

JOHNSON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES  
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2016

**Present:**

Selectboard Members: Nat Kinney, Doug Molde, Kyle Nuse, Eric Osgood, Mike Dunham  
Others: Brian Story, Rosemary Audibert, Jessica Bickford, Lea Kilvadyova, Casey Romero, Susan Alexander, Elly Ventura, Duncan Hastings

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

**1. Call to Order**

Eric called the meeting to order at 7:02.

**2. Additions, Changes to Agenda**

B. Story said Duncan Hastings had sent the board a card. Nat said if there is time at the end he would like to talk about doing some sort of survey of the voters of Johnson to ask how we are doing.

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

**Mike moved to approve the minutes of October 17 and November 16, 2016, Kyle seconded, and the motion was passed.**

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

Rosemary said we have received PILOT funds for this year. We budgeted for \$275K and got a little more than \$334K. Expenses to date are at 40.5% of budget.

The town has received 2 requests for tax abatements. The board agreed to schedule a BCA hearing for December 5.

Rosemary informed the board of the changes the assessor had made to the Grand List. **Doug moved to accept the changes in the Grand List as presented by the assessor, Kyle seconded and the motion was passed.**

The new loader will be delivered this week. Rosemary got loan rates from 2 banks. We need to borrow \$133K for 5 years. Community National Bank offered a rate of 1.75% and Union Bank offered 1.35%. (*Lea arrived at 7:12.*)

**Doug moved to borrow \$133,000 for 5 years from Union Bank at a rate of 1.35%, Mike seconded and the motion was passed.**

The board authorized Rosemary to sign the acceptance of terms and conditions for the loan.

Rosemary asked what holiday pay the board would like to give to employees. In the past, the board has approved \$100 per employee. **Kyle moved to give holiday pay of \$100 per employee, Nat seconded, and the motion was passed.**

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

Brian said work funded by grants is being wrapped up and he and Brian Krause will start working on the required reports for the grants.

Last year, Brian K. only needed to use one part time employee for plowing season. This winter might be more severe and another part-time employee might be needed. It would be nice to get someone who is qualified to drive some of the heavier equipment. Brian K. is not looking to hire right now but he wants guidance on whether he should interview people. It might be a difficult position to fill. The board agreed that Brian S. and Brian K. could start looking for people who might be interested.

Doug asked if there is a plan to put guard rails in the area by Foote Brook where rip rap was put in. Nat said that sounds like a good idea. Brian S. said he will ask Brian K. about it. Doug said in the past we had a budget for guard rails so we could install some every year. He thinks it is good to put some money in the budget for them so we can gradually work on putting them in. (*Casey Romero arrived at 7:21.*)

**6. Report from the Skate Park Committee**

Casey said Greg Fatigate is the lead on developing the new bike trail in the meadow by the skate park. He is developing this kind of park terrain for Smuggler's Notch as well. Ideally, developed to its fullest, his plan would consist of a series of mostly natural and some man-made obstacles – nothing over 18 inches high because of insurance. As he sketched and explained it, it really will alter the landscape of the meadow. It would involve bringing in big rocks, some of which would be buried to build up curves and berms and some of which would be used for making low bridges and jumps. The plan will result in a park in the meadow that is easy enough for beginners and intermediates but has enough technical interest and challenge to bring in more expert riders and maybe attract events.

Doug asked, who are the people who might object? Casey said the plan won't impact the community garden. In terms of broad public opinion the plan is in line with what people said they wanted in the survey that was done many years ago on how to develop that park. She doesn't have any conflicting information.

Doug asked, what about the neighbors? Are there any uses of that part of the property now? Casey said aside from the archery program, there aren't. Nat said there is quite a bit of borderland still between the park space and residents. He never hears of noise or crime issues from the skate park. Casey said neighbors at the top of the hill hear noise from the park sometimes. The neighbors on West Highland can also hear noise. It has been less noisy since the wooden opening structure was replaced by a concrete one. One neighbor hates the wood scraps that are there now and has pointed out a tree that isn't healthy. The tree board will help with that. Skate park committee members and neighbors saw that it was very different this past summer having someone working at the skate park full time, compared to when there wasn't someone there. This new park is going to attract and allow broader use by younger and less skilled bikers. It's inviting. Eric said he can't remember the last time a skate park complaint came to the board.

Nat said there are drainage pipes there. Do we know what is under that field? Casey said there was a septic field in the area. She is not sure exactly where it was located and doesn't know who to ask. (*Susan Alexander and Elly Ventura arrived at 7:32.*)

Nat said now the meadow is brush hogged a couple of times a year. He guesses the new park would increase mowing costs. Casey said it would take more time to brush hog the field. She doesn't know if different machinery would be needed.

Casey said this could be a \$10-12K project. The skate park committee would like to get grant funding for it. This spring they would like to do about \$5K worth of work. They can start funding the project with what they already have in the budget. Once it gets underway they will see what in kind donations can be solicited and hopefully they can do more.

Nat said he thinks it is a great thing. The board agreed the skate park committee can proceed with plans for the new trail. Casey said she would like to keep in touch with Brian as more detailed plans are developed. She suggested the town could provide soft support as the project proceeds.

Casey said the skate park committee has seen that having someone at the skate park for around 400 hours this past summer made a huge difference. About 68% of their expenses for the current year went to support that. They need more money and they want to ask for an increase. Does the board want them to do a petition or can they just make a request to the board? Eric said normally a town committee budget request comes to the board and a petition is not needed.

Nat suggested the skate park committee and the rec committee might be able to work together on hiring, as the rec committee is also looking to hire someone. There might be an opportunity for one person to work year-round.

#### **7. *Healthy Lamoille Valley's Regional Prevention Project***

Jessica Bickford handed out information about the organization she works for, Healthy Lamoille Valley. It is a prevention organization focused on substance abuse prevention in the region. The main focus is youth. They are collaborating with LCPC on ways to endorse protective factors at the community level. One thing Johnson does well is our parks, like the skate park. They provide activities for youth, families and young adults. A policy level approach is another possibility – for instance, putting up clear signage that parks are substance free zones.

Lea said LCPC, in partnership with Healthy Lamoille Valley, produced a primer on prevention – a document that provides opportunities for towns to include substance abuse into regulatory and non-regulatory documents. (The town plan is an example of a non-regulatory document.) There are examples of how other towns have addressed substance abuse in their town plans. LCPC and Healthy Lamoille Valley want to make the selectboard aware of this initiative. Some town plans have included ideas about healthy community design. Towns can also implement appropriate language into zoning bylaws. But we don't have zoning now. The goals and policies the town has regarding housing are another way to support the goal of substance abuse prevention.

Kyle asked if other towns have done this. Jessica said last year Hyde Park put in language about restaurants vs. liquor outlets in their village. No more than 50% of a business's sales in the downtown area can be alcohol because it is so close to the school. Wolcott has done a lot

with healthy community design – putting health language in the town plan. Waterville put a sentence into their town plan related to substance abuse. Casey asked if Hyde Park has zoning. Lea said yes. It is traditional zoning, but she thinks Hyde Park village is exploring changing to form based zoning.

Kyle asked if this would include smoking. Jessica said it could. The town might want to consider signage at the skate park making it alcohol and tobacco free. Her group can help with signage. The town could choose to make only some parks substance free or could have signs indicating that people could get permits to use alcohol or tobacco, for instance for a wedding. This is something the town could have in place in case recreational marijuana use becomes legal.

Doug asked if there are any surveys or data on how it works to have areas that are alcohol or marijuana free. Jessica said what her group recommends is considered evidence based best practice but she would have to research the data.

Nat said Roger Marcoux frequently indicates how substance abuse is inundating his department and driving his budget up.

**8. *Lamoille Regional Solid Waste Management District – Proposed Compost Facility***

Susan Alexander, Lamoille Regional Solid Waste Management District manager, introduced herself and Elly Ventura, who does outreach and education for the district. They gave a presentation on their proposed composting facility to be located on town property. They had an opportunity to secure some economic development grant money. The project is aligned with local planning goals and was prompted by the Universal Recycling Law that requires diversion of food scraps from the waste stream, the lack of composting infrastructure in the state and the underutilized piece of public infrastructure in Johnson. Susan showed a map of certified recycling facilities in the state. The closest one is the facility run by Chittenden Solid Waste Management District. Chittenden is nearing capacity now and unclear on how they will manage additional capacity. There is an obvious lack of infrastructure for us in Lamoille County. LRSWMD had the opportunity to secure grant funding from the Northern Border Regional Commission, a federal and state partnership dedicated to community and economic development in areas labeled as distressed. Lamoille County meets their criteria. LRSWMD was one of only 14 grant awardees. Funding is targeted at economic development. Part of LRSWMD's proposal is to improve economic development in the area. The grant is \$50K. LRSWMD also has committed \$75K to the project.

The existing facility is exceptional. It is very well designed. It is in a fairly private location – the old landfill. LRSWMD's transfer station is right next door. The facility is already permitted for biosolids. But it is underutilized. No maintenance is going on. LRSWMD would take on the maintenance and extend the life of the facility.

In addition to economic opportunity the project would provide educational opportunities. It relates to many objectives from the municipal plan. There would be some direct economic impacts. Local contractors and vendors would be hired to work on revitalization of the site. Materials and supplies would be purchased within the region. LRSWMD would hire at least a half-time employee, maybe a full-time employee. The facility wouldn't require someone on

site 40 hours a week but the same person who ran the facility might also run the route to pick up materials from the other LRSWMD sites. Dollars put into the economy would be spent in the region.

There would also be indirect impacts. The grant application noted that the project is aligned with town, regional and state plans. LRSWMD got letters of support from various entities. They had support from LCPC, which recognized the paucity of infrastructure in the area, and from the Agency of Agriculture and the Department of Environmental Conservation.

There are impacts related to educational opportunities. LRSWMD could work with Johnson State College, Vermont Studio Center, and Green Mountain Technology & Career Center. There may be opportunities for private haulers to bring materials to the facility. There could be partnerships with local farms.

Susan showed a diagram of the site. LRSWMD anticipates about 3 tons of food scraps a week, which would translate into about 1000 cubic yards of finished compost per year.

LRSWMD can't register a facility without having a facility management plan which is required by the state to address things like odors, vectors, and noise. No one except LRSWMD would access the facility on a regular basis. People would bring scraps to transfer stations and LRSWMD would bring them to the composting facility, where they would be blended with wood chips, leaf and yard debris, etc. Food scraps would be covered as soon as they were put on the ground. There is a good fence so bears would not be a concern. If signs of other vectors like rodents are seen, they will be trapped.

The site was originally set up for a windrow system. There is a windrow turner there already. But windrows take a lot of space and don't heat up as well. They require a lot of labor and diesel and every time a windrow is turned over more odor is potentially released. LRSWMD plans to use an aerated static pile system. There is a blower with a system of perforated pipe. Piles stay in place. There is no regular turning; piles are just moved from bay to bay. This system is less labor and fuel intensive.

Nat asked, the piles are outdoors? Susan said the facility has a roof but no envelope. The piles would be sitting on a concrete pad with a roof over them. Bays would be built under the roof. There is some existing lighting. LRSWMD would improve it and maybe put in a security system. Piles would be monitored remotely for temperature and moisture.

Susan showed what the Chittenden facility looks like. It is bigger than the proposed LRSWMD facility.

The Johnson facility is still permitted as a biosolids composting facility. Composting food scraps have less odor than biosolids. There are always odor concerns, but LRSWMD would intend to keep odor under control. They operate 6 facilities and they have not had odor complaints or vector problems.

Currently about 140 cars come to the Johnson transfer station each day it is open. They envision that the same people who are currently coming will be the ones to bring food scraps. They don't envision great numbers of people coming just to bring food scraps. This composting is for residential customers. At least in the beginning they don't envision any large trucks coming through. Haulers are required to offer food scrap diversion and they can charge for it. Most people won't want to pay an extra fee for it. Eventually a hauler might make a business of hauling food scraps and there might be one or two trucks a week visiting the facility. Traffic to the facility is expected to be largely those already using it and perhaps a few more.

Nat said he is imagining grocery stores and commercial establishments needing this service. Susan said the law requires the largest producers of food scraps to divert them. Some are already doing it. The threshold for who has to do it will be lowered until in 2020 food scraps will be banned from the landfill. The Agency of Natural Resources says they are looking for progress, not perfection. LRSWMD wants to make composting food scraps an option for people who want to comply with the law.

Nat said he imagines most residential customers would have backyard composting. He imagines the biggest utility would be for the local grocery store, restaurants, and college. Susan said they would have to dispose of food scraps through their hauler. She can't see more than one or two haulers getting into that business.

Susan said LRSWMD anticipates having about 1000 cubic yards a year of compost to sell. Their plan is to sell it in bulk, not to make special potting mixes or small individual sales. They plan to sell a cubic yard or more at a time. Landscapers or municipalities could use it. If it were sold in loads of about 2-3 cubic yards, that would mean about 330 truck trips out of the facility a year, primarily in the growing season. Elly said they would try to make it so people could pick up compost when they dropped off their trash so everyone would not need to make a special trip. They could also set specific hours and days for compost pickup.

Eric asked how many haulers there would be bringing material in from other sites. Susan said just LRSWMD or a hauler they contracted with. Material from other sites all gets hauled to Stowe now. Elly said that is done just with a pickup truck and a trailer. Nat said the biggest demand for compost would probably be in spring when roads are wet. Susan said they can set dates for pickup when road conditions are good.

Mike said, so we will be picking up Stowe's waste also. There are a lot of restaurants there. Susan said the Johnson facility will be getting food scraps from facilities LRSWMD runs. Most restaurants' garbage is now picked up and taken to a chicken farm in Moretown. Elly said this is primarily residential composting at this point. A lot of big food scrap producers are already being serviced.

Susan said LRSWMD will test for metals and pathogens. The possibility of environmental damage claims was raised by the village and town. LRSWMD runs 6 facilities and they have never had an environmental damage incident. They don't anticipate that will be a problem, though they can't guarantee it 100%. They are insured by VLCT but no one offers

environmental pollution liability insurance. Nat said the contract could address this. Susan said yes, the contract could say that LRSWMD would take all responsibility. There would be less risk than with biosolids. A closure plan is required for the facility. If it is closed, LRSWMD has to leave it “broom clean.”

LRSWMD put together a draft operating budget for the composting facility, based on Chittenden’s operating budget. They will need to procure carbon. They accept yard waste at the transfer station but will have to bring in some sources of carbon as well. In the draft budget, expenses exceed revenues. There will be a fee for food scraps when people bring them in. It has yet to be decided whether that will be a separate charge or if it will be embedded in the trash fee. If a small hauler got into the business of hauling food scraps LRSWMD could get tipping fees from the hauler. Compost sales revenue could be increased by using a bagger and selling a value added product. Currently they are looking at running the facility with a small subsidy from the district. Eventually expenses and revenues need to be evened out with LRSWMD fees. They try to operate all their facilities with even expenses and revenues, but now all the facilities run a deficit.

The proposed composting facility may contribute economically and socially to the community. It can help the community have resiliency and sustainability. It can feed into the food system. There is a great story to tell here about how we used economic development dollars given to us and a facility already purchased with grant money for a project that meshed into our missions and fits with state mandates.

Mike said one of the slides Susan showed said the project would create many well paying jobs. Then Susan talked about a half or full time employee. Where are the other jobs? Susan said other jobs might be created if an entrepreneur wanted to pick up food scraps. But LRSWMD would be directly employing just one half-time to full-time person.

Doug asked, with other composting facilities in the state, is LRSWMD optimistic they can sell the compost and won’t end up with it on site? Susan said yes. They have looked at the range of prices charged for compost in areas around us. They would offer compost at a price closer to what this community can support. She doesn’t think people are willing to drive far for compost.

Doug asked how the compost is regarded. Susan said one reason the village currently landfills biosolids is that there is a lot of resistance to biosolids compost being put on land. Food scrap compost is well regarded by vegetable growers and landscapers. It could be used in municipal projects. She thinks it would have high appeal as a quality product.

Doug asked what LRSWMD would do if this facility didn’t exist. Susan said probably they would be incurring huge expenses to transport food scraps, if they could even find someone who would take them. Chittenden is not interested. The chicken farming operations in Moretown and Stannard that take a lot of food scraps have very high requirements for material. For instance, every sticker must be removed from fruit. We couldn’t guarantee our materials would meet their requirements. They do a huge amount of education. They also don’t want to take any material other than food, like paper plates or napkins.

Doug asked if any consideration was given to building a new facility. Susan said it would be impossible. Chittenden pays a lot to subsidize theirs. This facility is already built. There is no debt service on it. It was purchased with grants and some town dollars. Not having debt service is what would make it viable. Doug said it would be almost a donation from the town and village of Johnson. Susan said and from the whole state, because of the tax dollars that helped finance the purchase. She said LRSWMD doesn't ask people what town they are from when they come to a facility. LRSWMD is a union district. They don't assess different towns differently or tell people from one town they can't go to another town's facility.

There was a question about whether there had been any discussion of payment to the village for use of the facility. Susan said LRSWMD is not budgeting for payment. They can offer the village compost, but not cash. They would continue to maintain the building and improve the facility, extending its life. That would be an in kind contribution. Mike asked, so LRSWMD would consider painting some of the facility? Susan said probably. They would have a capital budget plan to make sure the facility would be maintained.

Doug asked what the solid waste district's position is on the policy of food waste composting. It seems like an unfunded mandate. Susan said it is an unfunded mandate. (*Duncan arrived at 8:28.*) Solid waste districts lobbied for getting funding to help pay for it. Different funding models were discussed but none of them passed through the House Natural Resources Committee. LRSWMD loves that they will be able to divert more from the landfill, but figuring out how to do it is difficult. This is probably the most unique and awesome opportunity any district in the state is looking at. Chittenden spent millions on their facility, which is running out of capacity, and they are subsidizing it heavily. Someone from Chittenden came out to view the Johnson facility and said it was beautiful and he wished his district had it. It is co-located with the existing transfer station so people are already coming there. It is a great story to tell – a great case study for how communities work together to make things happen.

Nat said he had been reading about the mandatory composting law and the reason behind it. ANR did a study and found that at least a third of waste being sent to landfills now is compostable. And our landfills are filling up. There is one landfill in the state that has room. As much as we hate unfunded mandates, there is a public good to be had from mandatory composting. He thinks this is a good opportunity.

Brian said he and the board chairs still need to develop the agenda for the joint trustee board-selectboard meeting on December 7. He knows LRSWMD has asked to be on it.

Elly gave Brian some supporting materials.

9. *Administrator Report, Action Items and Signature Required Items*

**Nat moved and Mike seconded to enter executive session to discuss a contract matter related to the Foote Brook/Codding Hollow culvert replacement project, discussion of which in open session could put the town at a substantial disadvantage, inviting Brian, Rosemary and Duncan. The motion was passed and the board entered executive session at 8:33.** The board came out of executive session at 8:59.

**Nat moved to authorize Rosemary to pay SD Ireland \$288,270 for the Foote Brook/Codding Hollow culvert replacement project, Mike seconded and the motion was passed.**

Duncan reminded the board that it had been agreed that he would repair a few gravestones at Whiting Hill Cemetery, then report back. He handed out information about the work he had done. He worked on 3 stones – one was simple, one was a little harder, and one was even more difficult. He can put together a budget proposal if the board wishes. The information he handed out gives an idea what he did and how it was done. (*Duncan left at 9:03.*)

Brian said the town has donated to Front Porch Forum in the past. Their donation drive was recently concluded but they will take donations any time. They have been a great service to our community. He is not sure what we have donated in the past. Rosemary said she doesn't remember. She would guess maybe \$250. **Nat moved to donate to Front Porch Forum the same amount donated by the town last year, Kyle seconded and the motion was passed with Mike abstaining.** Mike explained that he would like some limit on the amount. He didn't feel comfortable voting yes without knowing how large last year's donation was.

Brian said we have a Highway Structures Grant to replace a culvert on Upper French Hill Road. The grant amount is \$37,637. We are going to match 20%, roughly \$10K. The total project cost is about \$47K. Work will be done in the spring. We will probably contract it out. **Mike moved to authorize Eric to sign the grant agreement for the Highway Structures Grant, Doug seconded and the motion was passed.**

Brian said Eden is not a member of the Lamoille County Sheriff's Department service but there have been an increasing number of calls for mutual aid to Eden. Does the board want to send a letter to Eden requesting that they make a contribution to the Sheriff's Department to help offset the cost? There have been 22 calls to Eden in this calendar year. **Mike moved to send a letter to the Town of Eden requesting that they make a contribution to the Sheriff's Department and to authorize the chair to sign the letter, seconded by Kyle.** Brian said he believes both Hyde Park and Wolcott have already voted to send the letter. Wolcott definitely has. **The motion was passed.**

Doug said he thinks LCSD ought to reimburse us if they provide service to Eden. We provide money to Roger Marcoux for service here and if he takes the service elsewhere we should be reimbursed. Nat said it could be argued that the money he is spending towards Eden doesn't come from the patrol budget but from another revenue source. Eric agreed it would be a good topic of discussion with LCSD.

Brian got an estimate from Green Mountain Painters for painting and maintenance of the Old Mill House. The top end estimate is \$18,048. There are a lot of different options with different costs and he plans to get an estimate from another contractor. He asked about replacing the existing clapboards with new ones to get out of lead remediation but he was told that would not be sufficient. We would need to do a lot more work than that. He thinks

we can lower our cost if we hire our own carpenter instead of using theirs. The building is in surprisingly good shape given the lack of maintenance.

Eric said the village has made a request that we have the assessors assess the Old Mill House. We approached them about whether they wanted to transfer over to the town their responsibility and ownership of the building. Because they don't seem to want to maintain it, the intention was to see if they wanted to sign it over to us. They want to be compensated for the value of their share of the property. That is a direction Eric never would have wanted to go.

Brian said they want to be free and clear of the building. To the best of his knowledge they don't want the land. Nat said his understanding is that Troy has an office there. Brian said they want us to own the building and rent them an office and we could provide them free rent in lieu of cash for the building.

Mike said they want half of the fair market value. He thinks we would need to get an appraiser in. Nat suggested not going down this road at all. He got the impression they didn't see any value in maintaining the building. If they do see value in it, like having an office there, can they budget something to maintain it? Eric said he thinks this should be a topic for the joint meeting. Nat said he would rather approach the trustees by himself at a trustee board meeting than make this a joint meeting topic. Doug said we need to think about right of way and land if we think about ownership. Eric said he thinks we need to renegotiate. He thinks they misunderstood our intent. For a number of years the selectboard has wanted to maintain the building but the town only owns half and the trustees have not wanted to pay for maintenance. The town and the village each need to pay about \$9K. That is what we need to go back to them with.

Brian said our GIS maps are difficult to use. They have been getting more inaccurate over time because we are not updating them as we should. He doesn't know whose job that is. No one has that as part of their job description. We need to update the system and develop a plan for keeping it up to date in the future. If it is more accurate, that should improve collection on the Grand List. It should cost \$5-10K to update the system. He is seeking a contribution from the village. There are some options related to utilities. We won't choose those options if they don't want to make a contribution.

The state is working on new requirements for mapping. We have some parcels drawn to the center of the road and some to the edge. The state is talking about making funds available for municipalities to update their systems so all parcels are drawn the same way. Doug said we can be consistent and be wrong. It can be either easement or fee ownership and how to draw it depends on that. But we can't know which is correct. The records have been lost and we won't be able to find them.

Brian said we are still early on in the process. He wanted to let the board know he is talking to a vendor. He is asking the village to contribute 5-10% of the total project cost, in addition to the cost for the utility options, because they collect from the Grand List also.

We are moving ahead on the EV charging station. Brian has been in contact with the state about getting an extension on the construction. They are okay with that but not with giving an extension on the final deadline for the report, so that is not really much of an extension. He expects to be done with construction in time, hopefully by the original deadline. We should still have time to get invoices and paperwork submitted on time. Nat had asked last time about the monthly bill. It looks like it will be either \$30 or \$28, depending on whether we go with Verizon or AT&T.

Brian handed out some notes he and Meredith came up with on priorities for future marketing decisions for the community, as discussed at the November 2 community meeting. Meredith has shared this with the trustees. Brian and Meredith first listed broad goals developed at the November 2 meeting. What we want for our online presence is unified access to all community resources – one website that serves as a portal to everything going on in Johnson. It needs to highlight local businesses and contribute to economic growth. We want to improve access for mobile devices, make use of social media, and make the website more visually interesting and exciting.

The village had a couple of things they wanted to make sure were covered. Eric said he thinks we need professional help. Brian said we are going to get professional help. Eric said he thinks perhaps the town should take the lead because everything is part of the town. Brian said the village talked about having a workgroup with representation from the school, the college, the village, and the town and tasking that group with developing this. He thinks we will have to hire a professional. He thinks we can get a grant to at least develop a plan with a consultant. Ideally we would get one grant for both planning and implementation. He will try to make it one project if he can. He thinks having a consultant report to one body that is made up of representatives from contributing organizations would streamline the process. Doug said he thinks the first step is to hire a consultant.

Nat said a revised budget from LCSD had been sent out by email. He thought Roger Marcoux did a good job for us on it. It has 0.29 % lower spending than the current fiscal year but because we are not getting carryover funds we will spend \$15,590 more next year than this year. He doesn't think Roger can do better without cutting services.

Brian said there is an information session in December on the LCPC Act 174 energy plan. Developing a plan for a community will give the community more input into renewable energy siting when a project goes before the PSB. LCPC will be developing a plan for our area. We should have a representative at the meeting. He can go. This is the first session to start talking about it. The board agreed Brian should go to the meeting.

Brian showed the board the Tree Removal Policy for the Village of Johnson that the trustees adopted. Noel Dodge, the tree warden, had a little concern about one part of the policy. It says when a threat to village infrastructure can be addressed by removing just part of a tree the village will confer with the private property owner and/or town about removing additional parts. They must speak to the Town of Johnson tree warden before removing anything that is not a threat to village infrastructure. He believes that is what they intend, but

the wording is not as clear as it could be. He reads it as saying that they may confer with a private property owner and they will confer with the town.

Eric asked if Brian can take that back to them. Brian said they don't necessarily even need to make any changes, just confirm their understanding of the meaning. Eric said the wording makes it look like they may not talk to the town tree warden.

Doug asked why they have developed a tree removal policy. Don't they have easements that cover this? Brian said they wanted to clear up language around shade trees in the town right of way. They have authority as a utility to manage for utility purposes, but the line on where they have to stop is a little unclear. They wanted to firm that up for their own understanding. Eric asked, they do understand that we can't change state statute if any policy they have conflicts with state statute? Brian said his interpretation of their policy is that it doesn't conflict with state statute, though he can see two ways of reading it. Mike and Nat agreed that the sentence is not clear. Eric said the tree warden's power extends further than we originally believed, as we found out with the school project. Brian said shade trees are not defined in law. Virtually any tree could be called a shade tree.

Eric asked what the trustees want the selectboard to do with the policy. Brian said he just brought it to the board for information. Doug said he thinks we should write to them and say there is unclear language. Brian said he will ask for a written statement of understanding that he is interpreting it correctly and that they will talk to the tree warden if tree warden involvement is required.

Brian said he has started getting funding requests from various groups. Eric said the policy we have always had is that additional non-profits not already receiving town funding have to do a petition and once their funding is approved by the voters we absorb it into our budget as a line item and as long as they ask for same amount each year they don't need to take further action. If they want more they must come before the board or we may require them to get another petition.

Brian said Kyle Nuse is now president of Johnson Works. Johnson Works is not doing the Winter Jubilee this year. They were not able to organize the event. That was their main fundraising event of the year. They have some ongoing expenses and they would like some contribution from us. We usually gave them money for the Jubilee. They would like money to go straight to operating expenses. Previously we gave them \$750. Their main expense is about \$1K a year for public wifi. Johnson Works is working on improving the wifi. The board offered a few years ago when they got the routers to pay to renew the licenses on the routers when they came due. It is likely they will want to upgrade and get more modern routers instead. They will come back with a request in the future. **Nat moved to give \$750 to Johnson Works, Doug seconded and the motion was passed.**

Brian said he and his wife had been thinking how nice it would be if we had a sporting goods/bike shop right on the rail trail, where the Old Mill House is. If someone wanted to open a business there he feels they could find support for it. Mike said he thought that was a great idea. Kyle asked, what about the bike rental company? Are they looking for a physical

space? Brian said he doesn't think so. He thinks they are happy to move around. He will share with them that we are open to the idea of a business in the Old Mill House. Mike asked if board members would mind if he asked a few people if they are interested. The rest of the board said that would be fine.

Nat said Troy's office and the food shelf are in that building. Brian said we would have to find another site for the food shelf. He thinks we could find another space. Mike said he thinks it would be great to sell the building to someone who wanted to put a business there. Nat said the Boy Scouts use the upstairs fairly extensively. Eric and Mike suggested the Boy Scouts could meet in the municipal building. Rosemary asked where they would store all their stuff. Doug said he likes the idea in the sense that he thinks it is important to develop infrastructure that draws people who are on the rail trail into Johnson. We would have to ask the trustees also because the building is co-owned, but he thinks we can see if people are interested. Nat said he agrees with the aims but the food shelf is an important part of the infrastructure in town. Brian said maybe we could get another building, rehabilitate it, and then down the road sell it.

Eric said he, Gordy, Brian and Meredith talked one day and discussed exploring whether it would be feasible for the town to run its own compost site where the village could take its biosolids. He asked Brian to do some preliminary checking to see if it would be feasible. If other towns wanted to bring their composting here we could charge them, getting some revenue to offset costs.

Brian said Susan Alexander's figures for running a composting facility are quite a bit lower than the figures he came up with after doing some research. We would need 1-3 people. We probably would need at least one full-time person. We would have to hire someone who could do monitoring and management of the mix. Building materials for structures needed to do aerated static piles would cost around \$50K. We would need a front loader and probably more like 2-3 full-time staff. It would cost us \$185K for a bucket loader and almost \$200K for 3 employees with benefits.

Mike said he can't see that being a money maker. Eric asked why we would need 3 employees when they only need one. Brian said he doesn't know how they get away with just one employee. That seems low based on the information he got. He suspects they would have one employee for that site and then some others already employed by the district that might do additional work for the composting facility. He thinks that is why he is getting a higher figure. Three employees is probably excessive. One to two would probably be enough. There is a system with a vertical auger that runs through the pile. It is computer controlled and takes very few man hours. If we could use an existing loader there sometimes that would reduce cost, but he doesn't know if we would have one with enough down time.

Eric said we wouldn't have enough material. LRSWMD is looking at composting for the whole district. Unless we get other people's sludge, Mike said. Eric said it would just be the village's sludge. Mike said Donny didn't think sludge composting was cost effective. Nat said Susan's estimates are based on sale of compost suitable for gardening. Eric said composting village sludge would be the only incentive to get the village on board. They

could contribute what they are paying now to dispose of sludge. Mike said their contribution would be miniscule compared to the total cost. Why would we want to do this? He doesn't think we need to discuss it further. Eric said he doesn't see how LRSWMD is doing it for \$80K, based on Brian's figures. Doug said they said they have a grant and they are also throwing in \$75K. That might account for part of it. Nat said he doesn't see taking on that liability for ourselves. Doug agreed.

Eric said it would cost LRSWMD a lot more if we didn't give them the site. Mike said that would increase their fees. Eric said if we let them use the site we are saving money for Stowe. Nat said he thinks it is a public good. It provides a service for Johnson. Eric said he doesn't have a problem with having the transfer station here. But the compost facility would provide service for the whole district – beyond our county, even. Mike said it would be beating our roads up. Nat said he thinks what Susan said about the number of vehicles and the lack of added vehicle traffic was credible. There might be one truck from Stowe a week. He doesn't see that there would be a lot of extra traffic. Mike said he thinks there should be at least a little extra compensation for maintenance of roads.

Brian suggested we could ask for the transfer station to be open one more day a week. That might distribute car traffic over more days, which would reduce damage to the roads. Nat and Mike said they think that is a good idea. Doug said he questions whether many people will come on the additional day rather than on Friday or Saturday.

**10. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20.

*Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths*