

JOHNSON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES  
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2018

**Present:**

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

Others: Brian Story (by phone), Rosemary Audibert

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

**1. Call to Order**

Eric called the meeting to order at 6:00.

**2. Additions, Changes to Agenda**

Nat added a request from a neighbor to put lights on Sinclair Road.

**3. Review of Town of Johnson Revolving Loan Fund Application**

Brian said the applicants are applying for a loan of \$52K. Under the new guidelines the loan period would be 15 years. He suggests we use that period rather than the one specified in the current guidelines. Under the current guidelines the board has the discretion to make changes. Applicants Allison Tafuri and Chris Ferguson have been successfully operating Downtown Pizzeria. They are working on purchasing and renovating the building. They want to fix the apartments upstairs and make changes to the restaurant downstairs. They have applied to Union Bank and VEDA for funding. Their application to us is for working capital to support regular operation of their business during this time. They have been reviewed by VEDA and Union Bank and by John Mandeville on our behalf. All three found them to be credit-worthy and they believe they can sustain the debt load. Their debt obligation will be a little on the high side but they have a good history of successful business operation so they are considered likely to be able to repay the loans. Their application is recommended for approval by all our sources. Both Union Bank and VEDA reviewed the complete package and assumed our loan would be part of the package. They believe they will be able to repay all 3 loans. They don't believe that without our funds they would be able to successfully complete the purchase and renovations and continue regular operations.

Mike said the bank wasn't willing to lend them the whole amount. They must have felt there was some risk in lending that amount. Doug said he feels the three loans spread the risk.

Doug moved to authorize Brian to execute the loan commitment to Allison Tafuri and Chris Ferguson. He said he thinks the documents should refer to real property, not just buildings. Mike said he thinks the board should review the application documents in executive session before voting. Doug said he feels we are delegating the review to John Mandeville. Eric said he doesn't feel qualified to make a judgment. He is relying more on John Mandeville's judgment and the knowledge that Union Bank and VEDA are willing to make loans. Lacking a second, the motion failed.

**Mike moved to go into executive session to review sensitive loan application documents as permissible under 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(6) for the review of public record exempt documents, the motion was seconded and passed and the board entered executive session at 6:15.** The board came out of executive session at 6:30.

**Nat moved and Eric seconded to approve the loan requested by Allison Tafuri and Chris Ferguson and to authorize Brian Story to act as the selectboard's agent in finalizing the loan.** Nat said this is a very good business for our town. They can make sorely needed improvements to that building. He thinks this loan is a wise investment for the town. Eric said he thinks the business is a good neighbor to the community and a true asset. **The motion was passed.**

**4. *Sinclair Road Light***

Nat said his neighbor, Bill Frankfurter, wants the light restored outside his house. Nat explained to Bill the budget situation and the reason the lights were turned off and told him he would bring the request to the board. The board reviewed a letter sent by Bill. His wife has had issues with falling. Brian said he has communicated with Bill in person. He has heard from a couple of other residents on Sinclair that they would like the lights restored and he has heard from a couple that they prefer to have the lights out.

Mike said people who want lights could have lights of their own on their property that they pay for. He thinks there are probably about as many people on Sinclair who like it the way it is as people who want streetlights.

Doug suggested sending someone to Bill's house to consider possible solutions other than municipal lighting. Brian said he will look into it. United Way or AARP may be able to help. They have grants for home improvements that allow seniors to stay in their homes.

Nat asked if we are prepared to set this precedent for every complaint. Doug said the precedent is that we may or may not turn the lights back on but we are suggesting there may be a private solution. Brian said he is not worried about precedent because we changed the situation. It is similar to when we pave and offer help to people whose driveways no longer meet well with the road.

**5. *Adjourn***

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45.

*Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths*