

JOHNSON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2018

Present:

Selectboard Members: Mike Dunham, Nat Kinney, Doug Molde, Kyle Nuse, Eric Osgood
Others: Brian Story, Rosemary Audibert, Brian Krause, Matt Rooney, Bobbi Rooney, Katie Crown, Sophia Berard, Mara Siegel, Scott Griswold, Dan Noyes, Dawn Locke, Richard Whittemore, Nichole Whittemore, Rob Rodriguez, Jasmine Yuris, Kim Dunkley, Scott Meyer, Greg Stefanski, Gary Clark, Will Jennison, Kathy Black, Beth Foy, Lucia Green-Weiskel, Peter Moynihan

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Meeting videotaped by Green Mountain Access Television. GMATV info: <https://greenmountainaccess.tv/>; PO Box 581, Hyde Park, 05655; info@greenmountainaccess.tv or 802-851-1592

1. Call to Order

Eric called the meeting to order at 7:01.

2. Additions, Changes to Agenda

Eric added discussion of selectboard members' seating arrangement. Brian Story added discussion of the recreation committee and the recreation coordinator position. Nat added discussion of a proposal for the front lobby.

3. Review and Approve Minutes of Meetings Past

Mike said he misspoke at the October 15 meeting. The minutes state, "Mike said the email board members received from the sheriff conflicts considerably with what is alleged to have happened." The board did not actually receive an email from the sheriff but did receive an email concerning the sheriff. It was agreed to add a note in brackets to the October 15 minutes explaining that Mike corrected this statement at the next meeting. Nat said "one other community member" in the list of those present on October 15 can be changed to Rob Rodriguez. Bobbi Rooney said the name of the snowmobile club she belongs to should be shown in the October 15 minutes as Sterling Snow Riders. **Nat moved to approve the minutes of October 15, 2018 with the changes discussed and the minutes of November 2, 2018, Mike seconded and the motion was passed.**

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

Rosemary said to date, almost 4 ½ months into the year, we have spent almost 31% of budget so we are on track. Delinquent taxes from last year will go to the tax sale attorney at the end of December. Current year taxes are about 55% collected for the year, which is close to the prior 2 years.

Rosemary asked if the board wants to leave holiday pay for employees at \$100, as it has been in past years. **Nat moved to give holiday pay of \$100 per employee, Mike seconded and the motion was passed.**

5. Road Commissioner/Road Foreman Report and Action Items

Brian K. asked if there were any questions about the salt shed cover replacement. Eric said it sounds like we were able to make repairs to temporarily get through until it can be repaired correctly. Brian said that is right. The cover will be replaced in the spring.

Brian K. said for at least 17 years we have been plowing a 0.2 mile section of Plot Road that belongs to Waterville. That section of road has a fairly steep hill and is somewhat troublesome. There is a better spot to turn around 0.15 miles before the end of Johnson's part of the road. He feels it is time to switch and have Waterville plow a small section of our road for the next 17 years. Our part of the road is better taken care of and it wouldn't be hard for them to do.

Eric said typically the board doesn't get involved in matters like this. It is between the two foremen. Brian K. said he will proceed to make the switch.

Brian K. said last Friday the crew started plowing around 3:00 am and plowed 3 times. In the evening the sheriff's dispatch called him and said that an officer reported that the roads were really icy and a vehicle had gone off the road and he wanted us to sand the roads. At some point employees need to rest for safety. Brian drove to River Road where the vehicle had gone off the road and all the way there he found that there were winter conditions but the roads were not slippery. He explained to the officer that he did not intend to wake up the employees to sand when they would have to get up early, because the roads were not that icy. He wanted to explain that decision to the board in the case board members heard about it.

Eric said sometimes board members do hear about situations like that, but the board has always supported the foreman's decision.

Brian S. noted that one employee's 6 month probation period has ended. The board could review his evaluation in executive session.

Nat asked if plowing Old Mill Park for winter access is working out okay. Brian K. said the crew has been plowing it. So far he has only been opening one parking lot as there has not been much use. *(Brian K. left at 7:19.)*

6. Planning Commission Report

Brian S. said 2 people have applied to serve on the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission has held the first hearing for the enhanced energy plan. They will deliver it to the selectboard and then we will have to have 2 hearings and the village trustees will have to have one. The hearings will be held at future board meetings. There wasn't enough time between the Planning Commission's meeting and this meeting to warn a hearing for tonight. The Planning Commission is talking about working on river corridors next. They are also looking to be more actively involved in economic development activities.

7. Review of Proposed New Highway Access Policy

Brian S. said our current highway access policy is serving its purpose but VLCT has a model policy that seems like it would clear up some issues. It would create a more formal process to go from review to permitting. A person would apply for a permit for work in the right of way. The application would be reviewed by the road foreman or road commissioner, who would sign off and issue a notice of permission to proceed. The permit would be issued after construction was completed and approved. Now we have little leverage if problems with the work are discovered after the project is completed, because we have already issued the

permit. The model policy would give us authority to issue fines if work is done that was not approved or if there is a problem with the way the work was done.

8. *Scott Griswold for Northern Emergency Medical Service*

Scott Griswold said NEMS is proposing a budget that would cost Johnson a total of \$121,135. Last year Johnson's cost was \$109,686. This year there would be an increase of \$3.32 per capita. They were able to keep the increase down because of the increased coverage in the Newport area. They added some towns this year, which meant adding staffing and ambulances but they did not need to increase administration so there was a decrease in administrative cost. Johnson's cost is \$35.15 per capita. Last year Morristown Rescue cost \$60.60 per capita. The number of calls out of the Johnson station for the year to date is 1,300. Of those, 281 were transfers. There were 503 transfers out of Copley to other hospitals. The number of calls went up this year and they expect the same next year.

Michael Paradis is retiring May 1 and will be replaced by Jeff Johansen, who started as an EMT, then became a paramedic, then became an administrator. This budget includes a new ambulance. Ambulances normally cost about \$180K but they are reusing an ambulance box and putting a new chassis on it, bringing the cost down to \$120K. All cardiac monitors need to be replaced to meet new requirements. They cost \$30K each but NEMS got a 50% matching grant which cuts the cost to \$15K each.

Eric brought up that last year NEMS was having issues with mutual aid imbalance. Scott said it has been great this year. There have been no problems with Cambridge or Morristown.

Scott said the budget increase is due to a lack of increases for Medicare and Medicaid and an increased number of people on Medicare and Medicaid. *(Scott left at 7:32.)*

9. *Review and Adopt Annual Weight Limits*

Brian gave the board a list of weight limits for our roads. He wants to move up when the board approves the weight limits annually to the start of the winter season rather than the start of mud season so we can get it out of the way earlier. We are investigating making a change to the customary language we add to the overweight permit. DMV will allow us to include conditional language in the permit. We could include language saying that vehicles are permitted when the temperature is below a certain amount. In the past it has been done by permission but DMV recommends avoiding verbal permission because if permission is verbally issued to one permit holder it is effectively issued to everyone. If we can't add a condition based on temperature we may do it by time of day. The board could adopt the weight limits for roads now and update the overweight permit language in the future. Eric suggested waiting and adopting the whole thing later.

10. *Katie Crown to Present Johnson Inclusivity Statement*

Katie Crown said she has been nominated by a group of 20+ Johnson community members to present a statement they have been working on that they believe represents the mindset of Johnson. The group believes this statement positively represents our town's mission to honor diversity and reject oppression. They feel the town's adoption and display of this statement will generate economic success and wellbeing for our town and community members and will welcome new businesses and families. They propose that the statement be included on the town website, newsletters and other town documents. With the adoption of the statement

the group plans to generate imagery to present to businesses, homes and streets of Johnson to further demonstrate our dedication to fostering inclusiveness.

Katie read the proposed statement:

The people of Johnson embrace inclusiveness and together we will build bridges to understanding, ensuring that all who live, work and visit our town feel welcome and safe. We reject racism, bigotry, discrimination, violence and hatred in all its forms. Together we commit to growing a cooperative, sustainable, and thriving community.

Bobbi Rooney said she is a business owner and a landowner in Johnson. After reading the community group's minutes it seems to her that the inclusivity group is racist and bigoted themselves. The original minutes (which have since been replaced) had comments about Republican bigots. As a business owner she is offended by the minutes. She thinks the group should apologize to Republicans as a first step. Many people don't feel included.

Katie said those minutes aren't professional. They are just notes taken at the meeting. The group doesn't have a hired person regulated by state standards. It was brought to her attention that there was language used that put "Republican" and "bigotry" in conjunction, which was inappropriate. Most of the people who have showed up at the community meetings have been of a more "hippy liberal" stance and the group was discussing how to make imagery and language relevant to both liberals and Republicans. The conjunction of "bigotry" with reference to Republicans was very inappropriate.

Kathy Black said she commends the group for bringing forward this statement. She works at the Vermont Studio Center, which welcomes people from all around the world to Johnson. Most have a great experience here. Last summer there was an unfortunate incident where two women of color were walking through town and someone yelled racial epithets at them from a car. They were extremely offended and hurt. One of them told Kathy that she had a life-changing experience at VSC in 2012 and she always thought that she had VSC to come back to and was crushed to think that might not be true. Johnson makes its place in the world by having people come here to the college and the Studio Center. Making people feel welcome is a really meaningful thing. She supports this statement and thinks it is great that we are discussing it here tonight.

Scott Meyer said he looked up what other towns have for mission statements. He doesn't see this proposed statement as a heavy lift or a divide. Hateful speech has to be addressed. Adopting a mission statement is pretty easy. Bennington's mission statement talks about getting along and treating the environment right. Other towns have statements about treating people with respect, treating the environment with respect and being socially responsible. He has been here almost 30 years and he has seen the town come close to being a utopian place and then take a nose dive. He doesn't see a big push to get this place back up where it belongs. There is no mission statement on our web page. We are looking for economic development and he feels a mission statement is key. He will push the village to adopt one but it would be nice if the town and village could have the same mission statement.

Kim Dunkley said she has a similar perspective. The proposed statement is a lot of words but it would be nice for people who get onto the town website to read it and know their welfare and safety are being looked at. She could see this statement being in the town plan.

Will Jennison said he is not opposed to a mission statement. But publishing one on the website or on letterhead won't change people. We will make ourselves feel better for a few days but it won't solve the problems. Standing behind the statement is much needed. How do we do it? We can start with the statement, then get people to authenticate it. He thinks the proposed statement is too wordy.

Lucia Green-Weiskel said she teaches at the college and is a new resident of the town. She is in support of the proposed statement. She doesn't think it is too wordy. She would suggest that those who feel excluded or offended join the group that has been meeting and bring about change from within. She feels this statement is tied to principles that make America great. The statement doesn't prevent people from speaking but it does change the climate of the town. It will percolate into the elementary school and from there it can affect adults.

Greg Stefanski thanked the board for taking up the statement. He said he knows it is not typical for the board to address matters like this but he appreciates that the board was willing to open up public dialog. He supports the statement. It won't change the world and probably won't change a person but it is a starting point. It gives us a vision to work from. There are actions boards and businesses can take that are focused on building community and connections. Tonight we have heard examples of situations when people felt harmed. Let's talk about building the community and about what to do when there is harm. Those things don't just go away on their own. We need to make a statement and then take some actions.

Beth Foy said she stands behind the statement. She thinks it is important for everyone to be behind it and for it to represent all views. Most organizations have a mission statement that is something they can all stand behind. She would be interested to hear how it could be changed to be more inclusive if anyone feels it is not inclusive.

Peter Moynihan said he would support the statement. He said we have had someone in town displaying the Confederate flag. That made him uncomfortable and he knows some people have expressed some concern about it. He would like to see the village and town make an inclusivity statement that we don't want that kind of attitude.

Will Jennison said the town can't infringe on people's rights. People can fly the Confederate flag or the BLM flag. He feels it is way off base to get that involved.

Peter said he agrees that the town can't tell people what kind of flag to display but he is offended by the Confederate flag.

Kim Dunkley said she wonders if anyone on the board has an interest in being a liaison to a group that comes together when an issue comes up or to a person who has an issue.

Doug said before the flood took out the Grand Union there was a group that reminds him of Katie's group – Johnson 2020. They were pre-empted by the loss of our market. In his opinion Katie's group could work on the same things. There is a role for community involvement.

Doug moved that the selectboard adopt the inclusivity statement as proposed, seconded by Kyle.

Kyle said JES principal David Manning emailed a statement. He supports the proposed statement. At JES they strive to help every student feel safe and welcome so the goals of this statement match theirs in that respect. Kyle said she supports the statement. Studies show the importance of working to prevent hate crimes. There was a 4-fold increase in hate crimes in Vermont over a 2-year period. We can't wait until incidents happen. We have to work in our communities and do education. She thinks adopting this statement is a first step. Silence is acceptance.

Mike said Katie had mentioned that the minutes from the community meeting weren't professional minutes. Because the group is not an official town organization they can amend or sanitize their minutes. But it is obvious that someone at that meeting did make a statement about how to relate imagery to Republican bigots, implying that Republicans are responsible for bigotry. He is a Republican. In his family he has Native Americans, Latinos, African Americans, people from India and people who live alternative lifestyles. To call him a bigot is insulting to him. He is not looking for an apology but to him talking about other people that way is not building bridges in the community. Johnson elected a Republican governor. Rhetoric of this sort disenfranchises hundreds of neighbors. He has no problem with the proposed statement but he has a problem with some of the people involved in putting this together. He thinks the town should decide this, not the selectboard. He will abstain from the vote, not because he rejects the statement but because he thinks the town should decide.

Katie said she hears that the language in the minutes hurts. The meeting notes misrepresented the conversation that occurred so they were amended. The group wasn't discussing making imagery where Republicans were hateful and harmful. They have been missing Republicans at these meetings. The meetings are for everybody. Taking notes has been a learning experience for her. She is very sorry for the way Mike and Bobbi felt harmed by the relationship between Republicans and bigotry that was implied. This proposal is not about the community meetings. She put this out to the selectboard and on Front Porch Forum, not just the small group who came to the community meeting. She thinks everyone should have a voice in this. She really wants to echo what Kyle was saying about silence being acceptance. It breaks her heart a little that harm from the notes would make Mike not vote on the statement because not voting is acceptance and being complicit in hate, racism, etc. She would love to see him vote tonight.

Nat said he was at a couple of the community meetings. He did not hear anyone say Republicans are bigots or use those words in the same sentence. He was embarrassed when Bobbi pointed out that language in the minutes but he didn't hear it said and he doesn't

believe it was said. The motion is about this particular statement, which he really likes. He is proud to endorse this statement.

Eric said he doesn't see where anyone could disagree with the statement itself. It is very inclusive. He agrees with Will on the wordiness. He thinks it could end right after "embrace inclusiveness." He is afraid if we put it on letterhead and on the website people will look right over it because it is too much. If it is one sentence they will read it and we will get the meaning across with fewer words.

Kyle said if you are a person of color you would not skip over the rest.

Eric said a mission statement is usually one short sentence. If we make it shorter people will read it and it will fulfill its intended purpose.

Doug said the City of Lewiston has a 14-page policy. He doesn't know how we will fit this on letterhead. He thinks it is good to make a statement and then tell people what we told them again.

Brian S. said we would not necessarily have to implement the whole statement in every context. We could have the whole thing on the website and use just part of it in other contexts. But the whole statement could be adopted by the board.

The motion was passed 4-0 with Mike abstaining.

Bobbi asked, now that we have voted for non-discrimination, does that mean the snowmobile community can come into the community of Johnson?

Nat said this board hasn't prohibited snowmobiles from coming into the village. Eric said we want snowmobilers downtown spending money. (*Many community members left at this point.*)

11. Review Updates to Animal Control Policy

Brian S. showed the board a new draft of the animal control ordinance with changes that had been requested. Most of the changes were focused on Article 9. Our concern was that it interacted in unintended ways with state animal control guidelines. They have guidelines about how to conduct vicious dog hearings and we wanted to have similar hearings for potentially vicious dogs. But we had written something that would preempt state law, which can be done only with a vote from town residents. All we intended was to state that when holding a potentially vicious dog hearing we will follow the same procedures the state outlines for vicious dog hearings.

Eric asked if this draft is the same as what Wolcott and Hyde Park have. Brian said the old policy was, but this one is not. Eric said we wanted a uniform ordinance between the 3 towns. Brian said he can bring it up with them. They are aware there are issues.

Scott said when he previously looked at a draft ordinance it had temperature ranges for dogs. Brian said we amended it based on Scott's feedback. He believes we changed from naming

specific temperatures to saying the temperature must be appropriate for the breed. (*Scott Meyer and Kim Dunkley left.*)

Eric suggested running this draft by the other towns because we want a unified ordinance.

Brian said under the original ordinance there was virtually no burden of proof for asking for a potentially vicious dog hearing and no discretion about whether to hold one. It created a situation where someone could potentially use the selectboard to harass someone by repeatedly asking for a hearing. With the language in this draft the board can decide not to act if they think a claim has no basis.

Brian said he will take this draft to the neighboring communities.

12. Appointments to Fill Planning Commission Vacancies

Kyle moved to appoint Kyle Hill and Greg Tatro to the Planning Commission, Mike seconded and the motion was passed.

13. Appointments to Fill Development Review Board

Brian said all those interested in being on the DRB have completed the training except for Will Angier, who will complete it soon. They will adopt their own rules and procedures and elect a chair. He doesn't know if they will give reports to the selectboard or if he will serve as liaison between the two boards.

Nat said 5 people have already been appointed to the DRB. In addition to those, we need two alternates. He doesn't remember discussing the other two people who want to be appointed. He doesn't know them. One, Will Angier, has posted on Front Porch forum that he is against form based code. Nat is curious about why he wants to be on the DRB if he is against it. It was agreed that Brian should ask the two people who have not yet been appointed to come to the next meeting.

14. Updated Deed for Evergreen Ledge Cemetery

Brian said we don't have the updated deed for Evergreen Ledge Cemetery. It will be forthcoming. His suggestion is to sell a lot to Don Sargent under our current deed. There is some confusion about how the old Evergreen Ledge Association relates to this. There has been no activity from them since 1988 but we are still exploring how that works. His suggestion is approve the sale to Don pending the resolution of that question.

Mike asked if we are going to change the lot size ourselves to something smaller than what was on the drawing. He doesn't want to spend money to pay an architect to redraw plot lines. Brian said we can subdivide them ourselves.

Doug asked, is there some question about whether we are the proper party to convey a lot? Brian said there is. Eric said if a cemetery association is formed in a certain way it can require the state legislature to dissolve it. Brian said the question is whether the town or the cemetery association actually owns the cemetery. The cemetery has been in operation since before the association formed so it is not likely that they own all of it, but it was expanded after the association existed and the association at least owns the expansion. The part where Don wants to buy a plot is not in the expansion.

Nat moved and Mike seconded to convey a lot in Evergreen Ledge Cemetery to Don Sargent if it is determined that the town owns the lot.

Doug said he is not sure about this. He will vote no. He thinks we should resolve first whether we own it and are the proper party to deed him the lot. He suggests voting the motion down. Mike said he thought the motion was that we would proceed after we confirm we have ownership. Eric agreed that was his understanding. **The motion was passed with Doug opposed.**

15. Review Draft of Town & Village Merger Study RFP

Brian shared two drafts of the merger study RFP. One was emailed to the board a couple of weeks ago. The trustees have seen it and were not supportive of it. They didn't like the idea of getting recommendations. The more recent draft, instead of asking for recommendations, asks for next steps for a variety of different scenarios we might want to pursue. This might be more palatable to the trustees because we are not asking for a specific path.

Mike said if we modify the draft again he wonders if the trustees will have another concern and we will get to town meeting and have done nothing. If they don't want to play ball he thinks we should go it alone. Eric said we wouldn't want two competing RFP's and two different opinions coming in. But with the amount of money the village is authorized to spend he doesn't think they could get a good analysis.

Doug said the previous proposal didn't ask for a recommendation. He tried calling Brian but he was out of town so he spoke to Meredith and told her that as far as he is concerned if the RFP doesn't ask for recommendations he considers it a waste of money. He told her he was speaking only for himself but there may be others who agree with him. He wanted a concrete analysis. He wanted to alert the trustees and he thinks they were reacting to his opinion. He thinks it is good to have a unified RFP. It would be good to have a discussion with them. He feels Brian's second draft is more useful because it doesn't call what we are asking for a recommendation.

Beth Foy asked about the wording of the article the town voted on. Did it call for a recommendation? Eric said the town's article was pretty open ended. The village has limitations such as a \$4K cost limit. Beth asked if there were any words describing the study in their article. Eric said he doesn't believe so. Brian said recommendations were not mentioned in either discussion or article, just pros and cons. In the village there was discussion that the RFP should be made public before it is put out.

Kyle said she believes our intention was to get a concrete analysis. She would like to work together with the village. Is the village aware that we could do this independently? Has there been a statement to that regard? Brian said not to the trustees.

Nat said he agrees with what has been said.

Eric said this board very strongly wants to see recommendations if we are spending money on a study. Brian asked how the board feels about not getting one specific recommendation but recommendations for different options as in the second draft. Eric said we want recommendations. If the village doesn't want that we would have to decide if we want to do the study on our own. The most we will have before town meeting is the selection of

someone to do the work. We won't have agreement from the trustees until maybe the next meeting. Mike suggested going ahead now without the village. Eric said we still probably won't have anything back from the consultant before town meeting. Mike said we have let the town down. He thinks they expected something by town meeting day. Eric said we couldn't start the process until the village had their annual meeting. Nat said there is an expectation among people who were at town meeting that this would be completed. He knows that impression is out there. Doug said he feels the most recent draft is the best way to move this along. Nat said he feels we should try to work with the village.

Mike moved to go forward on issuing the RFP for the merger study without the village. Lacking a second, the motion died.

Doug read what the RFP calls for as far as study goals and deliverables. Eric said we have to make sure what we get back is not subjective, not something we could read and think we should merge while the trustees read the same thing and think we shouldn't merge.

Beth asked who the stakeholders are. Eric said the town and village. Beth asked, not the community? Brian said his intent was to include the perspectives of residents, staff, board members, etc. He thought of residents as stakeholders. Maybe we need to clarify the definition of stakeholder.

Eric said there very likely will be a lot of ways a merger will benefit the town but not the village or vice versa. We should have what is best for the community, not what is best for the town or the village.

Mike said the village is continuing with their charter change. Nat said the minutes of their last meeting show they put it on hold. Brian said that was not because of the town's recommendation but for other reasons.

Eric suggested giving the trustees one more opportunity to accept the RFP and then if they do not accept it we can decide whether to go ahead with the study on our own.

Brian asked if there are any changes the board wants to the RFP besides clearing up the definition of stakeholders. Doug suggested we might want to talk about different layers of the town and village, such as the fire department, the town highway department, sidewalks, drainage, etc. Brian said he thinks clearing up what we mean by stakeholders would help address that.

The board agreed the language about addressing different scenarios rather than specifically calling for recommendations is okay.

Eric said if the trustees approve the RFP we should be ready to approve it after their next meeting. If they don't, we will look at our options.

16. Rec Coordinator Position

Brian said Heather Rodriguez is resigning from the Rec Committee. The committee will have a hard time performing their regular services without her. Nat suggested, and Brian agrees,

that it would be a good idea to use the money budgeted for the rec coordinator position to pay Heather for the rest of the fiscal year. After town meeting we can look at expanding the hours and duties of the rec coordinator position. Eric said we budgeted for a rec coordinator and we have not spent that money yet. We have enough that we could add hours to the rec coordinator position for the rest of the fiscal year. Brian said he would like to spend the money budgeted to pay Heather for the rest of this fiscal year, if she agrees, and then create a new position for next year. We could increase the hours for the rest of this fiscal year because we haven't used any so far. Eric said Brian should look at how many hours we can offer with the money we have.

Doug asked who Heather would be answerable to. Brian said to him.

Kyle asked what the plan is if Heather declines. Brian said we will have to rely on volunteers. We don't have another person lined up. When we ran the search last time Heather was the best candidate. He hopes she applies again for the expanded position but he thinks it would be worth it to run a job search.

Doug asked what the Rec Committee's role is with regard to Heather. Brian said she would work with them but administratively he would be in charge of her, with the selectboard above him.

Nat said there need to be well-defined, specific tasks to give to her. The problem is that there is not a lot of separation between her life and the Rec Committee now. Dealing with the public shouldn't be Heather's responsibility or a volunteer's responsibility. Maybe it should be Brian's but he doesn't have much time. Longer term we need more capacity in the office.

Beth said it seems like the committees that thrive have one person who is a driving force and once they burn out the committee dies. If the rec coordinator can be that driving force it could be good for the community.

Kyle said she thinks it would be good to have community-wide calendar coordination including the college, JES, etc., to prevent conflicting events

The board agreed to offer to pay Heather as rec coordinator using the money that was budgeted for the remainder of this fiscal year. After that, the board may expand the position. Doug suggested telling Heather that there is interest in exploring a larger role and the process of selection has yet to be determined. Eric said it is hard to discuss a single budget item now when we haven't looked at the whole budget. *(Beth Foy left at 9:19.)*

17. Budget Priorities for 2019-2020 Fiscal Year

Brian said we wrote our capital plan assuming replacement of tandem vehicles after 8 years but we said we would review it this year. The numbers are not definitive. He is still working on a list of repairs but it looks like the truck we sold this year performed better towards the end of its life than the previously replaced truck. Eight years is around the average for other communities but 10 years is not outside the norm.

Eric asked if the board can have maintenance costs for the individual trucks as they went from 8 to 12 years. Brian said he should be able to get that data together. He will give the board more detail at the next meeting.

18. Health Care Options

Brian said we can now join a healthcare association. That would save us a small amount of money. The available healthcare associations all use Blue Cross/Blue Shield. We would pay a dues fee to the association and our employees would be able to choose one of the select plans. They restrict what plans are available. Employees wouldn't be able to choose from the full range of plans. Last year we started offering all Blue Cross/Blue Shield and all MVP plans. Joining an association would save us less than 5% and it would cut down on employees' choices. For the two associations he looked at the number of plans employees could choose from would go from 12 or more down to 2.

Doug asked how many plans employees choose. Rosemary said 3 or 4.

Brian said he would recommend against joining an association. Eric said that has to be a joint decision of the trustees and the selectboard. He will talk to Gordy about it. Maybe the RFP can also be discussed at a joint meeting. Mike said he thinks we should only talk about the healthcare. We weren't going to have joint meetings until the East Johnson sewer transfer was done.

19. Update on East Johnson Sewer Transfer

Brian said we will soon have a final draft of the East Johnson sewer quit claim deed. The last task was to research any easements the town had for crossing private property outside of the state or town owned right of way. We found a couple of easements that will be added to the quit claim deed to make sure they transfer with the property. The village has requested that the town provide a resolution stating that we will either provide labor to uncover the sewer manholes or reimburse the village if they have to do it.

Nat moved to approve the following resolution: We resolve to work cooperatively with the village to uncover the manhole covers on Sinclair Road. The motion was seconded and passed with Mike opposed. He said he voted no because it has been stated several times already in selectboard minutes that we will do this.

20. Beautification Proposal for Village Green

Brian presented a beautification proposal for the Village Green. Eric asked why this is before the selectboard. We have nothing to do with the Village Green. Brian said this proposal was brought forward by the Beautification Committee.

Doug said the Village Green is village-owned but has community wide impact. Brian said he thinks the proposed work could have great impact for downtown. The Village Green is not very eye-catching as it is now. He thinks the plan would help separate the parking area from green space. The plants selected are hardy and resilient and should survive well in that area despite salt and sanding.

Mike asked if the town would bear the whole cost or if the village would pay half. Doug said he thinks the whole cost would be borne by the town Beautification Committee. Mike asked, the village is not going to incur cost? They are expecting us to pay? Nat said they are not

expecting it. This is an offer from the Beautification Committee. Doug said he doesn't think the trustees know much about this plan except that Gordy is on the Beautification Committee. The Beautification Committee thinks this is where it can spend money and have the most impact. Kyle said the Beautification Committee has always been about beautifying our downtown area.

Eric asked when the work would be done. Doug said the committee is trying to get it into this budget year. It would be done in spring. Kyle said the estimated cost would finish off what is left of the money budgeted for the Beautification Committee.

Nat said he thinks the areas Peter Moynihan was working on would have benefited from a well-developed plan like this. Can this effort be put into those common areas instead of the Village Green or is there a way to better plan for those areas?

Kyle said the person who came up with the plans for the Village Green is not interested in doing maintenance. She is just the landscape designer. She would make the plantings and nurture the plants at the beginning and come once during the season and once at the end. But she would not be doing weeding, etc.

Doug said he hopes this turns out to be a template for expansion. Kyle said the same person could come up with a design plan for the other areas. Nat said that is what he is thinking. We need better planning for the signs at the edge of town. If we spend what is proposed for the Village Green we won't have money in spring for the other areas. What are our priorities?

Eric said if we spend money on the Village Green that would be an item that would be supportive of a merger. Doug said he would say that the village would have to agree to let us do the proposed work there.

Doug moved to approve the beautification proposal for the Village Green, Kyle seconded and the motion was passed.

Brian said he will take the proposal to the village.

21. Discussion on Personnel Policies for Joint Employees

Brian said some time ago we had made a request to the village that they not add things to personnel files of joint employees without notice to the town. The town has added positive things to employees' files without providing notice to the village. Eric said we should provide notice. Brian agreed. The village hasn't been informed of those additions but he will let them know. In past discussions additions to personnel files were always imagined to be negative. Positive additions weren't envisioned but Brian thinks the same principle should apply.

22. 1st Offense Warning for Tobacco Product Sale at Sterling Market

Brian said Sterling Market received a first offense warning for sale of tobacco to a minor. They are going to get a letter of warning and a license suspension of one day.

Eric said in the past for a first offense we have just sent a warning letter. We have not taken additional measures. The board agreed to send Sterling Market a letter reminding them that we could suspend their license for a longer period.

23. Lamoille County Sheriff's Department Report for October of 2018

The sheriff's report was sent out.

Nat said Roger Marcoux proposed that we consider an ordinance having to do with false alarms. LCSD has responded to quite a few. There is a cost to the taxpayer. Morrisville has an ordinance. Brian said Stowe also has one. They are the only ones in Lamoille County. Nat said he thinks it might be a good idea.

The sheriff's report was sent out.

Eric said the next sheriff's department advisory meeting is next Monday at 6:00 pm.

Brian said the budget increase projected for patrol is a little more in line with what we are used to seeing. There are no real surprises. It is an increase but not extravagant. They gave two options for the communications budget. One is a slight decrease and one is level funded. If we level fund they will be able to buy new consoles. Their request is for level funding.

24. Johnson Revolving Loan Fund Update

Brian said the sale for the revolving loan fund has been completed. We have to file some paperwork to get on as a 3rd mortgage.

25. Light Industrial Park Update

Brian said he is expecting to hear back soon about the Municipal Planning Grant for the industrial park. He is still working on the EDA grant. It will cover both final engineering and the first phases of construction and site prep. If we get the Municipal Planning Grant we will use more of the EDA funds for construction and site prep. If we don't get the Municipal Planning Grant we can use EDA funds for final engineering.

26. Review Old Business

Brian said the stop sign ordinance and speed limits are still close to being completed.

The board asked Brian to follow up on a possible study on flooding and freezing in Johnson.

Brian said he has two new drafts of the dilapidated building policy to send out.

Eric said he had an inquiry about selectboard member seating and if it could be changed. Each new member of the board has taken the seat of whoever they replaced and it has never been changed. Whether or not the seating is correct is a good question. He thinks it could be modified. He feels the chair should be near the center with the vice chair to his left and the other senior member to his right and the junior members on the ends. That seating arrangement could be achieved if Doug and Nat trade places. It could change in the future depending on seniority or election of officers. It could be more fluid than what it has been. For the next meeting he will ask that Doug and Nat change places.

27. Proposal for the Front Lobby

Kyle said she has been told several times by community members that they would love to see the front foyer area looking nicer. Linda Hill is willing to donate time to making the front

entryway more inviting. She would need the cost of materials covered. She could come up with a proposal.

Eric said it would be good to have a proposal. It is not our decision alone. Kyle said maybe this could be discussed at the joint meeting.

Nat said it would be really nice to spruce up that area and make it something we could be proud of. Now looks a little like a closet.

Doug asked if there are any other stakeholder groups besides the trustees and selectboard who need to be involved. Eric said Rosemary is the boss. Nat asked if it is okay with her. She said yes.

28. Review Old Business (continued)

Brian said we got another note from Bill Frankfurter about turning on the lights. Eric asked if anyone went out to his place yet. Brian said not yet. He will get in touch with Bill.

Mike said someone asked him why the town decided to put streetlights there. Eric said it was done well before our time. Mike said it is difficult if someone moves to an area where streetlights have been on for years and then they are turned off. But we have discussed that there are probably as many people who are happy the way things are now. So it's a tough call. He wouldn't mind reconsidering where the board made its budget cuts. Other board members did not indicate a desire to reconsider.

29. Executive Session for Employee Evaluation

Mike moved to enter executive session under 1 V.S.A. § 313 for the purpose of reviewing personnel records, Kyle seconded, the motion was passed and the board entered executive session at 10:03. The board came out of executive session at 10:25.

30. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:26.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths