

JOHNSON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES  
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
MONDAY, JANUARY 20, 2020

**Present:**

Selectboard Members: Mike Dunham, Nat Kinney, Doug Molde, Kyle Nuse, Eric Osgood  
Others: Brian Story, Rosemary Audibert, Jessica Louisos, Doug Osborne, Scott Griswold, Rick Aupperlee, Ellis O’Hear, Jessica Bickford, Jeanne Engel, Daryl West, Seth Jensen

**Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.**

**1. Call to Order**

Eric called the meeting to order at 6:02.

**2. Additions, Changes to Agenda**

A Beautification Committee update was added.

**3. Sale by Auction of Town Owned Mobile Home**

Eric said the amount owed to the town is \$5,499.95. He will open bidding at that amount and if no bids are received he will drop the amount by increments until there is a bid or a board member asks for a hold on bidding so the board can vote on whether to retain the trailer.

Mike asked if all the bills are paid. Eric said it looks like there is past rent of \$4K due.

Mike said the notice says the trailer will be sold to the highest bidder. If there is only one bid that person will be the highest bidder and the trailer will be sold to that person. Eric said the selectboard could put in a bid to retain it. *(Nat arrived at 6:05.)*

Eric opened the bidding at \$5,499.95. No bids were received. He dropped the amount in increments until it reached \$50. Nat said he thought the board should put a hold on bidding. Doug said this is probably a lesson for us on buying mobile homes at tax sales. We will have a rent payment coming due. If we dump the trailer instead of selling it, it will cost thousands of dollars. Eric resumed the bidding at \$40. There were no bids. He continued dropping the amount until it reached \$1. Mike said he isn’t going to bid, but the way the notice was written, he could bid a dollar and the trailer would be his. That is no way to take care of our town property. He wants the town to keep the trailer and try again to sell it. There are people who were interested but couldn’t make it tonight. Eric said they could have sent in written bids. Mike said there was a person who was willing to pay \$4000 for it, but he changed his mind. The iron was hot and we should have struck. Eric said we have to go through a process. Mike said it was mentioned the other night that we didn’t have to. Brian said we didn’t have to have an auction but we had to have posted notice of the sale.

Eric asked what the board wants to do. Mike said he talked to someone today who had a trailer removed for \$5K. He thinks we should try again to sell it. Kyle asked if there is a way we can get the word out better. Brian said we put it in the paper and posted it around the town using our normal avenues. Nat said it was on Facebook. He thinks we should try another auction or just put a price tag on it and sell it first come first served. Doug asked, do we have to put a price on it? Can we say we will sell it to the first person who comes in with

an acceptable offer? Mike said the village board used to sell property by giving people a month to send in sealed bids and then they would open the bids and sell it. Nat said he thinks we should at least come up with a dollar amount we want. Mike said he thinks we should try sealed bids and give people a month to submit them. We can put it out on Facebook and Front Porch Forum and in the paper. He likes the idea of a minimum bid of \$2K. Eric said \$4K is owed on back rent on the lot. Probably the trailer park owners wouldn't let the trailer be moved until that was paid.

**Mike moved to sell the trailer owned by the town through a sealed bid process with a minimum bid of \$2000, with bids accepted from today until the sale at the first selectboard meeting in March, Doug seconded and the motion was passed.**

Doug asked, is it our understanding that the new owner has to pay the back lot rent? Not the previous owner? Brian said that is what he believes based on advice he has received. Mike said he doesn't think the buyer should be liable for previous lot rent. They could be liable for rent that came due after we assumed ownership. Eric said we have been paying rent since we took possession. We have already paid just over \$1000. Eric said payment of back rent would have to be negotiated between the new owner and the owner of the trailer park. Mike agreed.

#### **4. Budget Review**

Brian said he added to the budget some funds to reduce taxes - \$15K from the estimated surplus for the 2019-20 fiscal year and \$37,500 from the Historical Society contribution for the remaining balance on the Holcomb House. The total added to reduce taxes is \$52,500. In the current draft there is a small reduction from the previous year in the amount to be raised by taxes. The biggest change since last time is the contribution of cash to reduce taxes, which was not in previous drafts.

The estimated surplus for this year is \$31,664. What we do with that can be tweaked based on the attorney's answer about putting that money into a reserve fund. (*Scott Griswold arrived at 6:25.*)

Brian said we got the final insurance figure from PACIF. It was almost \$10K less than what had been estimated. There was a reduction due to our good safety record. This is for property and casualty insurance and worker's comp. It does not include health insurance.

Brian S. and Brian K. tightened the highway budget. Our paving budget allows us to maintain current conditions. If we want to pave more roads or improve access we will have to make some changes. Nat said maybe that is a place we can justify spending a little more. When we get behind on paving it seems to him we end up spending more in the long run and residents have to pay more in car maintenance. He would suggest maybe putting a little more in there for paving. Doug asked what the next project would be. Is there anything we are putting off? Brian said Plot Road is waiting for us to either receive a grant or make a significant contribution. We suspect that will be a pretty major project. We think the road bed is not in good condition. Eric suggested keeping in mind that we could increase the amount budgeted for paving. There could be other areas we would want to increase.

Brian said one caution is that a significant amount of what we are using to reduce taxes is one-time money.

**5. Review Newport Emergency Medical Services Budget**

Eric said the board is interested in hearing an explanation of the significant increase in the NEMS budget. We understand one driver is a change in the budget year.

Scott Griswold of NEMS said NEMS has always been on a calendar year. In any given calendar year they would get less from the contract towns than what was in their budget because the contract was for July 1 to June 30. That always set them back a little. This year they are asking for \$327,780 for the calendar year. That is a \$20K increase for the calendar year. From January 1 to June 30 of this calendar year the contract for \$307,391 applies and then from July 1 to December 31 they would receive half of the contract amount for the next fiscal year. In order to make that add up to \$327,780, they have to make the contract amount for the upcoming fiscal year \$348,145, which is an increase of \$41K between the 5 towns. That gives them an automatic increase of \$20 for the 2020-21 budget, so as long as they have a good year this year, next year they should be in very good shape.

Scott said this year call volume is down. That is another reason for the increase. NEMS is working on expanding its territory. They are also working on contracts for transports, trying to increase their call volume. They have been able to bring administrative costs down because they added 5 towns in the Newport area. They didn't have to add people when they did that. Administrative expense is divided between this area and the Newport area based on income and now a larger proportion goes to the Newport area. If surrounding towns would look at what it would cost them they would see that regional is the way to go. Cambridge has about 300 calls a year and they are trying to maintain full time staff and ambulances. Their costs are extraordinary.

Nat asked, as you add towns do you add ambulances? Scott said they would have to.

Eric asked where there is opportunity for growth. Cambridge seems to want to maintain its own service and so does Morrisville. Scott said they are presently talking to Cambridge, but that would be for administration only. Cambridge is interested in keeping its own base.

Kyle asked if there is a theory on why calls are decreasing. Scott said he thinks we are losing population. This year their 911 calls increased but transports decreased. There were more services trying to do transports from Copley because they need income as well. If NEMS can schedule transports then they can do more of them because they will be less likely to conflict with 911 calls. Another factor is that Morrisville really got their act together this year. Previously NEMS was responding to more calls there.

Doug asked what Morrisville's cost per capita is. Scott said it is \$78 per capita, much higher than Johnson's per capita cost. He doesn't have exact figures for Cambridge. They own their building and ambulances and you have to take that into account and not just look at what they are paying year to year.

Kyle said she is wondering if this a symptom of a greater healthcare issue. In her family there are two times they probably should have called an ambulance and thought twice about it due to the expense. She knows other people are thinking twice about it. Is there anything NEMS is doing in Montpelier as an organization?

Scott said a key factor is reimbursement for Medicare. They are talking to Montpelier all the time about that. They are getting 60 cents on the dollar and they are getting more of those calls because the population is aging. If we have Medicare for all it will really hurt. For every call they would get 60 cents on the dollar.

Doug asked, is there a certain percentage of people you pick up who have no insurance? Scott said there are some. He thinks there are fewer than in the past. A big thing is non-transporters. By state law they can't bill unless they transport a patient somewhere. If they go to a car accident or fire and don't transport anyone they get no income. Mike said they perform a service but don't get paid. Scott said in most of those cases they just show up and don't perform a service. Dispatch will be conservative and put them on the road if they don't know what is going on at the scene. Nat said their only cost is the fuel. Scott said they could miss another call while they are there. It doesn't happen often, but it could.

Doug said he thinks the service we get from NEMS is a bargain for the price. Eric said we would be paying much more if we had stayed with Lamoille Ambulance.

Eric asked, NEMS expects this to be a one-year adjustment? Scott said yes, and then we will be on a new cycle afterwards.

**6. Budget Review (continued)**

Eric asked if Brian made any adjustments to the capital equipment plan. Brian said not to the plan. He is waiting on advice from our attorney. (*Jessica Louisos arrived at 6:49.*)

Doug asked what happens to the second \$37,500 we are to receive from the Historical Society. Brian said it depends when we receive it. The easiest way to handle it would be to receive the first payment July 1, 2020 so it goes into this budget, and then the next one on July 1, 2021. Doug said he thought we said we would take \$37,500 now and \$37,500 on July 1. Mike said that was what he thought too. Doug said Mike first moved to take all the money now, Eric suggested breaking it up for tax purposes and the motion was amended to take half immediately and half July 1. Then he thought the discussion later at that meeting was that it would make no difference. Brian said if we receive it in FY21 and want to apply it to FY22 we can just not spend it in FY21 and then it rolls over to be used to reduce taxes. Brian said he recalls that we talked about options but the motion was just to take the money in two payments without specifying when the payments were to be made.

Eric said if we take half now and half some time after July 1 we might as well take it all then. But if we get half on July 1 2020 and half on July 1, 2021 that will be in two separate fiscal budgets and we can show it in the budget. Mike said if we take it now, that is good for this year's taxes. Eric said there would be a reduction this year and then we would have to make it up next year. Doug said not if we only spend half of it.

Eric said the amount to be collected by taxes is less than the last fiscal year in this budget draft. The total amount we will spend is up, but that includes grant money. The bottom line is that there is not a tax increase. Brian said there would be decrease of less than a penny.

Eric said he thinks the school tax is going up 4 cents. And Brian's tax estimate is almost meaningless because a new grand list will be issued this year. Brian said the grand list will go up. It is not well-defined whether we pay the village the 10% of the grand list based on the current grand list or the grand list after the reappraisal is done. Eric said he thinks in the past we have always done it based on what was budgeted. But at the time we pay them there will be a different grand list. Brian said an argument can be made that the number we have budgeted for what we will pay the village is for the next fiscal year, starting July 1, and by then the 10% figure will be different. Eric said we always build our budget based on the current grand list and it always changes and we never make that adjustment. Brian said the reappraisal will be different from year-to-year changes. Eric said he doesn't think we have ever made that adjustment in the budget. Nat said it is not the first time we have done a reappraisal. We have precedent. Brian said in the charter document that talks about 10% of the grand list it doesn't define as of what date. Doug said maybe it ends up being as agreed on by selectboard and trustees. Brian said Rosemary recalled that the boards had come to agreement on this before. Eric said it used to be that we negotiated every year what would be paid. (*Rosemary arrived at 6:59.*) Eric asked Rosemary what we have done in the past to address the fact that the grand list will change from what it is while we are budgeting. Rosemary said in the past the two boards have come to an agreement in reappraisal years. Doug asked, an agreement on which year they will use? Or they pick a number? Rosemary said a number. (*Ellis O'Hear arrived at 7:00.*)

7. ***Review and Approve Minutes of Meetings Past***

**Mike moved to approve the minutes of January 7 and January 13, 2020, Nat seconded and the motion was passed.** (*Daryl West arrived at 7:01.*)

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

Rosemary said to date we are at about 52% of budget spent. We got the 3<sup>rd</sup> installment of state aid to highways.

Rosemary said we have placed an order for computers. They want a 50% deposit, which is in the orders. During the last power outage we found out our battery backup for the server doesn't work. Replacing that will cost \$450. Eric asked, will that be taken care of when backups are being stored off-site? Rosemary said no. Brian said the battery backup keeps us working in the office when the power goes off. Rosemary said it allows everything to be shut down properly. The weekly generator test bumps the power off. We are getting a new battery backup.

Rosemary distributed the list of delinquent taxpayers. There is currently \$63K in delinquent taxes that will be turned over to the attorney this month for collection. To date we have collected slightly more in current year taxes than at this point last year.

9. ***Road Commissioner/Road Foreman Report and Action Items***

Brian said we have spent about \$41K so far on the November 1 flood. That still leaves work on the low water crossing on Rocky Road. That will be an additional cost of about \$85K. To bring it back to what it was would probably cost more like \$40K. A low water crossing

resulting in washing out the road less frequently will cost more like \$85K and our share will be about 15%. (*Jeanne Engel arrived at 7:08.*) He is not sure any of our work done so far on Rocky Road would be applicable to the match if we did the Rocky Road project.

**10. Planning Commission Report**

Brian said the Planning Commission is working on electing a new chair.

**11. VAST Land Use Agreement**

Ellis O'Hear said Sterling Snow Riders got two grants. In order to get reimbursed they need a landowner permission form signed by the town. The two areas where they did grant-funded work were French Hill and East Johnson.

Nat asked about the status of the East Johnson area where VASA did some work. Ellis said they are going to wait until spring to rectify it. It is a dangerous spot. The work Sterling Snow Riders did is different from that. Nat asked if VASA had permission to work on our road. Brian said we granted them permission to do maintenance but not leave the project in that state. That was well outside the agreement we had. Ellis said that will be fixed. The work they did under the grant was in an area where someone logging off Sinclair Road cut into the side of the road, causing bank erosion. They smoothed it out and made it wider.

**Doug moved to authorize the board to sign the landowner permission form for the grant-funded work done by Sterling Snow Riders, Nat seconded and the motion was passed.**

Ellis said there is a section of the rail trail that he has heard is going to be closed for about a week while the state does some repair work. He asked if snowmobiles could run on the road to go around the section if signs are put up cautioning to go slow. He heard that bids are going to be opened tomorrow and the work is supposed to start next week and should take a week. **Nat moved to approve VAST use of River Road East between the location where the rail trail crosses River Road East near the town gravel pit and the Manchester property near Dog's Head for the period of time that section of the rail trail is not available, with the understanding that Sterling Snow Riders will put up signs, Kyle seconded and the motion was passed.** (*Ellis left at 7:19. Doug Osborne arrived at 7:19.*)

**12. Certificate of Highway Mileage**

Brian said there are no changes from last year to the highway mileage certificate. **Nat moved to approve the Certificate of Highway Mileage, Doug seconded and the motion was passed.**

**13. Overweight Vehicle Notices**

Brian showed the board overweight vehicles notices. He said the roads and weight limits are the same as last year but this year he is planning to start posting on March 1. Last year we started our coverage in the second week of March. He doesn't recall why we started then last year, but March 1 seemed like an easy to remember date. **Mike moved and Kyle seconded to approve the overweight vehicle notices as presented and the motion was passed.**

Daryl West asked how long the posting is. Brian said from March 1 to April 30. Daryl asked if that is a typical length. Brian said yes. He said last year winter dragged on a long time and roads were still relatively soft on April 30. If that happens again this year it might be worth thinking about changing the dates.

On February 5, Brian S. and Brian K. will be attending a training on weight restrictions to try to improve our enforcement.

**14. Carmine Sargent Cemetery Deed**

Carmine Sargent would like to purchase a plot in Evergreen Ledge Cemetery. Brian said the one she would like to buy is one of the ones Duncan has already reviewed. **Nat moved to approve the sale of a plot in Evergreen Ledge Cemetery to Carmine Sargent, Mike seconded and the motion was passed with Doug abstaining.**

**15. Review Sheriff's Patrol Budget Proposal**

Brian said the patrol budget is a 3% increase. (*Jessica Bickford arrived at 7:25.*) Roger Marcoux is interested in a multi-year agreement with us, during which time we would conduct research into law enforcement options. He is thinking about holding increases to 3% while we do that study.

Nat said Roger originally came to us with a 10% increase and we said we couldn't bring that to our voters. They way he brought it down was with a contribution from the Lamoille County Sheriff's Department. He is pitching in from other monies he has and reducing his personal salary to keep it at 3% this year. That means there are costs the taxpayers are being protected from for a period of time but we can't be protected forever. We will have to pay more or look at ways to reduce costs.

Kyle said that doesn't seem very sustainable. Brian said it's not. Roger wants a commitment from us that over the next few years we will be okay with 3% increases and during that time we will work on sustainability planning for law enforcement. Eric said we will probably be working hand in hand with Wolcott and Hyde Park if we decide to stay with the 3-town contract. Brian agrees we would want to work with our neighbors. He doesn't realistically see us saving money by going it alone. Going to the State Police is an option but we would see a serious reduction in services.

Doug asked what our increase usually is. Eric said usually it is 4 or 5%. Kyle said it is healthcare benefits that are killing his budget. Healthcare went up 69.5% in one year. Eric said the biggest driver there is that most of the new hires have gone from single to family plans. Brian said the increase is due to plan choice and rising cost. Nat said their staff is paying approximately 25% of their health insurance cost. Brian said the sheriff's department employer contribution is 75% of the premium and then they also make a contribution to the employee's deductible. We just contribute to premiums and nothing else except that if our employees choose a plan that costs less than the standard premium then we contribute to an HSA. We might consider for ourselves what Roger does. It is more variable that what we are doing but sometimes we would save money.

Brian said Roger would like us to commit for 3 years. He didn't give us a deadline for an agreement but Brian thinks we would want to start a steering committee in the next few months. Town meeting would be a good opportunity to ask for volunteers. Nat said he would like to recruit members with a fairly neutral view who are not coming in with an axe to grind. Brian agreed.

**16. Merger Study Update**

Brian talked to Kyle about when she could schedule an interview with Kent Gardner.

Daryl West asked if there is a public meeting next Monday. Brian said yes, at 6:00 pm on January 27.

**17. Light Industrial Park Update**

Brian said he and Seth Jensen were able to get together and talk about beginning the long form application for the same EDA grant we have been pursuing. We will apply under the second disaster category, the ice jam, which requires a new application and uses a different form. Brian has some work already done on it which he is handing over to Seth. He thinks we are very competitive for the grant.

**18. Beautification Committee Update**

Kyle said the Beautification Committee met last week. They revisited the projects sponsored this past year and talked about priorities for the coming year. They are interested in continuing with landscaping efforts on the village green and at the municipal building and they want to spend a little more to get the results they want. They are very happy with what Andrea Blaisdell did at the village green and are interested in hiring her to do a landscape design for the municipal building and to continue with phase 2 at the village green but they wanted to see how the trustees and the selectboard feel about that and about priority projects.

Doug said the committee also agreed that if they have money left this fiscal year they would like to put it into the planned arboretum. Kyle asked if everyone has been paid for last year's projects. Rosemary said as far as she knows all have been paid. Kyle said there is a little over \$1000 left and the committee felt good about giving that leftover money to the Tree Board's efforts with the arboretum. Brian said we shouldn't count on giving the entire balance to the arboretum if we want to have anyone start doing watering or planting before July 1. Kyle said that is a good point.

Kyle said Gordy was going to get in touch with Andrea about her phase 2 plan at least for the village green. Right now the plantings are in the back and she was envisioning that they would come out to the sides a bit too. We need to get more information from her about what that would look like. Doug said when the committee has a breakdown they can come back.

Nat said his priorities as an individual would be the signs on either end of the village and this building. The arboretum is in a place where not a lot of people will see it.

Brian said the committee discussed at least getting designs for this building.

Eric said it would action of the board to transfer the money. We probably need to find out first how much springtime money the committee will need.

Kyle said the Beautification Committee will write a report for the town report.

**19. Review Old Business**

Brian said the elementary school gym is not open on February 1 for the racial bias training. It is reserved for basketball. Eric asked what their available dates are. Brian said he is working on that. He will pick an available date and then come back to the board.



**20. Lamoille County Sheriff's Department Report for December 2019**

The sheriff's report was emailed out.

**21. Update Personnel Policy Re: Background Checks**

Eric said Rosemary was conducting interviews for assistant town clerk and treasurer and he and Gordy were assisting. The thought they had was that we should probably think about performing background checks for anyone hired in the office because of the amount of money that flows through there. That requires approval from the selectboard and the trustees.

Brian said we have been conducting background checks as a practice but that is not part of policy. Motions to hire have included the condition that the candidate must pass a background check. It would be better if it were part of our personnel policy.

**Mike moved to amend the personnel policy to add language presented by Brian stating that it shall be the policy of the Town of Johnson to conduct pre-employment background checks and make passing a background check a condition of all offers of employment unless specifically waived by the selectboard, Doug seconded and the motion was passed.**

**22. Railroad Street Flood Modeling**

Jessica Louisos and Doug Osborne of Milone & MacBroom gave a presentation. Milone & MacBroom has been working with Seth Jensen of LCPC on evaluating flooding along the Lamoille River in Johnson. The focus is on parcels where redevelopment might be occurring. They have been looking at what the hydraulic result of filling would be. They know there are some contaminated soils on some of the parcels. They are also looking at some parcels that could remain wild and be lowered down to allow more flood storage. They looked at the effect of raising the land on the Manchester Mill, Parker & Stearns and former talc mill properties. They started with the FEMA hydraulic model that was created decades ago and they did additional surveying to make the information more accurate. The floodplain and flood elevations changed somewhat based on the new information. In some places there is up to a 1.3 ft difference for a 100-year flood. They did updated floodplain modeling. She showed the area that would be flooded during a 100-year flood under today's conditions. They used the November 1 flood to compare to their model. Their model was within 0.2 ft at the USGS river gauge location. In general the flood matched well with their model and the model was within half a foot to a foot of observed values.

Jessica showed a list of alternatives they considered. One is filling all redevelopment areas with 1 foot of soil and one is adding 2 feet of fill. Those are pretty common amounts to put over contaminated soil to cap it. They also looked at cutting all flood storage areas down to the 10-year flood elevation or the 5-year flood elevation. Some other alternatives combined filling and cutting. One alternative is to balance 2 feet of fill on redevelopment sites with flood bench creation on each site. (*Seth Jensen arrived at 8:07.*) If filling and cutting could be balanced on the same site off-site flood storage areas would not be needed.

Doug Osborne reviewed the changes in the 100-year flood water surface elevation predicted by the model for the different alternatives. Filling alone would result in a flood level rise that is generally very low. Cutting alone would cause general decreases in flood elevations. Cutting to the 5-year flood elevation does not have much more impact than cutting to the 10-

year flood elevation. The results for the alternative that involves balancing cutting and filling on the same redevelopment site shows that filling could be balanced by cutting flood benches close to the river. It is possible to have no change in water surface elevations without having to do work on another parcel. The preferred alternative was adding 2 feet of fill on all redevelopment areas and cutting all floodplain restoration areas down to the 10-year flood elevation. The model indicates that would result in a few tenths of a foot of flood elevation decrease while still allowing redevelopment of all those areas at the same time.

Doug Osborne said next they looked at velocities. He reviewed changes in the 100-year flood channel velocity predicted by the model for the different alternatives. For the alternatives with cutting and no filling there is no velocity change across the whole area but in the area of the floodplain restoration sites the model does predict a drop in velocities. If ice jamming were occurring the ice would be getting out of the floodplain in those areas and not going on downstream.

Jessica said the predicted velocity changes are very small. She wouldn't be alarmed by the predictions, which show slight increases in velocity for most alternatives. With a permitting effort there is a much bigger focus on water surface elevation.

Daryl West asked if faster water is in theory worse. Jessica said it can be worse. It could create more erosion or there might be more scour if water is going faster through a bridge. Daryl said he knows faster water means less ice built up. Jessica said in this case higher velocity might not be a bad thing, especially if water slows down at an appropriate spot for ice and logs to get out of the river.

Daryl asked, the alternatives here are creating more cubic space for water? Jessica said the floodplain restoration areas will do that. Daryl asked about dredging. Jessica said they have modeled dredging and it doesn't work well. The river pulls it back in so it doesn't last long. When the channel is made deeper more water is stuck in the river and it goes faster as that happens, creating more erosion on the sides and destabilizing the banks. We have seen around the state that dredging causes more problems than it is worth. Bringing water out at appropriate locations works better. That provides spots for ice and logs to go. Daryl said he is not sure he agrees. He thinks there is benefit to having a channel of moving water that prevents ice from building up in the first place and having more space for water. Based on his experience, sometimes having water slow up and stop causes more problems. Jessica said we are stuck with the slope of river we have. The Lamoille is a relatively low slope river and we can't dredge all the way to the lake.

Rick Aupperlee said he has lived on Railroad Street for a long time. He was there during the 1995 flood. The Gihon was riprapped to protect the sewer plant. After that, he noticed more streambank erosion downstream from the riprapping. He would say the river has eroded 60 to 100 feet into properties on the Railroad Street side. The riprapping has increased sedimentation in the Gihon where it approaches the Lamoille. The bottom of the river bed is getting closer to the surface of the river. It culminated in a situation where ice froze to the bottom of the river. Riprapping to protect the sewer plant has led to people losing property, a hurdle for the Gihon where it joins the Lamoille, and increased flood proneness for the village.

Jessica said flood storage areas can be helpful even if they do not provide a huge change in flood elevation. In a large flood they are also areas where sediment can be deposited instead of just in the stream. Floodplain restoration area B on the river bend would alleviate some of the pressure in the confluence area.

Eric asked if the modeling took into consideration any of the Gihon. Depending on the type of event – how fast and how long the rain falls, etc. – the Gihon reacts differently and sometimes multiplies our problems. Sometimes the Lamoille is lower but there is more flooding because of the Gihon. He always wondered what effect it would have to try to increase capacity. Unfortunately the effects seem pretty minimal. The town owns Checkerberry Field and the skate park and could easily lower those. Would it be worth lowering them by 5 feet?

Jessica said they didn't look at floodplains on the Gihon. There is some modeling in place in that area but it was not included in this study. She thinks it would be worth looking at.

Daryl West asked what the flow rate is. Jessica looked it up. For a 100-year flood in this area it is about 18,900 cubic feet per second.

Daryl said he questions how taking out a farmer's field will make a big difference. Jessica said it makes less than half a foot of difference. But there are additional benefits.

Doug asked about effects on phosphorus. Seth Jensen said there is a definite benefit with regard to phosphorus levels in Lake Champlain. That is a component of this but for this study they focused on flood level.

Seth said with regard to the Gihon, this study was funded through the Brownfields program and it needed to be tied very specifically to the Manchester property and the talc mill property. If there is interest in the community we could talk about ways to study the Gihon and about finding the funding resources. The Gihon is obviously part of the puzzle.

Doug said with the focus on Brownfields this is for economic development. This is part of how we could get ourselves into using these properties. Seth agreed. He said to get state approval for capping by putting fill on either site we will need to show no net rise. This model is a critical piece of demonstrating that. Otherwise if there is contaminated soil the only other option is excavating it and sending it to the landfill, which would be much more expensive. This work provides information that will make redevelopment significantly easier.

Daryl said in his mind moving forward with redevelopment might be the only reason to move forward with any of these alternatives. His personal opinion is that it is not enough to help much with flooding.

Doug asked when we are getting a study on ice jamming. Eric said this summer. Seth said we will share this data with the group working on the ice jam study.

Doug Osborne said their study looked at the results of doing the preferred alternative for a 100-year flood and also for a 500-year flood. Higher decreases in flood level are seen for a 500-year flood. The difference gets bigger as the flood gets bigger. He showed on an air photo the difference between 100-year flood levels under existing conditions and with the preferred alternative. There is not a huge difference. He showed where flood benches would be put in to offset fill areas farther from the river.

Brian asked if they studied soil contents. Jessica said no; she believes that would be the next step. Seth said feedback we got from the area wide plan from ANR is that first we needed this report to confirm that capping could occur without increasing flood elevations downstream. That impacts how we manage soils. We know from this that we can do capping in place.

Mike asked if all the cuts are going to have large boulders for riprap. If we don't do that it will just cause more erosion. You can make things worse by making cuts. Jessica said they have done these in many different spots around the state. The areas to be cut down would be part of the river and allowed to flood. Often what is done it to put riprap back along the new river bank and dig it deep. If the river erodes into that area over time, that is allowed. Riprap wouldn't cover the whole surface. There would be a deep riprap wall.

Mike asked, have you done financial analysis of how much this would cost? Jessica said no. Mike said he thinks it will be astronomical. Jessica said it could be very expensive. That is why they feel the results for Alternative 7, which involves filling and cutting on the same site, are good for Johnson. It means each site is a self-contained unit and one site could be redeveloped with a reasonable amount of cost without having to do everything else they looked at.

Nat asked about the impact of flood redevelopment areas on roads. Jessica said for Area C the road might need to be moved over or we could have it flood occasionally.

Seth said cost benefit analysis would be required at some point, but we are not at that point yet.

Seth said the area in Jeffersonville under the new Greenway bridge is something like what a flood bench is like. It has been helping the river clean out sediments. Some of the work could possibly be funded with Brownfields remediation and redevelopment funding. What we learned in Jeffersonville if that half a foot reduction can be very significant in a major event. LCPC can help with anything the town wants to pursue regarding redevelopment or other priorities.

**23. *Executive Session to Discuss Communications by Town's Attorney Regarding Collective Bargaining Unit***

**Nat moved to go into executive session to discuss communications by the town's attorney regarding a collective bargaining unit as allowed by 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1), Kyle seconded, the motion was passed and the board entered executive session at 8:47. The board came out of executive session at 9:25.**

**24. Executive Session to Discuss Personnel Matter**

**Nat moved to go into executive session to discuss a personnel matter as allowed by 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3), Mike seconded, the motion was passed and the board entered executive session at 9:25.** The board came out of executive session at 9:39.

**Nat moved to make the salary for the Assistant Town Clerk and Treasurer position \$23.50, Mike seconded and the motion was passed.**

**25. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40.

*Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths*

UNAPPROVED