

JOHNSON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2015

Present:

Selectboard Members: Nat Kinney, Doug Molde, Kyle Nuse, Eric Osgood, Howard Romero
Others: Duncan Hastings (Manager), Rosemary Audibert (Clerk), Brian Krause, Lea Kilvadyova, David Butler, David Bergh, Tasha Wallis, Seth Jensen, Scott Griswold

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. Call to Order

Eric called the meeting to order at 7:00.

2. Additions, Changes to Agenda

Duncan added one item – discussion about a memo received today from Ruggiano with updated costs on the industrial park. Doug added an informational item on Class IV roads and impact on financing. *(Kyle arrived at 7:01.)*

3. Review and Approve Minutes of Meetings Past

Donna said the trustees had requested a change to the minutes of the joint meeting on December 2. The minutes included Duncan's comment that we have talked about spraying the old mill house building with a high pressure spray gun but not the subsequent comments about that being an illegal method of removing paint. Scott wanted an addition saying that those present indicated that would not be legal. **Nat moved to approve the minutes of October 19 and November 2015 and the minutes of the joint meeting on December 2, 2015 with the change approved by the trustees, Kyle seconded and the motion was passed.**

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

Rosemary said to date we are at 44% expended. Included in orders for this month is the payment to Desroches for the College Hill project. That is about \$119K, almost the complete cost for the town. Duncan said right now we have approximately \$121K available in grant funds. The bill just paid doesn't include the 2 change orders Desroches requested which he believes will be denied. *(Howard arrived at 7:05.)*

Today we received \$40,375 from the state for the Beard property. They will send us the balance once they do their final inspection. Rosemary showed the board an old picture of Beard's swimming hole provided by the Historical Society that she thought she might use for the cover of the town report. Board members thought it would be good.

To date we are at 55% of current taxes collected, on par with the last couple of years. Attorney Angela Ross has collected about \$25K in delinquent taxes since they were turned over to her.

5. Road Commissioner/ Road Foreman Report and Action Items

Brian said with the recent warmer weather his crew has been able to do some much-needed ditching. He would like to improve a couple of turnarounds for town trucks. What channels does he have to go through to do so? Duncan said typically as a courtesy we would contact the property owner, but if we can stay within the highway right of way technically we don't

need approval or permission. Brian said he will notify the property owners and stay within our right of way.

Duncan said the owner of a property at the end of Lamoille View Drive asked why the town has not been plowing the road to her property. The town road extends 370 ft. further than where we have stopped plowing. The town hasn't plowed that part of the road for a long time, but it is clearly a town highway so Brian will start plowing it.

Nat asked if the highway crew is down a part-time person. Brian said yes. He is going to try to get by without that part-timer. Nat said he is concerned about whether that will increase overtime. Brian said he is not sure how much it will affect overtime. If it is a problem we can address it.

Nat asked if the problem with Brian's cell phone has been worked out. Brian said no. He has been trying unsuccessfully to find out when the AT&T upgrade is going to take place. If it will be soon he doesn't want to change phones. For now he will leave things as they are. Duncan said we could also look into a booster antenna to see if that would boost the signal at his house. Eric asked if Brian's pager works at his house. He said yes, but no one pages him. Howard suggested he could have calls to one number forwarded to another.

Eric asked if Duncan and Brian have started work on the highway budget. Duncan said they have worked on it a little, but need to do more.

6. *Planning Commission Report*

David asked Lea to speak. Lea said the Planning Commission held a public forum on form based code on December 12 on form based code. She did not participate but she heard attendance was slim – about 11 people. There were no great surprises in terms of public comments. The Planning Commission is doing a good job trying to reach out but interest hasn't been overwhelming.

Lea said at the last Planning Commission meeting the land use chapter of the town/village plan was approved. They have been holding off on that chapter, waiting to see how form based code will pan out because ultimately the plan is a framework for a land use bylaw. After consulting with LCPC, they concluded that form based code and the plan will still work together even if no big changes are made to the land use chapter, so they did some minor tweaks.

LCPC is offering to collaborate with the Planning Commission and the town on an effort related to river corridors. David said LCPC is funding through a grant a project to study rivers and say whether or not the mapped river corridors match what is on the ground. ANR painted river corridors with a broad brush. They went out and spot checked, but they only checked places they could get to easily. They didn't hike anywhere. They didn't look at the whole stream structure. LCPC is going to choose certain towns to go out and study. The Planning Commission voted to be one of those towns if we can be. Lea said our goal is to get better on-ground data to have a way to show the state if something on their maps doesn't apply.

Doug asked if we are expecting they can change it to an elevation rather than a distance setback with better data. David said his hope is that we will find some streams are in deep ravines, so the 50-ft. buffer zone within which people cannot put buildings will disappear.

Lea said ideally the selectboard will support the Planning Commission's desire to participate. If the selectboard wishes, our request to participate can be withdrawn. Board members indicated they support our participation.

Eric asked what the steps are now with form based code. David said the Planning Commission is not getting a lot of public input despite its efforts. They made efforts to advertise the December 12 forum reasonably well. Two naysayers came in adamantly against form based zoning and left in favor of it after a 20-minute conversation. He thinks this would be a done deal if they could have one-on-one conversations with townspeople but getting that is hard. He would like to have an informational discussion at town meeting. He would prefer not to have the vote at town meeting. He feels it would be too polarizing and would take too much time. Lea said it is not even possible. She said the Planning Commission has done a lot already to educate people and those efforts will continue. Her recommendation to them is going to be to hold a formal public hearing on the document and then pass it on to the selectboard, while continuing to reach out to the public.

David said the Planning Commission went to the Historical Society and now two very influential anti-zoning people are both happy with the form based code and wish it would be extended further, beyond the zones picked. Duncan asked if there is there any benefit to trying to put together a mailer that covers the high points of form based code and sending out to every house. David said that would probably be beneficial if it were done in conjunction with a warning for a hearing. One reason we may not be seeing much input is that people may not understand this is a town-wide vote even though the code just affects the village. Duncan said he occasionally hears people in the village asking why the town is taking a vote on something happening in the village.

Nat asked if the Planning Commission went to the trustees. Lea said no. Two trustees – Scott and Walter – were on the form based code steering committee. Doug said he thinks the trustees said they would be in favor of it if the voters voted for it. Eric said he thinks the Planning Commission should give the trustees an update.

David said he would like to invite steering committee members who wish to to come to the next Planning Commission meeting to talk about the things the few people who came to the forum brought up. One issue seems to be the amount of glazing required. Possibly that can be adjusted. The 14-ft. wall height for the first floor of buildings seems to be a big bone of contention. The reason for it is that it allows a bigger commercial restaurant to come in. They need a lot of space in the ceiling for heating and ventilations. It doesn't mean the ceiling is 14 feet high. Other than that the Commission is not really hearing a lot of negativity.

Board members agreed there is not time to go through all required steps to have a vote on form based code at town meeting. Eric said he thinks an informational presentation at town meeting would be good. David said the Planning Commission can do that. Doug suggested

putting something in the town report about form based code. Lea said she thinks more people will read it there than in a separate mailer. Doug suggested putting the whole 6 page code in the report. David said the maps and other visuals might have to be reduced too small to be very readable. (*Seth Jensen and Tasha Wallis arrived at 7:40 and Brian left.*)

7. Recreation Committee Report

Nat said the committee is starting budgeting for next year. They are talking seriously about the need for administrative help. Heather is spending an inordinate amount of time managing youth sports, registration, etc. He thinks the need would be seasonal, July through December. He will have more for the board on this in the future. Lea did a nice job of getting signs for Old Mill Park and the rail trail.

Howard said he thinks Brian should put the chain across the entrance to Old Mill Park. Eric asked Duncan to pass that request on. He mentioned that he has seen cars on Checkerberry Field, too. There is a cable that can be put across that entrance.

Nat said he expects the signs for the park and rail trail to go up in the spring. Lea said they are blue way finding signs for Main St. The Rec Committee paid most of the cost.

Howard asked if the Rec Committee is going to put a handicapped-accessible portable toilet in the trailhead building next spring. Nat said yes, they plan to.

Doug asked about signing to make clear where the public highway is where Lendway Lane goes by Old Mill Park. Nat said the Rec Committee will have a proposal on that.

Duncan said now that the rail trail is officially open we may need to think about the use of Old Mill Park as a trailhead for snowmobiling and where we would want people to park with trailers.

Nat said the Rec Committee often talks about putting up boulders to keep people from driving onto the fields in the park. But they are rather expensive. That will be part of the discussion they will be putting out there at some point.

8. Manager's Report and Action Items

Duncan said he and Lea met with Sam Ruggiano about updating the cost estimates for construction of infrastructure for the industrial park. Ruggiano updated the figures and reminded them that they had brought the plans up to the stage where they could be submitted to permitting agencies. He updated them as to what the cost of going through the permit process would be. Duncan and Lea also met with John Mandeville. Lea has looked into financing through the Vermont Economic Development Authority. That seems to be one of our best options for financing. Lamoille Economic Development Corporation could act as developer of the project if we get to the point of buying the property. Duncan said we also received information today on the Northern Economic Development Association. It looks like they may provide additional opportunities for money.

Doug asked, couldn't the Lamoille Economic Development Corporation purchase the property? Duncan said they didn't seem interested in that. Lea said John Mandeville said his board is open to all options but he proposed specifically to act as the developer or overseer of

construction. Duncan said LEDC would also be trying to push the sale of lots. Lea said having a marketing agent would be a requirement to get a loan from VEDA.

Duncan said in the end it will come down to the net price for lots and whether it is competitive. That will depend on the price of the land and development.

9. Class IV Road Issue

Doug said an issue that is popping up is that some banks now are not financing residences on Class IV roads absent a maintenance agreement, and we don't do maintenance on Class IV roads. (*Scott Griswold arrived at 7:51.*) People may not be able to get bank loans to buy property on Class IV roads. David asked, what about insurance? Doug said is it not affecting insurance. Though it took him a year to get insurance after they asked him how long it would take a fire truck to get to his house. (*David Bergh arrived at 7:53.*)

10. Manager's Report and Action Items (continued)

If there is still interest in reviving the Lamoille County Sheriff's Department budget committee, Duncan has been working with Ron Rodjenski to review its purpose and re-establish it.

At Doug's suggestion, Lea drafted a letter thanking the River Conservancy for their work on the Beard Lot. Duncan read the letter. **Nat moved to sign and send the thank you letter to the River Conservancy, Howard seconded, and the motion was passed.**

VLCT is requesting board dues for 2016-17. That will be addressed during the budget process.

We submitted a request for reimbursement for the Better Back Roads Grant and received a check for grant funds of \$8,404.80. This was reimbursement for work done on Foote Brook Road.

Solid waste landfill water quality results continue to be about the same every quarter. There are some high levels of arsenic and some metals in one test well, but they are not increasing. Ross Environmental has started the solid waste post closure application process with ANR for us.

Duncan is still on the VLCT transportation committee. They met with the Secretary of the Agency of Transportation and reps from ANR about the total maximum daily load for phosphorus. There will be a general permit that will filter down to the level of highway departments. It is anticipated that the draft general permit will be out a year from now and by 2020 all communities in the state will be subject to it. It will be phased in, starting with those communities having the biggest impact on major waterways. We may be on the front end. The general permit has standards associated with it and each town has to meet those standards in every activity they do. It is pretty much predicated on towns establishing erosion control priority lists. We have done that. One thing that came out is that they will clearly include Class IV roads in their erosion control process. Committee members pointed out that towns get zero money for maintenance on Class IV roads and Class IV roads are not eligible for FEMA reimbursement so there is no source of funding for erosion control on Class IV roads. The general consensus was that the state recognizes that but towns will have to do it

anyway. On the good side, the federal transportation act that was recently passed includes more money to the state. The state will filter down additional grant money. A lot will come through Better Backroads, which will cover more activities and provide larger amounts. Vermont is going to dedicate a fairly substantial portion of what is now Transportation Enhancement Grants to stormwater-related projects. The village might be eligible for projects like the College Hill one. To some degree the conclusion the committee came out with is that it is best for us to map areas and identify priorities first rather than leaving it up to the state to prioritize areas. But that will only insulate us to a certain degree. An area like the one on Coddington Hollow Road where we just got the FEMA grant approved could be an area of huge capital expense with little or no funding.

Doug asked, would this prompt us to think about abandoning Class IV roads? Duncan said that was a topic of conversation at the meeting. The state representatives said they obviously would prefer that towns not give up public roads and the committee members said that if there is no money available for Class IV roads it is almost certain that some towns are going to simply give up those roads or reclassify them as legal trails. Eric asked, we don't have to do erosion control on legal trails? Duncan said that is right.

11. NEMS Proposed Budget 2016-2017

Duncan handed out copies of the NEMS budget. Scott Griswold said they are asking for a 3.7% increase. He listed some of the reasons for the increase. They have had a wage freeze for 3 years and they need to increase wages now. They will have a new ambulance delivered in January. As expected there is another decrease in Medicare. The per capita increase in the budget is around 86 cents, compared to almost 7 dollars per capita in their northern district.

Eric asked, are we approaching the time where we need another crew? Scott said there are 2 crews during the day from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm, one for emergency services and one for transports. There is one crew in the evening for 911 calls and emergency transports. He is not sure if bringing in another crew would be profitable enough. There is a problem with mutual aid because some neighbor services are not fully staffed. NEMS set up a meeting with District 4 to discuss their concerns. Scott would like a selectboard member to express the selectboard's concerns at the meeting. The towns that contract with NEMS at times are paying for primary coverage for other services. Cambridge is doing a very good job now, so it is mainly Morristown. He believes Morristown is looking at addressing the problem starting July 1, but it is not fair to NEMS to wait. He would like the selectboard's assistance on this meeting. He will let the board know when it is set up. The best answer for this area would be regionalization. Duncan asked if that will be a topic of discussion with the Morristown board. Scott said he will make sure it is. It is fortunate the 5 towns that contract with NEMS understand the need for regionalization. Hopefully we can get more towns interested in it. *(Scott left at 8:12.)*

12. Regional Plan Policies for Development in Floodplains

Duncan said Doug had asked about the impact of LCPC's regional plan on Johnson, so he invited David Bergh and Tasha Wallis to come in and give us background on what is in the plan and what the potential impacts on our community are. David Bergh said he has represented Johnson on the LCPC board for several years now. He is chair of the LCPC board. LCPC recently completed a new regional plan. It was approved about a month ago. He thinks it is a good plan they all feel proud of. There was a good process behind it. It was well

vetted and reviewed. There have been recent articles in the News & Citizen and Stowe Reporter about Morristown's concerns with it. A lot of that has to do with internal politics in Morristown. There was a concern that it was anti-development because of land use restrictions. It is surprising that these concerns emerged after a multiple year process of review. He is not sure what could be seen as new land use restrictions in the plan. The idea that it is seen as anti-development seems strange to him. Those involved in developing it included Caleb Magoon and a member of the Vermont Retail Association. The board is attuned to economic development. He thinks Morristown may be rehashing old concerns from 7 or 8 years ago. His board will be pressing to get more information about their concerns and why they are coming forward now after a multiple year review process. David introduced Tasha Wallis, LCPC's new executive director, and Seth Jensen, the interim director.

Tasha said it has become clear to her that LCPC does great planning work but should probably get better at communicating their work in the community in plain language. It is easy to take things out of context. They haven't done a good enough job of helping people understand their work.

Seth said there seemed to be 2 sections raising concerns – the land use section and the flood resilience section. Regional plans are required by statute to address certain elements. They need to have a future land use section and a future land use map. LCPC spent a lot of time redoing the land use map. The previous one was based completely on different lot sizes. The board decided to start over and create a map based on planning areas identified in local plans. They came up with 4 regional areas. Once the map was developed he met with planning staff in communities or local planning commissions. He met with Lea. The center area they identified as the priority area for future infrastructure investment includes pretty much all the areas Johnson has mapped as village, college, outer village, or industrial, including the Jewett property. That is not the only area where infrastructure investment can occur, but the priority for use of public funds should be the center area. LCPC is bound by statute to identify infrastructure priority areas. If Johnson were to apply for a grant for development of the Jewett property this language would be there to provide support. There is language in the plan about avoiding new development in floodplains. Floodplains don't include the center where there is already development. The plan encourages but does not require 2 feet of freeboard. The plan also notes some maps, like the river corridor maps, may be lacking in accuracy and strongly encourages the state to take action to ground truth those and make them more accurate.

Doug asked about the interplay between those maps and the FEMA maps. Seth said FEMA has their flood insurance maps. Those are what floodplain regulations are based on. The state of Vermont has come up with river corridor maps that don't necessarily jive with the FEMA maps. David Butler said the ANR river corridor maps often take into account areas a stream may move into in the future. FEMA maps don't touch that. ANR includes more territory in the river corridor. FEMA is primarily concerned with insurance.

Doug asked if his understanding is correct that core places in the center of the village have a pass on flooding-related restrictions. For instance, if we wanted to increase the size of the

sewer plant, we would not run into restrictions? Seth said there is a different treatment of center areas, but a project could run into Act 250 restrictions. The requirement for 2 feet of freeboard is less stringent than what the state wants. Doug asked, the river corridor restrictions are going to be criteria for Act 250 permits, is that right? Seth said yes, but that is not the regional plan. That is Act 250's interpretation of Criterion One.

Lea said she thinks Seth is trying to say LCPC recognizes the importance of development in Johnson and tried to formulate language in the regional plan that in the Act 250 process hopefully can provide support for projects. Seth said that is right. David Bergh said that is why they are perplexed that the regional plan is being pointed to as adding to restrictions. Lea said the flood plain section of the regional plan just says no development is encouraged in floodplains. You need to look at the land use section to understand completely what the plan says about floodplains. Duncan said some could take parts out of context. That is probably part of what has led to concern.

Eric asked if we would we have been able to redevelop Sterling Market like we did under the current plan. Lea, David, Seth, and Tasha said yes. David said LCPC was concerned for a long time about the river corridor impact on private lands but discussed it and decided it is a moot point because most of those lands are not developable anyway. Most in Johnson are agricultural.

Doug asked, what is the time period for towns to consider whether to veto the plan? David Bergh said 30 days. Doug asked if anyone but Morristown has objected to it. LCPC reps said no. Tasha said one Cambridge representative on the board voted against it, but that was not consistent with the wishes of the Cambridge selectboard.

Nat said the plan is in place, right? And one community has vetoed it? David Bergh said Morristown has said their vote is largely symbolic. For the plan to be invalidated a majority of municipalities would have to veto it and he is not aware of others considering it.

Tasha said in the next year LCPC will revise the significant impact criteria for the plan and will keep municipal boards updated.

Duncan said he thinks it would be great for LEDC and LCPC to work together on issues. Tasha said LCPC is having discussions about a joint meeting with LEDC.

Tasha shared some information about the Northern Vermont Economic Development District. In the past there were congressional earmarks for specific projects. That has evolved and now there are earmarks for specific regions. There is a northern region that is part of Vermont. Once the district develops its policy for encouraging development in the region those communities are eligible for some federal funding sources. She and John Mandeville are co-chairs. They are finishing up strategies. There are opportunities for communities to weigh in.

David Butler said there is a brook that divides his property in half. At some point in the future he will find he can't legally access the other half of his property. Seth said during Irene

some small streams in southern Vermont had channel changes due to unprecedented amounts of water. The legislature mandated ANR to do river corridor mapping statewide. Their methodology was to assume worst case scenarios. The maps are very coarse and very broad. They just looked at the width of the stream and established a 50-ft. buffer. There is a process for ground truthing, which is something LCPC is hoping to do. David Butler said the ANR maps don't take into account any of our history or topography. Most mountain streams are so steep they can't move. Seth said a lot of river scientists in ANR are aware these are very broad. Part of LCPC's work with ANR is to identify communities where ground truthing would be helpful. Johnson seems like a good candidate for that.

Eric thanked the LCPC reps for coming in. They eased some of his fears after reading the article in the newspaper.

Howard said he would like a copy of all the flood maps. Duncan said he should work with Lea on that. (*Tasha, Seth and David Bergh left at 8:53.*)

13. Manager's Report and Action Items (continued)

Duncan said the board needs to schedule some budget meetings. It was agreed to meet the second Monday in January at 7:00.

A Vermont River Conservancy grant to build steps to the Beard swimming hole has been approved.

Riverbend Properties (the Landmark Tavern) has put in an Act 250 application. They are requesting an extension to allow storage units on the property.

Lamoille Kennels is increasing their price, which hasn't increased in quite a few years. We only pay them if the owner doesn't redeem the dog. Typically if an animal is brought to the pound the person who owns it has to pay the boarding fees. He would say the vast majority of owners redeem their dogs.

An employee has a spouse who has to go on Medicare because of their age. If this employee were to stay on a 2-person plan we would pay a pro-rated share of the 2-person plan. If we pay a pro-rated share of a single person plan and Parts A, B, and D of the Medicare plan it ends up being less than the pro-rated share of a 2-person plan. Is the board okay with paying 100% of Parts A, B, and D for the spouse? The decision for this employee will in essence become a policy as it sets a precedent.

Doug asked if this is comparable to the situation where a spouse gets their insurance elsewhere instead of using our insurance. Duncan said employees have a "cash in lieu of" option but spouses are not entitled to that. Eric asked why this is any different than if an employee's spouse goes with their employer's insurance. If an employee's spouse took insurance where they worked or purchased it on their own we wouldn't pay for part of it. Duncan said the difference is that the spouse in question would stay on the employee's policy if they could but our plan requires that someone who turns 65 has to go on Medicare.

Eric said the village had someone in this situation. What did they do? Duncan said they did just what he is proposing.

Howard moved to approve paying for Parts A, B, and D of the Medicare plan for an employee's spouse who has become eligible for Medicare, seconded by Doug, and the motion was passed.

Town employees were sent a memo on changes in health insurance.

Duncan said he has sent out his thoughts on the draft Outlook calendar policy the village is thinking of adopting. It is up to the selectboard whether to discuss adopting it. His concern is that the policy would apply to joint employees. He doesn't think either board can unilaterally adopt a policy applying to joint employees. The trustees also voted to change the supervisor of the CEDC to the village manager. The supervisor is defined in the job description as the clerk-treasurer. He doesn't think it is within the trustees' purview to make a change to a job description unilaterally.

Eric explained that the trustees have adopted a policy that all employees will use an Outlook calendar so all can look at each other's schedules and see who is in and out. They adopted the policy for village employees and applied it to joint employees. Duncan said he doesn't think they have adopted the policy yet. They want the selectboard to consider adopting the same policy, but the one up for approval applies to joint employees. Eric said he doesn't have a particular problem with the policy. He doesn't think we would want to apply it to the highway department. Most highway department employees don't have access to computers, and he is not sure how comfortable with computers they are. This came about because of a note he sent out. His concern was that Lea, Sandy and Duncan are all working part time and he couldn't figure out who was working what days. This has morphed into something different from what he asked about and something he doesn't have access to, so it does him no good. He doesn't have a strong opinion about the policy under consideration. He was looking for schedule information for department heads. He thinks Duncan is correct that for anything to be done with joint employees the two boards need to get together and agree.

Doug feels there should be a joint meeting and the trustees should share their rationale with the selectboard. Duncan said he is happy to share his Outlook calendar with Eric. He doesn't see the need for a policy. A future selectboard chair may not have any interest in seeing the administrator's calendar. Doug asked Rosemary if she sees a need for this policy. She shrugged.

Nat said for years the trustees and selectboard have worked well together but we don't seem to be on the same page so much anymore and that concerns him. He would like to work on repairing the relationship and working together better.

Board members expressed an interest in meeting with the trustees. Eric said he will talk to Gordy about scheduling a joint meeting on these two issues.

Duncan said the personnel policy committee has discussed the need to address supervision of joint employees now that the town and village have different administrators so the trustees' action may have been a little premature. The job descriptions of the administrator and manager may change and descriptions of who supervises who may change.

Doug brought up the question of budgeting for salaries when the town runs on a fiscal year and the village uses the calendar year. Duncan said the village's budgets are retroactive. They basically act without a budget for 4 months. Doug brought up the contributions toward shared employees. Duncan said Eric had circulated an email about it. His response is that if there is going to be any change to percentages or total hours we need to know that sooner vs. later.

Lea said the trustees invited her to their January meeting to discuss community development priorities for 2016. It would be good to have that discussion with this board as well. Duncan said Lea's job description talks about the Planning Commission as well as the two boards setting priorities, then developing an annual work plan. That may need to be part of our planning. Doug said he has suggested in the past having joint meetings about the future with the Planning Commission, the trustees and the selectboard. He thinks now that is more vital than ever. When he was chair of the Planning Commission he wanted the Planning Commission to have a strong say in Lea's work plan because he thought she drove a lot of the economic development in this community. Lea said she looks at it as 3 different boards composing together what they want for the year. She would like to follow up with the Planning Commission and the selectboard after meeting with the trustees.

Duncan said Lea's application for a Municipal Planning Grant for a resource inventory on behalf of the Conservation Commission was successful. **Nat moved to accept the Municipal Planning Grant for the resource inventory and to authorize the chair to sign the grant agreement, Howard seconded, and the motion was passed.**

Duncan had a meeting with Jim Cota from District 8. He is the person who would approve an amendment to our structures grant for the College Hill drainage project. Duncan passed out a spreadsheet showing the impact of the change orders on the project cost. Change order 1 has been approved. That leaves change orders 3 and 4. If we add everything together we get a total project cost of \$155K. If we did not get an amendment to the grant our unmet additional cost would be \$33,466 and our total cost would be \$57,841. His conversation with Jim Cota was very promising about being able to get an amendment to the grant. He believes the Desroches requests are not reasonable. Duncan believes a combined figure of \$15,955 for change orders 3 and 4 is supportable and reasonable. Jim Cota has agreed in principal that if Desroches accepts that amount he would be willing to amend the grant upwards to cover that cost. The new amount would be \$142,066 and the new town share would be \$28,053. Duncan would propose asking Otter Creek Engineering to make up the difference between the old and new town match. Otter Creek has in concept agreed to make the town whole. So it looks likely that we will come out at the original anticipated cost. He has had some conversations with Sandy about cost obligation in the event we don't get the grant amendment or Otter Creek doesn't make the contribution we ask for. He believes that since the town applied for a grant for village infrastructure the town should not be on the hook for

more than agreed to. He has not gotten entirely receptive responses to his suggestion that the village should make the town whole if the grant and Otter Creek's contribution don't go through.

Lea said she is sending out a letter with her ruling as municipal project manager about the decrease to the change order amount. We should hear soon if the contractor is amenable to accepting payment of \$15,955.

The Green Mountain Relay is seeking to use Old Mill park as a staging area on June 11, 2016 from 7:30 to 2:00 pm. Nat said he understood that it was the Rec Committee's role to schedule these things and respond to requests. Howard said in the future requests like this should go to the Rec Committee. Duncan said they should fill out a Facilities Use application. The board agreed the application should go through the Rec Committee.

We recently had an elevator inspection. There were 2 issues identified but Duncan doesn't know yet what they were because he couldn't read the inspector's writing.

We have received a request for a health inspection report for a building on Railroad St. Sharon has been dealing with this. The tenant has provided a certified letter authorizing us to speak with a counselor on this issue.

FEMA has approved full funding for the Coddling Hollow culvert replacement project. Duncan would like authorization to have Ruggiano Engineering proceed with development of the plans so we can go out to bid. The board agreed to that.

The LCSD monthly report showed a 61% ratio of tickets to warnings. The other towns had a lower ratio. We raised that issue with Roger Marcoux. Kyle said a patrolman called her, but she missed the call and hasn't been able to speak to him yet.

The Irasburg selectboard sent out an email seeking support with regard to municipal plans being given more weight in public service board projects. They are looking for selectboards to assist them but their request is amorphous. Someone wants to put up a commercial wind tower in Irasburg. Board members said they were not interested in reading the email.

According to the latest property valuation and review our CLA is 107% and our COB is 15%. That is a small increase.

Lea has submitted a LWCF reimbursement request which will cover the other 50% of the purchase costs for the Beard parcel and we received most of it.

The 2016 VOJ fire service contract is a 1.8% increase. Does the board want Arjay to come in and discuss it? The total contract amount is \$81,862, which is a \$1,447 increase. Eric asked Duncan to invite Arjay to the January 11 meeting. The board will wait until after that to sign the contract.

Duncan hasn't had time to follow up on the Travis Hill water line issue. Nat asked what we are going to do about the skating rink this winter. Should we ask the fire department not to do it? Duncan said he would recommend we continue doing what we have been doing and limit the amount of exposed area and avoid the water line as much as possible now we know where it is. He will try to get some information out to Travis and let him know that is the plan and he will work with Brian to stake out the area.

At their last meeting the trustees voted to pursue basic group net metering solar projects, consistent with the selectboard vote. Duncan won't have time to work on that until after budget season. Lea may have a little time.

Eric said he heard the trustees voted down the charging station. Lea said that is correct. She said they were concerned that it was not a predetermined priority in their budgeting and felt ratepayer money shouldn't be spent on it.

Duncan hasn't had a chance to work on the dilapidated building ordinance and won't until after the budget is done.

Rose told Duncan she could probably prepare the 2016 Grand List. Then we could hire someone on a contract basis to do the work going forward. In order to do that she feels she would need some extra help with driving, measuring, etc. This raises a couple of issues. If the board is going to put an article in the warning to abolish the office of lister then not less than 45 days after a vote to abolish the lister (or when the board hires a contracted assessor) the office of lister is abolished. That doesn't comport with the date the Grand List needs to be done, which is early June. One thing we could do would be to appoint Rose assessor on a limited term basis. As assessor she could sign the Grand List. She indicated she would be comfortable signing the Grand List if the board appoints her assessor. There is the question of who we would get to help her do the field work and whether she would need additional help. She thinks her husband would be willing to help, but Duncan thinks we would need to advertise.

Howard asked what our alternative is. Duncan said to hire one of the firms we have talked to to develop the 2016 Grand List. Howard said presumably Rose would be less expensive. Duncan agreed she would be.

Eric asked, wouldn't we have to appoint her as assessor? Don't we need more than one lister to sign the Grand List? Duncan said if the article to abolish the position of lister is defeated we are in trouble. If it is defeated and no one submits a petition the board would have to appoint a lister. If the article is approved and the office is abolished then after 45 days the office ceases to exist so in either scenario we would have to appoint her assessor. Doug asked if we have to advertise that. Duncan said he doesn't think so.

Duncan said we have talked about contracting with a couple of possible firms. We could put out an RFP or we could decide to hire an assessor. The board agreed they would like Rose to prepare the 2016 Grand List.

Eric gave the board an update on the personnel policy review committee's work. We now have long-term disability insurance that kicks in after 6 months. If we changed the waiting period to 90 days the total cost to the town and village for all employees would be around \$500. The committee thought doing that would make sense. There was a lot of discussion about whether we should get short-term disability. Sandy compared the cost of short-term disability with the payouts we have had for employees who retired and found that it would be more expensive to go with short-term disability. Now employees have a CTO bucket where they can carry a year and a half's worth of CTO. Then it rolls into a sick time bucket. The amount allowed in the sick time bucket now would not get employees to 90 days. After the sick leave bucket, time rolls into a catastrophic leave bucket. Employees can only access that if they have an extensive health need. One thought was to do away with the catastrophic leave bucket. If we changed the long-term disability waiting period to 90 days then the current amount of sick leave that can be accrued would not be enough to get employees to 90 days. They need about 780 hours. The thought was that we could allow that amount to be accrued in the sick leave bucket. Those are the only things agreed on so far. The committee thought this would be a good time to update the boards and see what they think. The committee hasn't gotten into the rest of the personnel policy much yet. They have just been discussing time off.

Duncan said the employee representatives made it very clear that they very much like the CTO policy. They think it works well for them and for the town and the village. They have asked for consideration of an additional holiday. They were willing to entertain the concept of a shorter window before long-term disability and expanding the amount of sick time that could be accrued. Eric said we would still cap the payout of sick time at the current number of hours. Duncan said Rosemary did a spreadsheet of payouts for those who retired. The cost per year ended up being about \$7K per person. Employees said if the payout is the issue then we should budget rather than buy short-term disability insurance. If no one uses short-term disability, we have still spent the money for it.

Doug said he is concerned about whether the standard to get benefits is similar with disability insurance and the catastrophic leave employees can get now. What do you have to prove to get a check from the insurance company? Is it similar to what employees have to do now to get catastrophic leave?

Eric said one thing about short-term disability that he thinks is a disadvantage is that we have had employees with health issues who were able to work for periods of time during their illness. They would not be able to do that on short-term disability and we would not have the benefit of their work.

Duncan showed the board Brian's sketch for a crosswalk to the library. Eric asked what the trustees' problem was with a sidewalk to the library. Lea said they are not in favor of extending the amount of sidewalk they have. They want to take care of what they have. They were also concerned that the sidewalk would hurt a business.

The new "Welcome to Johnson" sign is up.

Duncan asked Jon Clegg to provide estimates to 1) complete the repairs to Whiting Hill Cemetery, 2) provide a new and revised plat of Evergreen Ledge Cemetery and 3) do repairs to Evergreen Ledge Cemetery. Rosemary has drafted a “deed” for the sale of Evergreen Ledge lots and Duncan has met with two couples looking to purchase lots in the cemetery. We have to get it platted out and figure out what is left for space.

14. *Selectboard Issues and Concerns*

Kyle said at the last Johnson Works meeting an issue about rogue signs on Main St. came up. The board discussed a problematic business sign. Walter brought it up to the trustees, who decided to give it back to Johnson Works. The trustees don’t feel they have any way of enforcing what kinds of signs people put out. They need to look into the legal aspect more. Eric said AOT will pick them up if they are in the right of way. Kyle said Johnson Works would be concerned they might also pick up more attractive sandwich board signs that they don’t see as a problem. Nat agreed that other businesses have signs on Main Street that look nice. Lea said the trustees discussed addressing this through their sidewalk obstruction ordinance, which raises the question of whether we would also remove other signs that are on the sidewalk. Kyle said Johnson Works talked about how to reach out to the business owner to help her make a better sign.

Kyle said another issue that came up at the Johnson Works meeting is Casella trash receptacles being left out all the time, mainly on Railroad St. It doesn’t look good and could be a health issue. Nat asked whose they are. Duncan said they belong to tenants who live there. Howard said they don’t wheel them back in when they are empty.

Nat said he got an email from a citizen concerned about marijuana dispensaries. We should be aware we are going to be dealing with that with the possible legalization of marijuana.

15. *Adjourn*

The meeting was adjourned at 10:17.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths