent out by email. Mike suggested sending a letter to Eden expressing appreciation for their response to our letter. Eric suggested letting Roger Marcoux take the lead on that. If something is sent it should probably come from all three towns. Mike said he thinks all three towns should send a letter. Eric said we might want to wait

until after town meeting. He thinks they are putting our request before their voters. Brian said he can bring it up to Roger at the next sheriff's meeting.

Brian said an executive session for personnel is not needed.

9. Local Government Day

Eric said Local Government Day is February 15. He would strongly encourage board members to go. It is a great opportunity. Board members can go into any committee room and provide testimony. Legislators are looking for community testimony. It is our opportunity to get in front of senators and representatives and express any concerns.

Eric asked the board to designate him as a voting delegate to the special meeting VLCT will have on Local Government Day. **Doug moved to designate Eric as voting delegate from the selectboard to the special VLCT meeting on Local Government Day, Kyle seconded and the motion was passed.**

Doug said he thinks we ought to have a presentation on Class 4 roads to give them – how many miles we have, the cost to fix them, etc.

Brian and Eric both plan to go to Local Government Day. Kyle will try to go.

10. Johnson Recreation Committee Request to Use Reserve Funds

Nat said the rec committee wants to purchase a portable batting cage for the baseball program. It will allow kids to practice before the fields are ready for use. It can be erected inside the gym. The quoted price is \$3909. The committee is asking for authorization to spend up to \$4K. **Mike moved to authorize the Recreation Committee to spend up to \$4000 from the Recreation Committee reserve fund for a portable batting cage, Kyle seconded and the motion was passed.**

11. Bulletin Board Policy

Mike said he had read in the village trustee board minutes that they had discussed the selectboard's suggestion for the bulletin board. Donna, who was present at that meeting, said they would rather not allow public posting; they would prefer that the bulletin board be used only for official posting. Kyle asked if they had seen the selectboard's proposed disclaimer. Donna said yes, they reviewed that but one board member suggested saying no to all public posting and others agreed. Scott said he thought the board should get a legal opinion and it appeared Meredith was going to get an opinion from VLCT. Mike suggested that if the trustee board is going to get an opinion and has not made a final decision the selectboard should just wait until they come back with something concrete. Others agreed.

12. Executive Session – Contract Negotiations Regarding Compost Facility

Kyle moved to enter executive session to discuss contract negotiations with the Lamoille Regional Solid Waste Management District, Nat seconded, the motion was passed and the board entered executive session at 10:17. The board came out of executive session at 10:43.

13. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:44.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths