

JOHNSON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 2020

Present:

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

Others: Brian Story, Rosemary Audibert, one community member

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

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

1. Call to Order

Eric called the meeting to order at 7:0.

2. Additions, Changes to Agenda

Brian added discussion of town meeting.

Eric said Willie Leonard passed away this morning. He was the husband of Martha Leonard who used to be a lister.

Eric said he is in contact with Vermont Emergency Management regarding coronavirus. He is sending out the information they send him to board members. He has looped in the college, the Studio Center and the school superintendent. There was a school class that went to Italy and just came back on Saturday. They weren't in an area where the virus was. There is no order from the health department for them to stay home. The college has a few students that come from or visited areas on vacation that have infections. They are monitoring them but there was no direct contact that they are aware of. The Vermont Studio Center has new people coming in every month from all over the world so they are concerned. There are cases in surrounding states. He expects we will probably have it in Vermont at some point.

Doug added discussion on avoiding gender bias next year and a request that he be appointed as a liaison on broadband.

3. Appointment of Municipal Positions

Eric turned the meeting over to Doug as vice chair. Doug asked for nominations for board chair. Mike nominated Eric, seconded by Nat. Kyle nominated Nat. Nat declined. Doug asked if anyone wished to second Kyle's nomination. There was no second. **The board voted to elect Eric board chair.**

Eric swore Rosemary in as town clerk.

Mike nominated Doug for vice chair, seconded by Nat. Eric said the vice chair position could be added to the slate of appointments to be approved.

The board discussed appointments. Doug said he doesn't want to be on the broadband committee. He has been attending broadband meetings that Lea Kilvadyova has organized. According to Lea, the next step is to decide on a governing structure. We need to know what

we want to accomplish before we decide. He would like to be a liaison to agencies or companies that our broadband committee is talking to, representing the selectboard. Nat said looking at minutes online it appears that the broadband committee has not met since October. Brian said they met recently at a meeting Lea organized. It was agreed to discuss the broadband committee and the tree warden separately from the other appointments. Kyle said she would like to not be officially on the community oven board but act in more of a liaison role. Howard Romero does not want to be reappointed as energy coordinator. Doug said he thinks we should advertise for it. Nat does not want to be reappointed to the Recreation Committee. He is not sure Lisa Crews should be on it now that she is a town employee. Brian said he would think not. It was agreed to leave Trustee of Public Money and Agent to Convey Real Estate vacant. Doug said he does not want to be reappointed to the Beautification Committee.

Mike moved and Kyle seconded to make the following appointments:

Highway Commissioner: Brian Story
Road Foreman/Public Works Superintendent: Brian Krause
First Constable: Tracy Myers
Second Constable: Diane Stoney
Fence Viewers: Blaine Delisle, Margo Warden, Kathy Black
Official Weigher: Mike Patch
Vt. Emergency Management: chair of selectboard
Town Service Officer: Michael Dunham
Inspector of Lumber, Wood & Shingles: Richard Simays
Green Up Day Chair: Shayne Spence
Planning Commission, 3 year term: Dave Butler
Planning Commission, 2 year term: Rob Rodriguez
Planning Commission, 2 year term: Paul Warden
Recreation Committee: Jasmine Yuris, Katie Orost, Allen Audette
Skate Park Committee: Casey Romero, Howard Romero, Greg Fatigate, George Swanson, Jon Girard, Rick Aupperlee, James Whitehill
Conservation Commission: Lois Frey, Eric Nuse, Dean Locke, Sue Lovering, Noel Dodge, Denise Ashman, Jackie Stanton, Jared Jasinski, Carrie Watson
Tree Board: Sue Lovering, Rob Maynard, Noel Dodge, Dorcas Jones, Louise von Weise, Jacob Vandorn, Brian Vandorn
Fire Warden: Gordon Smith
Town Historian: Linda Jones
Historical Society: Linda Jones, Dean West, Lois Frey, Tom Carney, Alice Whiting, Duncan Hastings, Dick Simays, Kelly Vandorn, Mary Jean Smith
Plot Cemetery Agent: David Marvin
Whiting-Hill Cemetery Agent: selectboard
Development Review Board: William Jennison, David Williams, alternates Shayne Spence and Kim Dunkley
Beautification Committee: Gordon Smith, Kyle Nuse, Brennan Blair, Philip Yuris, Ann Marie Bahr, Bradley Fletcher, Angela Barton

Broadband Committee: Charles Gallanter, Rob Rodriguez, Robin Story, Charlotte Reber, Barry Cohen, Una Lee
Tuesday Night Live Committee: Howard Romero, Tim Mikovitz, Joie Lehouillier, Sophia Berard, Mara Siegel, Jasmine Yuris, Tom Moog
Community Oven Committee: Jasmine Yuris, Kay Kania, Luke Gallatly, Sophia Berard, Charlotte Roozekrans, Liam Murphy, Mark Woodward
Official Pound: Lamoille Kennels

The motion was passed.

Mike said he would rather appoint a selectboard member as tree warden until we hear what the legislature decides about tree warden powers.

Brian said the most recent draft of the proposed law cleans up of a lot of things we didn't like about the first version. It would establish that the tree warden has authority over shade and ornamental trees in rights of way and it clarifies that shade and ornamental trees are those that were intentionally planted. The town also has the authority to voluntarily designate other trees as shade or ornamental trees of public value. Apart from that it would be pretty much the way the law is now, which does grant pretty wide authority to the tree warden. It provides more limits on municipal maintenance of rights of way than limits on individuals doing work in rights of way. Property owners would not have to consult with the tree warden to determine the value of trees as long as they were not on our list of shade and ornamental trees.

Doug asked, what if we don't have a tree warden? Brian said he is not clear on that. Eric said he sent that question to the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT.) Their thought was that we have to appoint someone. He asked if we can appoint the whole selectboard. VLCT did not believe so. They weren't aware of any communities that have done so. But they said that often the selectboard will appoint a selectboard member as tree warden.

Nat asked what the change is that Mike is concerned about. Eric said the first draft of a bill that came out gave the tree warden carte blanche power over and above the selectboard or power companies to control cutting or trimming of trees in rights of way and VLCT came out strongly against it. Brian said he is more comfortable with the new draft that came out last week. It appears to be a minor improvement over the current law in the sense that the old law is very old and interpretation mostly comes from case law. The new statute would hopefully clear up understanding. He much of the motivation for this bill was driven by a case where a farmer cut down a large number of trees within his right of way and is being taken to court by a municipality.

Doug asked, aren't there are occasions where we want a tree warden? He thinks it is a risk we probably need to take because we probably should have one. Mike said he would rather see one of the selectboard members as tree warden until the final draft of the bill is done. He wouldn't mind being the tree warden temporarily.

Nat said he thinks the tree warden we have, Noel Dodge, is trustworthy with good judgment and deep knowledge and he would hate to alienate him or make him feel bad by not reappointing him. It might feel like a slight to someone who is well qualified. Mike said it is nothing against Noel Dodge. Once all is resolved he can have the job.

Eric said it is fair to acknowledge that this bill hasn't been pushed up by tree wardens. It is not as if overzealous tree wardens want to grab power. It seems that some state agency is pushing this. Even if the tree warden is granted more power they may not use it.

Doug said he thinks we should wait and discuss this with Noel Dodge. It was agreed that Brian should invite Noel to the next meeting.

Doug said the selectboard had given the broadband committee the direction that we wanted them to develop proposals on various options to bring fiber. They attended a meeting held by Lea and they were motivated by that. But they are divided on some questions and Lea feels they are moribund. It was suggested at one point that there should be a subcommittee to talk to Mansfield Community Fiber about what they would do for our community. It has to be kicked into gear.

Brian said Mansfield Community Fiber had an interesting proposal that would have some gaps. He asked them to more clearly define what part of town would not be covered with their proposal. We need that before we can move forward with them. We want a better idea of how many and which homes they are proposing to serve. They wouldn't get to anyone served by Comcast. They are only interested in those not served by Comcast. But there are conditions about who they will go to. He needs to know how many they will not reach before he can make a recommendation.

Brian said REDI districts or communications union districts are alternatives for forming coalitions with other municipalities. It seems to him that the way that usually works is that the coalition would develop the actual fiber and then contract with a company to operate and maintain it. That is also a pretty interesting option. After the recent meeting Lea set up, he thinks the broadband committee may be more functional. We may be able to encourage them to have groups of people who are interested in specific ideas work on those ideas while others work on different ideas and then get back together and make a decision after they have more information on each option.

Doug said a REDI district would be a single town. Two experts that Lea brought to the meeting said we would not have enough subscribers for a REDI district. Brian said he thought REDI districts could span municipalities and not include the entire town. Doug said a REDI district does not have to include the entire town but it is a single town. With a communications union district, it helps to get in on the ground floor. The experts said we don't have sufficient people to make a REDI district work. A communications union district will take a long time to get started but the end result is better because we own the assets. CUDs and REDI districts don't involve taxpayers pledging their assets. If we went with Mansfield Community Fiber they would put the system in and own it and likely at some point they would sell it to someone else. If you have a CUD you own the assets. The question

is whether there would be in savings in that compared to going with Mansfield Community Fiber, because we would be paying the operator. We have to figure that out. He understands from Lea that there is a possibility that with federal money Consolidated Communications might be a player in our community. He feels the broadband committee has to be pushed and someone has to be a conduit back to the selectboard.

Eric asked, do we feel the broadband committee is still needed and should be reappointed? Doug said if we don't have this one, we need another one. Brian said his sense is that the broadband committee was a little re-energized from the recent meeting. Doug agreed.

Mike asked if the broadband committee knows about Doug's interest in serving as a liaison. Doug said Rob Rodriguez seems to.

Mike moved to reappoint the current broadband committee members and to appoint Doug as a liaison on broadband, seconded by Nat. Kyle said her concern with the committee is about the leadership and whether that is working. Brian said he thinks the broadband committee has a vacancy and Doug could serve as a member. Doug said he doesn't want to. Nat said we should figure out how to use Lea. Doug said he wants her help. He said he would also invite Brian to meetings. **The motion was passed.**

Doug said he doesn't want to be second in command during an emergency. Eric said the EMD can appoint as many coordinators as they want. We have always had one, Gordy. He has vast knowledge in dealing with emergencies, but Eric would consider appointing Nat as emergency coordinator. He has expressed interest and gone to some trainings. He would be very capable if Eric were not in town. As vice chair, Doug would still be involved, for instance in declaring an emergency or authorizing expenditures. But the coordinators could do the rest. Kyle said Gordy is often called out for the fire department. Eric said Gordy also won't want to be emergency coordinator forever, so it would be good to have someone else in the wings.

4. Gender Issues in Town Report

Eric said an email had been sent to the board about gender issues in the town report. How do we go about making the report more gender neutral? Doug said he thinks we need to have someone go through and check the report and align it with the town's inclusivity statement. Committee material should also be gender neutral. We need to have a list of who we should ask to check their materials. It won't change unless we ask people to do it. Brian said he thinks we can make a better effort to track down everyone we get pages from. Eric said he is less concerned about material from nonprofits. He is mainly concerned about the ones we are responsible for. He asked who owns the boilerplate text that is reused from year to year. Brian said he has some, Rosemary has some and the auditors have some. Rosemary said the auditors proofread it all. Eric asked who can clean it up. Brian said he thinks we just have to put greater effort into making sure everyone's pages are free of issues. Doug asked, can we clean it up now so it will be ready for next year? Brian said he thinks that is a good idea.

Kyle said in the future she would like to see the town report before it goes out. It is disheartening and demoralizing to open it up and see that it refers to "selectmen." She has

said in the past that that needs to change and it has not happened. And now a member of the public is bringing it to light.

A community member said she noticed the word “selectmen” in the town report and all she could think was that if it said “selectwomen” with all the board members’ names underneath they would speak up and it would get changed. She thinks it is really important. It is respectful to any women on the board. The board needs to pay attention to this. She is very impressed with what Kyle does in the town.

Eric said the board cannot order Rosemary or the auditors as duly elected officials to do anything. He asked Rosemary if she would be willing to clean up the documents and pass on to the auditors that we would appreciate it if they could do the same. Rosemary said yes.

5. *Review and Approve Minutes of Meetings Past*

Mike moved to approve the minutes of February 17 and February 23, 2020 Nat seconded and the motion was passed with Doug abstaining.

6. *Appointment of Municipal Positions (continued)*

We need two representatives for the law enforcement options committee. Nat said he would like people with experience but not a strong bias. He suggested Diana Osborn as a possibility. He can't serve on the committee and probably shouldn't as he has strong opinions. What is suggested is for each town to have two members, one of them a selectboard member.

We will also need two board members for labor negotiations.

Eric asked if there is a board member interested in being on the law enforcement options committee. Brian said we don't know the time commitment for that committee. The committee will ideally reach a decision within three years. Mike said he wouldn't mind being on it, but he thinks he will be busy with the negotiation committee. He thought the board wanted him to be on that.

Eric said he thinks he is somewhat biased as he has worked with Roger Marcoux for a number of years. Nat said there are potentially strong candidates in the community. He thinks there could be two people from the community and no selectboard member. Doug said he thinks it could be an advantage for our operations not to have board members tapped for another committee.

Eric asked, if we do not have a board member at the table, will we be comfortable with what they may come out with? Mike said he would be willing to trade committees and be on the law enforcement committee. Doug suggested that the law enforcement committee representatives can stay in touch with the selectboard so we understand where they are going. He thinks if they reported to us regularly that would be enough.

Eric suggested discussing first who will be on the negotiation team. He is willing to serve if the committee is willing to accommodate his work schedule. He is only available on Mondays or Fridays.

Eric Nuse was suggested as a possibility for the law enforcement committee. Nat said it seems clear that no one on the board is very interested, so let's post the opportunity and ask a few people if they are interested.

7. Facility Use Request for Legion Field

Brian said Jackie Stanton is requesting use of Legion Field on May 30 for a Healthy Lamoille Valley event. There are no conflicts that we are aware of. **Nat moved to approve the facility use request from Healthy Lamoille Valley for Legion Field on May 30, Doug seconded and the motion was passed.**

8. Priority Planning

Brian and the board reviewed the priority list that had been developed previously. Brian said he had sorted the items by urgency.

Update safety policies in manual. There has been no progress, so Brian would leave that one alone.

Transfer station agreement. Brian said this one is in the hands of the solid waste district. He will follow up with Susan Alexander and see where they are with it. They had requested some changes and we struck them out and proposed just renewing our existing contract.

GIS mapping and grant opportunity. Brian said there has been no serious movement on that. The importance could perhaps be lower but there is a good opportunity coming up this spring to get a grant to have our mapping company make an update on our map. It is urgent because of the good opportunity coming up.

Gravel pit planning. Brian said we have made progress but he is not ready to give a report. He thinks he should get an expert to read the data he got. The report we got back still left a lot of questions and he needs to get help interpreting the report.

Mike asked, if we acquired land next to the existing gravel pit, would we pay the Nadeaus for every load that goes out? Brian said we would negotiate that. Mike said he thinks we need to look for property that we buy outright. Brian said we got the current property for less than market value because of the agreement that we would pay for each load we took out.

Emerald ash borer. Brian said we have budgeted some funds for this. It is in progress and going well.

Revolving loan fund committee. Brian said we need to advertise this again and get a few members appointed. Eric asked if we are on target on loaning out money. Brian said no, we are behind. The date when we have to have a certain amount loaned out is coming up soon. We can borrow some ourselves if we need to. Doug said we should know when the deadline is. Brian said he will work on confirming the deadline and advertising the committee.

Brian said the next item we can do away with because the voters struck it down yesterday.

Doug asked if we can advertise the availability of revolving loans. Brian said he thinks we can.

Update capital equipment fund. This has been done.

Holcomb House maintenance plan. Eric said he what he and Doug discussed with the Historical Society was pertinent to this but they did not go into details of what the building needs.

Joint employee agreement. Brian said the draft memorandum of understanding is with the trustees. He doesn't have comments from them yet. It was agreed that to change the title on this item to "Memorandum of understanding with village regarding office staff."

Law enforcement study committee. We discussed that tonight.

Social justice workshops. Brian said the first one is coming up on Saturday. Doug said he won't be there as it is the date of his daughter's death and he cannot manage it. Mike said if Willie Leonard's funeral is Saturday he won't be able to attend the workshop either as he will need to go to the funeral. Eric said he will be in the same situation.

Jewett property. Brian said that is going well right now. We are really close to submitting for the next stage.

Rail trail maintenance. Mike said there was a request that we mow twice a year. Eric said we were going to do that. Do we still need this here? Brian said he thought there was still the open question of people wanting us to mow it even more than that. Kyle said she thinks we talked about trying to find volunteers to mow it more often. She asked if this item also included the Old Mill Park trail. Brian said he doesn't think it was about that. We did maintenance on that trail this year and we will want to keep up maintenance. This item may have included a suggestion about the kiosk and welcome center at Old Mill Park, which are not very visible from the rail trail, and the possibility of improving signage. He would leave this as ongoing.

Beautification committee. This is revived and active again so the item can be stricken from the list.

Budget for community business mailing. Brian said this is something Johnson Works has been doing from its own funding but they don't have any regular income so they will probably come to us and ask for some funds for doing this mailing and other business advertisements. Kyle said they have already created a trifold flyer that list reasons to have a business in Johnson. They have designed it but the cost for printing and distributing are hang-ups now. They have also done a holiday mass mailing the last two years that lists all local businesses in Johnson.

Broadband access townwide. That was discussed tonight

Mill house subdivision. Brian said he would have to review to see where the trustees came down on this. Doug said Gordy said that he had asked Meredith to move forward on it. It

seems like Gordy is pushing on it. Brian said he hasn't done any work on researching subdivision for the property. Doug said he thinks we should ask Meredith what she has been instructed to do and see if there is anything we should do in relation to that.

Talc mill property trails. Brian said some people are interested in moving ahead with the plan for trails. Doug said we learned that the property is subject to Act 250. The question is whether the state cares about this project. Brian said he thinks they will want to see a more detailed plan than what we have and he thinks once they see it they will say it is an acceptable use. Doug said Nat had expressed willingness to talk to attorneys about this and would be willing as well. Brian said he will check with Lisa and see what her status is and get together with Nat and Doug about it. Mike said there were recent modifications to Act 250. Do they affect this? Brian said he doesn't think so. The ones he is most familiar with deal with village centers.

Holcomb house. We did that and it can be stricken from the list.

Redesigning Lendway Lane/Railroad Street/Old Mill Park intersection. Brian said he had an idea for this he wanted to work on this winter but he wasn't able to get to it.

Water access for Legion Field. Brian increased the urgency for this.

Legion Field master plan. Eric asked if we can consider this closed. Brian said we felt that it was turning into a park rather than a ball field and it would be good if we put some thought into its use.

Checkerberry Field. Eric asked if this one is closed. Brian said he thinks so. It is the arboretum now.

Manchester and Parker & Stearns properties. Doug said something substantial was accomplished on this – the study on flooding. That was a vital first step for development.

Merger study. Ongoing.

Regular public updates from Brian. Brian said he thinks he has made small improvements but he has more to do. He has been posting more board meetings on Facebook and Front Porch Forum. The other part to this is updates to the board. While we were having budget meetings every week he was not providing as many written updates to the board. Now he will pick that up again. He will give the board regular updates any week when we don't have a meeting.

Logging. Brian said there has been no movement on logging. Doug said he thinks logging is ad hoc. Brian said it has to come after we make other developments and changes.

Speed limit ordinance. No progress.

Class 4 road policy. We have received a Class 4 road policy.

Town sewer district. Eric said we haven't started that yet. Mike said he thinks we should move this up in urgency. Doug said he understands that is the planning commission's next subject. Brian said that is what we are sending them as a suggestion but they can choose to some extent what their priorities are. Mike asked when the town sewer district sunsets. Brian said Meredith told him she believes it sunsets and that she will get the date to him. Eric and Rosemary said there is not a date when it's sunsets. There was a set amount of capacity. Mike said he would like to talk about maintaining reserve capacity for the Jewett property and giving the rest back to the village.

Code of conduct for the selectboard. Brian said we have a draft. We haven't taken it up at a meeting.

Highway access policy. That is completed.

Social media policy. Brian said he has gotten input from a number of our boards. They have all had an opportunity to provide input. He thinks he is ready to write a report on what changes they want to see.

Sinclair Road. We haven't done anything on this.

Clock tower. We haven't made progress on this. Doug said he thinks it is worth talking to Steve Engel because he thinks the Masons have located a contractor and money and would be in a position to talk about ownership, etc.

Town clerk succession plan. Mike asked Rosemary, she will be here at least three more years, right? Rosemary said she plans on six more years.

Stop sign ordinance. There has been no change

New cemetery. There has been no change.

Route 15 TAC planning. Brian said this is for the part of Route 15 east of the village starting at the top of the gulf and going past Nadeau's and then down. The TAC priority planning meeting for state projects is in 2 weeks.

Medical center in Johnson. Brian said there are no real updates to give on that. It is still something very desirable and we will take whatever opportunity we can. He hasn't had an opportunity to meet with CHSLV in a while. Kyle asked if this is something the Tatros are still interested in having. Brian said yes, they are very interested. Jenna's Promise wants to build an outbuilding on the property. Doug suggested contacting CHSLV. Brian said he will.

Doug asked what happened to the idea of a clinic in the elementary school. Brian said they are doing work on that but it is just for elementary students. He has to touch base with CHSLV to ask about that. Kyle said she doesn't think the school has done any remodeling for it. Doug said we should ask David Manning about it.

Fishing access. Brian said he has a letter out to David Butler to try to set up a meeting about that.

Clay Hill pedestrian path. There has been no progress there.

Street naming ordinance. Brian said this needs a little more of his attention.

Encourage private businesses to promote recreation assets. Brian said we are doing this with Johnson Works. There is always more to do. We can do it on our own or assist Johnson Works. Doug said he has spoken to someone about trying to reinvigorate the rail trail committee. He would move the priority up now that there is going to be funding for the rail trail. It would be good to have things in place. Brian said a rail trail committee could also help with mowing on the trail. It was agreed to move this up.

Standing water on village roads. Brian said this remains a problem. Doug said it should say “town roads in the village” rather than “village roads.” Brian said Brian Krause gave a report on the issues. None will be easy fixes. The ones on the state road are technically easier to fix, but they are on the state road. Mike said we need to find a way to fix the mess in front of the Aupperlees’ house. Brian said it probably will stay until we do a paving project there. Doug said this is related to the question of merger and responsibility for curbs, sidewalks and storm drains. Kyle said the storm drains on Railroad Street are an issue for bikers. Once the rail trail is completed we have to make Railroad Street as bikeable as possible. Brian said we need to coordinate with the village to do a project like the one on School Street to redo the road and the storm drains all at once. Eric said it is a cement road and the cost of reclaiming the cement will be astronomical. He doubts the village will be prepared to do stormwater drain replacement without a grant. There needs to be coordinated effort between the town and the village and it will be expensive. The type of grant we need would be like the Main Street project grant. Mike asked, why don't we start working on that? Eric said we would need to do it in coordination with the village. Brian said he can ask them where it is on their priorities. Nat said it won't happen unless we cooperate better as boards. Once we get to the other side of the merger discussion, no matter how it turns out, we need to make a concerted effort to repair or build a relationship with the trustees.

ATV access. Doug said several people want to come to our next meeting about this. If we are going to review the ordinance we should review the entirety of it. Brian said this was already on here before Ken Tourangeau made his request at town meeting. Eric said Ken is coming to the next meeting. We will have to decide if we are going to change the ordinance.

Snowmobile access to the village. Brian said there is more broad support for, but it is more challenging. Snowmobiles can't run on pavement and we don't really have other places for them.

Green Mountain Byway. Brian said he is trying to tap Shayne Spence to serve on the Green Mountain Byway Committee.

Special events ordinance. Nat said this is for large events that create traffic and public safety issues. Roger Marcoux requested it. He thinks it is a lower priority because there haven't been many such events in recent years. Eric said this would relate to Field Days. Brian agreed. He said Moog's Joint is also interested in having events. He thinks we would gain from doing this ordinance. Kyle said she thinks it should stay on our radar. Brian said he will move this one up a bit in priority. Maybe even before we have an ordinance we can do a better job of sharing knowledge with the sheriff before large events.

Make over municipal building entryway. We have made some progress on this. Kyle said it is waiting for the entryway makeover. We have to make space for it. It is under shelter.

Branding for Johnson. Brian said there is no real change on this.

New website. Kyle said Johnson Works is working with an NVU alumnus who is giving them a great deal on doing a website. They will focus on highlighting businesses and natural resources. Brian said if Johnson Works has good experience with this person maybe we can also use them for a town website.

Kyle said she was tasked with branding last year. She reached out to people she knows that do this for a living and they all had to sign agreements with their jobs that prevent them from doing pro bono work. We would have to pay for it. Really good branders are really expensive. Johnson Works is working with someone who has done logos in the past. If he is good maybe we can see if the board is interested in working with him on this.

NVU relationship. Brian said the NVU relationship is going well. Their new point person, Leah Hollenberger, has been good to work with.

Compost facility. Brian said there has not been no real movement. The village agreement will run out in a couple of years.

Doug said, related to NVU, we had previously talked about appointing Rebecca Flieder, who has been attending selectboard meetings, to the broadband committee. Doug suggested that Brian follow up with her on that. Brian said he will contact her.

Ice jam flood study. This will happen this summer.

Doug asked what the compost facility item is about. Brian said is about what we do after our lease with the village expires. Doug asked about our lease with the solid waste district. Eric said that ends at the same time and has to be renegotiated. Doug suggested not waiting until the last minute but giving the solid waste district a heads up that we will be the owner of the site. Eric asked Brian to see what the date is when the village lease expires. Brian said he will check. It is two to three years from now. Doug said he thinks it will take two years to negotiate with the solid waste district. They will have to figure out what their alternatives are. Brian said the village will have to figure out their license for their wastewater facility and disposal. Doug suggested that we might want to consider having the property appraised. The solid waste district might want to buy it. It was agreed to increase the urgency of this item.

False alarm ordinance. Brian said we haven't done anything about this. Mike asked if we have much trouble with false alarms. Brian said no, but the sheriff would like something done about it anyway.

Graffiti removal. Brian said he thinks this should be moved up in urgency. This is a good opportunity when we have funds that people have told us they want us to spend on the historic bridges. Mike asked, didn't someone say they would remove graffiti as a volunteer? Brian said he would only want someone who had their own insurance to work on the outsides of the bridges. Brian said we should think about possibly painting or at least staining the bridges. It is much harder to remove graffiti from a natural finish.

Evergreen Ledge ownership. There has been no progress.

Bridge between skate park and Old Mill Park. There has been no progress.

Travis Hill water line. There has been no progress.

Nat said he would like to add establishing a policy for sale of trailers and other property acquired at tax sale.

He also wanted to add enforcement of the blighted building ordinance. Kyle said people have been asking her about that a lot. Doug said he thought we were going to consult our assessors and see what they considered blighted. We need to have a survey.

Nat wants to add next steps for town/village merger discussion. He wanted to add labor relations but he thinks we are addressing that. Brian said we should assign a priority to it. He wants to add flood doors and windows for the library, cold storage building maintenance, establishing a child protection policy for volunteer boards, next steps on the school merger question, and Scribner Bridge low water crossing and Rocky Road.

Mike said there are questions about the legality of getting out of the unified union as Walter has suggested. Eric said Walter has researched the process and calling a special meeting is the first step. There is not much of a role for us. We will just call the meeting and allow an opportunity for voters to discuss the issue. Mike asked if we are going to consult attorneys. Brian said he doesn't think we need our attorney. Eric said Walter sent out an article from other towns that went through this process. We probably could use the same article.

Brian assigned priorities to the new items that had been added.

Doug said he wants to add two new items. He thinks we ought to have a questionnaire for nonprofits requesting money so we have more information on them for town meeting. He thinks we should let them know that we are interested in their total budget, where money from us fits into their budget, the need for our money and whether they have reserve funds. Whether they do good things isn't the only question we want to ask. Brian said it might make

sense to require them to send an annual report with a budget or answer a questionnaire in order to stay in our budget. We will work on this.

Doug said he would like to have our committees do planning and tell us what their goals are for this year.

9. *Town Meeting Discussion*

Eric said the two things the board was charged with at town meeting were non-binding. It would not be a huge hurdle for Walter to be required to get signatures on a petition. We could require that a petition be raised. He checked with Dave Williams on his availability for a special meeting and he will be available after April 12. Eric sent an email to Cat Gallagher and Walter Pomroy indicating that he would like to give them an opportunity to be prepared but we couldn't have a special town meeting for at least 30 days.

Doug said he thinks we should warn a special town meeting without requiring signatures on a petition. Mike agreed. It is what the voters wanted. Eric said he sees our role as calling the meeting and then we would not have any part in the meeting. Dave Williams would be there as moderator. We don't have authority or responsibility. We wouldn't want to be seen as taking a side. Our only role is calling the meeting.

Eric asked if there is agreement that we would not want to write a summary of the consultant's report as suggested at town meeting. Board members agreed we would not want to.

Nat said the trustees are likely to have a lot of feedback for Kent. Nat's only feedback is that we want the figures to be corrected where they are inaccurate but we want this to be an independent third-party report. We don't want Kent to change his narrative substantially. He expects the village will probably write their own summary. We would have the option to do that as well. Eric said he doesn't think we would. Mike said we have always wanted to be as neutral as possible, not pushing one way or another. Nat said he thinks the trustees have a strong position on the question. Doug said it's not as important to us as it is to them. There is dysfunction in our arrangement regarding storm drains, curbs, streets, and sidewalks. That affects economic development in the village and needs to be addressed but we could do that with the government structure continuing as it is.

Brian said he had the impression that the two boards were going to meet before we sent directions to Kent. Mike agreed. Eric suggested Brian might want to talk to Meredith and make sure we all understand the same thing. Kyle and Brian agreed it would be good to have a moderator at that meeting. Doug said he thought we already communicated the factual problems to Kent. Eric said he doesn't understand why the two boards would need to meet again before sending data corrections back. He understood that Brian and Meredith sent some corrections and not all were incorporated into the report. Why would we add more now? Nat said Walter had some corrections. Eric said a lot of Walter's corrections had to do with the narrative. Nat said the idea is to send feedback to Kent on everything people want corrected including, he thinks, strong feedback from us asking that he not change his report. That feedback will go to Kent and he will return the report to us updated with corrections, then each board will decide whether to approve those corrections. We will try to have both boards

approve the report before we disseminate it. Mike said we need to compare the next report with the first one to make sure the narrative is still the same. We just want the figures that are in error corrected. Doug said he does not think it is our role to approve the report. If Kent has corrected the facts and says the narrative is related to the facts, it is his report and our approval is irrelevant. Mike said he doesn't want to see a changed narrative. Doug said it should be changed only if the changes relate to the changes in fact, but that is up to Kent.

Kyle asked if anyone fact-checked the facts. Brian said he can't speak to the village facts. We haven't given an opinion about any of their requests for changes. Eric asked Rosemary if Kent came to her for factual things like salaries. Rosemary said he asked for W-2 information and she sent that for both the town and the village. That doesn't include any benefits. Eric asked if Rosemary thinks the figures he gave for average town and village salaries seem about right. Rosemary said yes.

Brian said he believes the plan is that we will collect the requested changes and send them all at once. Eric asked, the two boards are going to get together before the requested changes are sent? Brian said he wants to review the motion that was made on that. He will talk to Meredith and make sure we are 100% on the same page about what will happen. Kyle asked him to send out to the board what he finds from talking to Meredith.

Kyle asked how many people were at town meeting. Rosemary said there were around 175.

10. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:02.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths