

JOHNSON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES  
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2019

**Present:**

Selectboard Members: Mike Dunham, Nat Kinney, Doug Molde (8:18), Kyle Nuse, Eric Osgood  
Others: Brian Story, Rosemary Audibert, Brian Krause, Greg Tatro, Dawn Tatro, Bobbi Rooney, Lois Frey, Jessica Bickford, Kim Dunkley, Tom Moog, Casey Romero, Howard Romero, Jeanne Engel, Daryl West, 3 other community members

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

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

**1. Call to Order**

Eric called the meeting to order at 7:05.

**2. Additions, Changes to Agenda**

Brian added discussion of a proposal on Heather Rodriguez doing consulting on recreation issues. Nat added updates on the Holcomb House and Mine Road. Eric added an update on the recent meeting at the college. Kyle added continued discussion on the inclusivity sign and discussion of response time to emails sent to the selectboard.

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

**Mike moved to approve the minutes of July 5, August 5 and August 19, 2019, Kyle seconded and the motion was passed.**

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

Rosemary gave the board the updated final budget status report for FY 2019. There is \$116,361 in uncommitted cash on hand. Brian suggested putting \$100,000 of that into the capital equipment fund and the remainder into the building maintenance fund. He said there is a pretty healthy amount in the building maintenance fund now but we will use some of it in 2020.

**Mike moved to put \$100,000 of the uncommitted cash on hand from FY 2019 into the capital equipment fund and to put the remainder into the building and grounds maintenance fund, Kyle seconded and the motion was passed.**

Rosemary said current taxes are almost 36% collected, about the same as last year.

A justice of the peace is resigning as they are moving.

Last week Rosemary and Jan went to the annual Clerks' and Treasurers' Association meeting. They attended several helpful sessions.

Tom Moog requested an expansion of the outside consumption area on his liquor license. He said the liquor control officer helped him to identify an area where the liquor control officer was comfortable allowing drinks. He described the area and showed it on a map. The entire area is visible from the restaurant. He would like to put some picnic tables and outdoor

recreation equipment in that area. **Nat moved to approve the requested expansion of the outside alcohol consumption area for Tom Moog's restaurant, Mike seconded and the motion was passed.** (*Harold Romero arrived at 7:15. Tom Moog left at 7:15.*)

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

Brian Krause said the Old Mill Park trail was sprayed as requested. Grant-funded work on Wilson Road has started. The road will be closed from 6:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. When that project is finished the crew will start the project on Fox Lot Road.

Brian K. recently shot grades in several areas. One was at the Holcomb House. He identified what would need to be done to drain water away from the house. The area would need to be regraded and some material would be removed. He thinks with three people and a rented excavator it could be done in a day. His crew wouldn't be able to do it until next month.

He was also asked to shoot grades for the sidewalk ramp on Pearl Street and at the west side of Railroad Street and Route 15. There is nothing that can be done to improve the situation on Railroad Street until the street is repaved; then it can be fixed. It is possible to fix most of the Pearl Street issue. There is a patch that is not flush with the existing grade that is building a dam and causing a puddle. A small milling machine could be used or it could be cut and re-patched. This is on the state highway portion. The patch is only about 4 feet long.

Eric asked about the puddle that is about 100 feet north on Pearl Street. Brian said he didn't shoot grades there. The board asked Brian to do that at some point in the future.

Brian K. said Casey Romero staked out an area for a basketball court near the skate park. He hasn't had a chance to estimate the cost for the town to do the work there but he will have an estimate by the next meeting. Casey said it would be a youth size half court. Brian said he won't have time to do the work on that this year.

The board agreed that town assets should be used to do the regrading at Holcomb House and the site work for the basketball court and that the town should pay to rent an excavator for the Holcomb House work at a cost of about \$400.

Kim Dunkley suggested that perhaps the Recreation Committee could contribute to the cost of the basketball court. Casey said the skate park committee has money for paving. Some fill will be needed. She will ask if Nadeau's can help with the cost of that. And time from town employees will be needed. Brian said he can give an estimate of the cost for the time next month.

**6. Planning Commission Report**

Kim Dunkley said the Planning Commission has been working on Class 4 roads. They were given a list of Class 4 roads that could possibly be changed to legal trails. They would like to recommend that any roads re-classified as trails still be maintained up to the last driveway. As a resident, she feels a better way for the town to handle developing policy on Class 4 roads would be to form a committee of landowners who have property on Class 4 roads. Eric said the Planning Commission could have brought in landowners.

Kim said there is inequality in maintenance of Class 4 roads now. Brian said he doesn't think the town maintains any Class 4 roads. Kim said Lendway Lane is a Class 4 road. Brian S. and Brian K. said only part of it is Class 4. We maintain the Class 3 part. (*Brian K. left at 7:32.*)

Kim asked how information gets from the Planning Commission to the board. Brian said David Butler should send information to him or to the board.

Kim said the Planning Commission is having a special meeting tomorrow to try to finish up work on the Class 4 road policy.

**7. *Library Trustees Report***

Jessica Bickford handed out an overview of things that have been going on at the library. She listed groups that use the library. She said this summer was busier than last summer. She showed use statistics. Last year the library renovated the children's area. The library board has been updating job descriptions and policies and preparing for flood proofing. They got bids to move the furnace to make it ceiling mounted. They had the ramp shored up. They are having a water heater replaced. There has been a problem with plumbing backing up. It may be due to a vacuum in old unused sinks downstairs. If fixing that doesn't solve the problem further investigation will be needed. The door and some windows were reinforced as part of flood preparation. A new library website is being created.

Kyle asked how the cleaning service is working. Jeanne said it is great.

**8. *TNL Committee Report***

Howard Romero said Tuesday Night Live had a great year. There were two nights when there was rain and estimated attendance on each of those nights was about 200. The highest attendance was nearly 1000 and it reached that level twice. Three portable toilets were not enough for that number of people. Next year the committee thinks we will need at least four, maybe five for the nights with the biggest attendance. The committee got a good start on reducing trash from TNL. They will do more next year. They plan to produce a mission statement and a set of policies over the winter, which they will bring to the board.

The committee instituted levels of sponsorship. It looks like at least 3 businesses are already interested in sponsoring at the higher level next year. Tim Mikovitz has a plan for upgrading our gear. The committee bought a new control board for about \$2,500. Currently Tim is providing some gear. It will probably take 4-5 years to get all we need. The committee got \$1,763 from passing the hat at 5 or 6 concerts this year. The money will probably be used for sound gear. The end of the year balance is \$3,163. The committee is in solid financial shape.

At least one committee member doesn't want to stay on the committee. Howard thinks at least 5 will stay on. He will come back to the board once he knows how many new people need to be appointed.

The committee will change the vendor fee structure. Currently the vendor fee is \$175, which is cheap compared to other venues.

The committee asked vendors not to use styrofoam and after the first concert this year they all stopped. The committee is still working on how best to collect trash and compost. Next year they will partner with the solid waste district and Black Dirt Compost. Black Dirt will provide a bin.

Howard said a lot of people bike to Tuesday Night Live. It would be nice to have bike racks there. Kim Dunkley suggested a bike corral supervised by one person would be another alternative. She suggested the Boy Scouts might help.

Howard said everyone wants water on the field. Vendors need water. Brian said there is a standing question about how we will deal with wastewater there. Our claim that we won't have any wastewater hasn't satisfied ANR. Brian will talk to Howard about water usage at the event. The state's concern is that we don't have any catchment for wastewater.

Eric encouraged Brian to try to move that forward and keep the board in the loop. He said the committee did a great job pulling Tuesday Night Live together.

Nat asked if TNL equipment is being stored at the municipal building. Howard said yes. There are some defunct pieces of equipment that the committee wants to get rid of and maybe make some money selling.

Mike said the committee did an outstanding job.

Nat said he thinks the Rec Committee should work with the library and Tuesday Night Live on providing bike racks at both locations.

Kyle agreed that the committee's work was outstanding. She said it was great to see NVU students involved. She wonders if Tim is considering making their help part of a for-credit class. Howard said he thinks Tim is paying them out of the Dibden account. The committee is thinking of providing them dinner vouchers. Kyle said she would love that relationship to continue. She also would love for Tuesday Night live to be smoke-free. Howard said he thinks the committee can at least sign it that way and see what happens.

Howard said next year there will be one trash station with lights for collecting trash, recycling and compost. There will be someone there to sort the material. Howard said at the two biggest concerts the portable toilets got so bad that they almost had to be closed. It is a serious issue. (*Jessica, Jeanne, Howard and several others left.*)

**9. VAST Waiver of ATV Policy for Trail Maintenance**

Brian said VAST has asked for an exemption from the town's ATV policy, which requires that ATV users on town roads be registered with VASA. A lot of their volunteers have ATVs that they usually use on private land and do not need to register and registering them for their volunteer work would be an extra expense. **Mike moved to exempt Sterling Snow Riders from the requirement to register with VASA and carry a VASA plate during trail maintenance, Nat seconded and the motion was passed.**

### ***10. Application for Robert Wood Johnson Award***

Brian said we think the work being done in Johnson by Jenna's Promise and CHSLV make us eligible for the Robert Wood Johnson Culture of Health Prize. It is a community prize. A municipality has to apply but the application has to be driven by a coalition. We have a coalition of volunteers from Jenna's Promise, CHSLV and Recovery Vermont. We are also doing work with Healthy Lamoille Valley and we hired a new rec coordinator. CHSLV is trying to open a clinic. There is a wide variety of work being done in the community. The prize is \$25,000. We have to research how we are allowed to spend it. It is not a grant; it is not paying us back for work done. If the prize comes to the town and not the coalition, then it could only be spent on town work. It could be used for road repairs on St. John Street, etc. Or it is possible that the prize could go to the coalition. The initial application is due in November. Then there will be several more rounds before up to 10 awardees are selected.

Eric asked if Jenna's Promise has become a tax exempt organization. Dawn Tatro said the paperwork has been filed for that. Eric said the document about the prize says a tax exempt organization is needed to accept the money.

**Mike moved to apply for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health Prize and Kyle seconded.** Kyle asked if applying will take much of Brian's time. Brian said he has been offered help from Jenna's Promise, CHSLV and Recovery Vermont. He thinks with that help he can do it. The motion was passed. *(Daryl West and one other community member left at 8:09.)*

### ***11. Replacing Locks and Keys for Lower Storage***

Brian said the Recreation Committee would like to replace the lock on the recreation part of the lower storage building with a resettable combination lock. The village is okay with that. The board agreed that would be okay.

### ***12. Racial Justice Workshop Options***

*[At the October 7 meeting, the board agreed the minutes should include a verbatim transcript of this section of the meeting, as requested by Kyle.]*

Brian: I'm going to touch with a few different options for the racial justice workshop. As you recall, the Racial Justice Center – Peace and Justice Center – sent a final bid of fifteen hundred, which was a little bit higher than we had anticipated early on in the process. I've since talked to a couple other groups, one recommended by Vermont League of Cities and Towns and that had had pretty good representation. They were around two to three thousand dollars. We spoke to Greg Stefanski. He had a group that he recommended that came in two to five thousand dollars. Those both sounded really good. I also spoke recently to our local resident Offie and Offie thinks he has a training that could be appropriate for us to do [inaudible] for a lot less. We didn't have specific dollar amount [inaudible] less than a thousand, a few hundred dollars.

Eric: So those other two –

Brian: Were more expensive.

Eric: How much? Two to three –

Brian: Two to three thousand and two to five thousand.

Eric: For two hour –

Brian: For the others we didn't get as far into planning what the workshop would be. So their prices are a little more variable because we'd have to do a lot more [inaudible] about what exactly we want. Peace and Justice Center has a – you know, this is their level one, identifying bias, I think what they name the training, they've got a training that they do that they think is a good fit for us that they're ready to roll out. So they know how much they would charge; they know exactly what they would do for us. We also had lengthier conversations with them because we just started with them earlier based on recommendations. The others we haven't got very detailed as to exactly what we want to see so their prices range a little bit. The folks that Greg Stefanski recommended, Kesha Ram and Sue McCormack, Kesha Ram was also involved in the economic opportunity zones. She has given a talk here in Johnson about economic opportunity zones before and she's also a personal friend, so you should be aware of that [inaudible] bringing her. Douglas and McCormack, the other folks [inaudible] Curtiss . . . I apologize, I'm going to bring this up . . . Curtiss Reed at Vermont Partnership for Fairness and Diversity who was recommended by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns.

Nat: Vermont what?

Kyle: Partnership in . . .

Brian: Vermont Partnership for Fairness and Diversity

Eric: And they were the two to five thousand?

Brian: They were the two to three.

Eric: Two to three?

Mike: But Offie's several hundred, right?

Brian: Yes.

Eric: Why is this so expensive? I don't understand. A couple hours . . .

Kyle: Well, I know in the case of the Peace and Justice Center when I did a workshop that they held at the library in Jeffersonville there was like three or four staff that came to do this because they have different specialties.

Eric: Are they paying these people?

Kyle: Of course. Yeah, of course. No, this is their profession. You know, we did things in a big group, we broke up into smaller groups, you know, there's a lot of movement to the workshop that required more guidance and staff.

Eric: And Offie – you don't know what his number is?

Brian: Offie's a little bit like the others. He talked about [inaudible] be a few hundred dollars but we haven't worked out a complete program of exactly what it's going to look like with it. Just like the others are a little bit variable, his is also, but he indicated that he was thinking a few hundred dollars, less than a thousand.

Nat: I'm not familiar with Offie's credentials or what, in terms of, I mean, the other groups have a . . . some . . . I know Kesha Ram, Center for Fairness and Diversity, Peace and Justice Center, they've got, there are groups behind them that give them the experience needed to do this sort of thing. So where does Offie fall on that sort of experience and expertise?

Brian: Offie does have . . . let's see, he works as part of the TransCultural Awareness Institute. I would say that its mission, its description is pretty similar to the others. I'm not familiar with anybody who's attended any of his talks but, you know, its mission and its description at least on a surface level, pretty similar.

Mike: Did you find his website?

Nat: No. I mean, I haven't looked yet. I'm looking up TransCultural Awareness Institute.

Mike: He certainly has quite a background as far as the civil rights movement. He's eighty-one years old or something like that, right? [inaudible] from the ground floor of the American civil rights movement. I think he's more than qualified to give us some types of training.

*Doug arrived at 8:18.*

Eric: Where he might have some credibility is he lives in this community and, you know, people might relate to him because he could share his own experiences or whatever and people know him and – a lot of people know him in the community.

Kyle: I guess I wonder again how much experience he has with large groups and doing effective training for large groups. I mean that's, you know, pretty key to [inaudible].

Brian: At this point I don't have any testimonials for him, but he does say this is something he does and something he's familiar with.

Kyle: Okay. I guess I haven't heard of any of his, I haven't seen any . . .

Brian: I don't have any testimonials.

Kyle: Yep.

Mike: There's plenty of testimonials on his website. There's plenty of stuff there.

Brian: Being a devil's advocate for this a little bit, it's also worth to think about like [inaudible] do we want somebody, is it valuable for us to have somebody from in town because people can relate to their experiences or is it valuable for us to have somebody from outside the town because they're not from here?

Kyle: Right. Right. A little more objective. Well, I think you all know my opinion. A lot of it is based on having done a training with Peace and Justice. It was incredible, it's life changing, it's top notch, it's in my mind worth every penny. I think this community really needs it. I think there's a lot of people that really want it. You know, when we were voting on the inclusivity statement a lot of people even on this board were saying, you know, well, they're just words, they're not action and, you know, how is this going to have any impact and I really feel like this is, you know, step one in the action piece that there seemed to be a desire for.

Eric: Bobbi?

Bobbi: I have some questions and it's all about the inclusivity and who's who and what's what. There's an extreme drive for the inclusivity and the racial justice and all that but my problem is we have a selectboard, I'm looking at you all, and you trashed businesses yourself on your Facebook page, which is exactly why I stepped down from my treasurer's position at Johnson Works after ten years. So can you explain to me, did you think about the twenty-five employees at Johnson Woolen Mills who may have the exact same opinions that you do? You dragged them into this. They are taxpayers here too and they have to work and they have to live. How is that inclusive? I'm having a very difficult time –

Kyle: Are we talking about –

Bobbi: With –

Eric: It's a little off topic from where we're at currently. I'll give Kyle an opportunity to respond if she wants, but it's really –

Bobbi: Then where is the appropriate spot to address that?

Eric: We can add you at some point, member of the public for comments.



Bobbi: Tonight or another time?

Eric: Your choosing.

Bobbi: You choose, you're the board.

Eric: Well, we can put you in after this line item if you want. If it's sort of pertinent. But I did make an offer to you if you want to respond. But I'm afraid if you guys start into a back and forth –

Kyle: Yeah, I'm feeling a little uncomfortable talking about this in this forum because it's – I'm feeling a little bit attacked about something on my personal Facebook page which has nothing to do with me being on this board. This feels personal and not that – I'd be more than happy to talk about . . . in a different –

Bobbi: You sit and vote to raise my taxes and you guys pitch that we need to bring business to Johnson so I think that it's more than just personal Facebook page. You represent the community that I run a business in. That's what you guys do, is represent the community that I run a business in. I would never do that. Never. On any personal Facebook page, town Facebook page, none of that.

Eric: Okay, I'm going to bring it back to the line item of the workshop and I'll, you know, you're more than welcome to provide your comments at the appropriate time.

Bobbi: [inaudible]

Eric: So back to the workshop discussion . . . [inaudible] where we were going with that, but . . .

Brian: Kyle made a proposal for the –

Eric: She was advocating for the Peace and Justice.

Mike: We ought to wait until Offie gets back with something more firm and what he's going to do for us and what he's going to charge us.

Brian: That's fine. Would you like me to pursue details with everybody or . . . that's kind of why we have unformed workshop ideas from the other folks. I don't want to spend a lot of their time planning out a workshop that we don't intend on giving, so I'm happy to work with Offie or any of the others with your instruction but I don't want to take a bunch of time with anybody that we just don't have any intention of hiring.

Mike: You're right. But we have more information from some of the other people than we do from Offie, correct?

Brian: We do.

Mike: Then maybe we should get a little more information from Offie, then it will be easier to decide.

Brian: Okay.

Mike: That's what I'm feeling.

Eric: What's the board's thoughts? *(to Doug)* You been awful quiet tonight.

Mike: He's been digesting all that . . .

Doug: I've been at a broadband meeting for two hours. I don't think you should defer to me. You've had the discussion, you know, I think you should vote –

Eric: Actually you walked in on the beginning of it.

Doug: Did I? This is all you know?

Eric: Yep, this is all we know.

Nat: Did you hear the four options that are on the table?

Doug: I only understood Offie and Peace and Justice.

Eric: Then there was two others.

Brian: There's two others. There's no organization to it but it's Kesha Ram and Sue McCormack.

Eric: Which were recommended by –

Brian: Greg Stefanski.

Eric: Greg Stefanski

Brian: And then there's Curtiss Reed at . . . I keep forgetting . . . it's Vermont Partnership for Fairness and Diversity, the other one, it's Curtiss Reed. They were recommended by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns and they've done trainings for the League in a couple different capacities.

Eric: And the prices on those were . . .?

Brian: Two to five thousand for Kesha Ram and Sue McCormack and two to three thousand for Curtiss and the Partnership for Fairness and Diversity.

Doug: And these are one-session sessions or . . . ?

Brian: That's where some of the pricing variability gets in is that they're probably one session but they're, you know, a couple hours open workshop . . .

Mike: Yeah, Offie was around three.

Nat: My sense is Peace and Justice Center has something that's out of the box that they move from community to community. They do this over and over again. They've got people, including Kyle, who've been to one of these and vouch for it. It's less expensive than [inaudible]. I can't imagine spending up to five thousand dollars, as much as I respect those speakers. So that's the way I would tilt.

Brian: That's my impression from talking to them is that Peace and Justice Center has a training planned that they can use for us. These others would have experience in this kind of thing but they would make something a little more custom to us. I had a pretty lengthy conversation with Curtiss Reed at the Partnership for Fairness and Diversity. I thought he had a really interesting opinion and take on why this was important and how this could benefit our community.

Mike: I could not support the Peace and Justice Center. I've read their website. They advocate wealth distribution. They want to abolish ICE. And I would not feel comfortable with spending taxpayer money of Johnson and especially [inaudible] to a group that is kind of out of sync with my beliefs. So I would not support the Peace and Justice Center of Vermont. I think ICE is very important for the security of our country and I think that there'd be anarchy if it was dissolved.

Eric: Well, I have my own reservations about the Peace and Justice. After we got the price quote I went on their website and I just – I felt like they were an extreme group. It seemed like they were protesting everything under the sun. And I just – I didn't feel comfortable with them. And I thought their price was extravagant but it sounds like that's the going rate.

Doug: Who's the – your conclusion, Nat? I didn't hear it.

Nat: My conclusion was that I was favoring Peace and Justice Center. That's an out of the box – off the shelf, I should say, off the shelf workshop that . . .

Doug: I think the job of these people is not to make us feel comfortable when they come here. Whoever it is, I suspect that they're going to be using a crowbar to move me from where I live my comfortable life. So I'm not so worried about – I think I can accept and reject and have some pretty strong opinions in areas where I might disagree with Peace and Justice but I suspect they do a good program. But the

question leading up to this was do we defer for Offie to develop. You were saying you thought we should?

Mike: I think we should. He's more than qualified to give us our training and he's local for crying out loud. We better use him. And he's cheaper.

Kyle: So, in past meetings and in conversations with Brian we aimed for having this happen in September and so here we are in mid-September. So I, you know, I would love to get this moving.

Eric: So what's the board's thoughts? Do we want to give Offie an opportunity to present something, a package on what he would provide, what his cost would be? Or do you want to submit a – have a motion to go with Peace and Justice?

Mike: See what Offie has to say.

Kyle: Can I – I move that we – may I make a motion?

Eric: Yeah. Yep.

Kyle: Okay. I move that we hire Peace and Justice to do a racial justice workshop for the Town of Johnson.

Eric: Okay, we've got a motion. Do we have a second?

Nat: Well, I have a question. You called them an extreme group. Does that shade your . . . or would you participate in it differently than you would a different group that you didn't – that you had a different impression of? My sense is – my concern is that if we just have this workshop and we don't have full buy-in from the board that it's not – it might not have the intended –

Eric: I would not participate personally. I mean I'll respect whatever the board's decision is but I personally would not participate if it was Peace and Justice. Do we have a second?

Nat: I mean, I think that whoever we go with, we need full participation from the board, so if that's your stance I wouldn't want to second.

Eric: I'm still looking for a second. Lacking a second the motion will die.

Doug: I guess I'm in the same position as Nat. I would favor them but I think that we all need to have the same experience even if we view it differently afterwards.

Eric: Okay, I'm sensing there's not really a second. If the motion dies then I will put before the board the question of do we want Offie to, at least Brian explore with Offie what his proposal might look like?

Nat: I would say Offie and the . . .

Eric: The other groups?

Nat: Yeah, the other groups.

Eric: Proposal on the table.

Doug: That's fine.

Eric: Everybody consent? Okay, go forward.

Brian: All right.

Eric: Bobbi, I'll give you an opportunity.

Bobbi: So Kyle, I'm not attacking, okay? I'm like, I just feel like there's a lot of driving for all – for good reasons, but it – I'm trying to figure out who's supposed to be where, like #boycottjohnsonwoolenmills, rotten to the core. When's it going to be Tangles? When's it going to be Jenna's Promise? When's it going to be Moog's Place? Like, I don't – we're all supposed to be here together trying to make this community work and that really, really, really upset me. I don't hate anybody. I don't despise you. I'm trying to figure out if it's only one group of people that you want in your little clique and the rest of us have to leave or are we all going to make this community work together? Because I was so offended when that happened. And I was getting text messages from other business owners while I was still in bed and I got out of bed and I resigned immediately because I cannot – I am not going to be a part of that. I'm not. I couldn't ever put things of that nature out on my Facebook page, whether it's Tangles' page or my own page because I would have myself right out of business. I keep my thoughts, especially when it comes to things of that nature, to myself and that's why I think it's really important at this point if we're going to have – we need a code of conduct and there should be a social media policy for anybody that sits and represents the voters and the taxpayers and the business owners of this community. I think it's really important.

Eric: Thank you. I will give you an opportunity to respond if you'd like, Kyle.

Kyle: Okay, I hear you, Bobbi. Thank you for telling me. I mean, it was – I wish, in retrospect that you had come to me in person because I was hearing things through the grapevine but not actually from your mouth, so it's good to finally hear how you've been feeling. From my side, I didn't feel like I was what you're calling "trashing." I felt like I was calling out and responding to an individual that was making blatant racist remarks as she was representing the Town of Johnson at this event in D.C. and that's what upset me and as a business owner of Johnson,

as a citizen of Johnson, as a board member I felt that it was in my right to speak out when I hear and see racist comments being made. That is in my mind a very important function to exercise. So that's where I was coming from and it was towards an individual who made specific racist comments.

Bobbi: What was racist? I'm trying to figure out what was racist. "If you don't like it here, you can leave?" Is that the racist? Which part's the racist?

Kyle: Well, I'll have to pull up the entire article. I'm sorry, I'm not prepared to give direct quotes right now. But I know for sure that I felt like there were because that's why I responded the way I did. What's concerning to me – so, back to the community piece, when somebody makes the comments that she did that I can't exactly quote off the top of my head, to me that is not community building. That is specifically targeting specific people that would not feel comfortable in our community and that is something that I feel like is really important to call out.

Bobbi: But I thought inclusively we include everybody. Don't we? Except this group.

Kyle: Not – I didn't ever say you –

Bobbi: Except for people who think like Stacy does. Is that right? Because if that's the case then I fall in the category.

Kyle: Okay, I never put anybody in a category. I was responding to specifically what Stacy's remarks were. I never said, "Bobbi Rooney." I never said, "Casey Romero." I never named other people. I was responding specifically to her and her comments. Whether you put yourself in that category, that's in your mind, that's not –

Bobbi: Well, [inaudible] Johnson Woolen Mills and that encompasses a company.

Kyle: The owner of Johnson Woolen Mills.

Bobbi: Well, maybe you should have said Stacy Manosh because you dragged in others unbeknownst to them. And, like I said, it offended – I was totally offended that somebody that represents my community would even think about doing something like that.

Kyle: And it upsetted me that someone – that she, representing our community, said what she said.

Eric: Okay, I'm going to interject here –

Kyle: So that's where I was coming from.

Eric: I don't think it's going to be productive if we continue but we've provided an opportunity for you to speak.

Bobbi: Thank you.

Kyle: Thank you.

Eric: We've provided an opportunity for rebuttal. I guess –

Greg: I just think that we've got to pull this community together. We [inaudible] have to work together and sometimes it – I've gotta say it does feel like not everybody is included. It seems like – I've been hearing rumors that, from some folks that were up here Tuesday night [inaudible] Greg and Dawn are going to bring in all these drug addicts, going to buy up every house in town and they're going on and on and on and I mean so you're telling me somebody in recovery's not included in this statement too?

Kyle: I never ever ever said that.

Greg: I didn't say you. No, no, I never said you did. But there was people that were up here at David Zuckerman's gathering the other night that that word got back to me. And they're people that you know and you hang with so, you know, I feel like sometimes if you're a Donald Trump fan then you're not included and, you know, that's – we have to all be included. When Obama was president I always respected the office. I didn't agree with much he did, but I respected the office. He was quieter; he didn't make such a fuss, no question, but we're all going to be included in this inclusivity statement. That means if somebody's a Republican that voted for Donald Trump they should be included too. And I don't feel like sometimes that's the way it works in this town and so I think [inaudible.] I think your statement was divisive. I don't think it was necessary. I think that you should have just – you know, you're representing this town and I just feel like you divided the town by saying – where we should be pulling together, that statement divided more and I just don't –

Kyle: Okay.

Greg: And I say things I shouldn't say too, I do, but you're an official here and that's – I understand; I do the same thing sometimes, but I think there's something [inaudible.] Let's just forget about all the stuff on the right and left, come to the center. Let's work together. I mean, that's what we gotta do. I don't think that's a bad thing.

Dawn: Right, we gotta work together as a community and that's one of the things that Greg and I really want to do. We want to bring this community back together. It's gotten too far apart. It's not what – when I grew up here [inaudible] for six years and it's changed. And, you know, if you got a business or I got a business, I'm

going to support you. And, you know, and I want you to support me and we have to do what we have to. We might not agree with each other, but we have to support each other because that's community. And that's what we have to do to make this a better life.

Kyle: And I agree for 99% of what you're saying, except when somebody is making blatant racist comments then I can't just turn a cheek. I can't close my eyes to that. I grew up with Asian brothers that, when we were growing up here experienced racism every day of their life in this community. So, and it's continuing. It happens every day here. We don't feel it because we're white middle class, rich, poor whatever, but we don't feel how people of color feel on an everyday basis. So I – it's very important to me that I stand up when I hear those kinds of comments being made. So that's where I was coming from with my post. Greg, I just wanted to say that I was at David Zuckerman's. I didn't hear any of what – the rumors you're hearing. Public access was there videotaping the whole time. You might want to look at that video, but I really don't remember anyone saying "those druggie" – I didn't hear any of that.

Greg: It got back to me [inaudible]

Kyle: Okay. You should watch the video because I don't think that happened. Not within earshot of me.

Greg: Well, it came from a pretty reputable source, so I'm thinking it did happen.

Kyle: Okay. Okay. Look at the video.

Greg: That's kind of hurtful. I'm not saying David said anything or anybody speaking, but people, there was a person in the crowd.

Kyle: Okay.

Greg: And you know that's pretty hurtful when we're trying to do what we're trying to do.

Kyle: Well, before you feel hurt you might want to watch the video to make sure it really happened, because I honestly do not remember hearing any comments like that.

Greg: I'll take your word.

Kyle: So, that's just what I remember.

Greg: Thank you.



Eric: Okay. Thank you. I think we'll probably move on now unless the board wants to overrule me.

**13. Efficiency Vermont Button Up Campaign**

Brian said Efficiency Vermont is doing a Button Up campaign. They would like to use Johnson as a host. LCPC can run an Efficiency Vermont event in Johnson. There would be little cost or time on our part. They would need very little involvement from us. It would be an education program geared around preparing houses for winter. The board agreed it would be fine for Johnson to host that event.

**14. LVRT Brochure**

Brian said LVRT is printing updated trail maps. We are well stocked with the existing maps. They are asking for us to pay \$190 for new maps. He thinks the new maps will include a little more of the trail than our current maps do. **Doug moved to pay \$190 to LVRT for printing updated trail maps, Kyle seconded and the motion was passed.** (*Bobbi Rooney and Dawn Tatro left at 8:49.*)

**15. Next Steps in Old Mill House Development**

Brian said the data gap analysis at the old mill house has been concluded. We received some recommendations for next steps. The village will be involved also. The first recommendation is to subdivide the parcel so the old mill house is its own property. Then we could do a Brownfields study for just that property and then we would be able to enroll in a redevelopment project. We could sell or keep the property. We did the data gap analysis because a Phase 1 study of the entire parcel would have been too expensive. A concern of the trustees was that since there is limited Brownfields funding they didn't want to divert anything from funding for the powerhouse building. They felt a study might split the available resources. So they might not be interested in a Brownfields study on the old mill property. But if we subdivided the property then at least we would be ready for a study.

Doug said he thinks we should do the subdivision and request Brownfields money. Eric said first we should see if there is interest from the trustees in subdividing. He asked if any thought has been given to where those currently using the old mill house would be relocated. Brian said he thinks we can work that out a little further along in the process. We don't need to answer that question yet. Doug said we can't redevelop the site unless we subdivide and do a Brownfields study.

Brian said another recommendation is that it is worthwhile to do a Brownfields study on any building we are using. If there are any contaminants there, we should know.

The board agreed that we should move forward with subdividing the property to make the old mill house its own property.

Brian said another recommendation is that we should do at least surface testing on soils where trails are proposed before people start work on the trails. That testing may not be eligible for Brownfields funds. We may have to pay out of pocket. Kyle asked if VAST has done any testing on their trail. Brian said he is not aware of any. Brian said digging is especially a concern. Talc is often found with asbestos. Nat said his impression was that not a lot of digging would be needed for the trails. Brian said he does not think there will be a lot. He thinks a couple of surface-level tests will be enough. He hopes to have more information

for the joint meeting. We should also test around the town and village garages. As our vehicles drive over that area it gets dusty and we are not confident enough that there is no historic contamination.

**16. Citizens' Budget Committee Formation**

Brian said he has started work on the budget. We should put out an invitation to citizens to serve on a budget committee. He will put the invitation on Front Porch Forum with board approval.

Nat said he is not sold on the idea of a citizens' budget committee. We are elected to do that work. Mike said he brought up the idea. Cambridge has a budget committee. Their committee looks into committee budgets and their fire department budget. There are a lot of things that people with an accounting background can see. We could ask for people with budgeting or CPA experience. They would look into everyone's budgets. Eric said a group would have more time, but he wonders if there is interest. Brian said the Cambridge finance committee spends more time with committees than he is able to spend. The Town of Cambridge likes its finance committee. Kyle asked if they are keeping their finance committee now that they have a five-person board and a town administrator. Brian said yes, they are keeping it for now.

Doug asked what Casey thinks. Casey said she would have to give it some thought. Eric asked Lois her opinion. Lois said she thinks it would be good to have a budget or finance committee. She thinks it is a big help to have other eyes looking at the budget.

Nat said he feels that much of budgeting is setting priorities and he is not interested in ceding much of that. Brian said he thinks if the selectboard doesn't cede some power there may not be much interest in being on a finance committee. Mike said he thinks the committee would only make recommendations with supporting documentation. Eric suggested we could do a pilot program for one year. Brian said he has done budget planning sessions and gotten no attendance. Eric said he thinks it might be different if people are helping draft the budget. Doug said if we are giving work to a committee he wants to respect what they say, which means delegating to them, but he feels the work is his responsibility.

Casey said she has always had trouble reading and understanding the town budget. A committee could make recommendations on how the budget is presented and laid out. They could work with the prior budget and come up with questions but not form the projected budget. She feels having a committee working on the projected budget could be obstreperous to the board and Brian and may be complicated. But she sees value in looking at how the budget is put together and identifying questions that come up.

Nat said he doesn't want to have a finance committee. He feels it is our responsibility to set priorities. If we ask volunteers to do a job and then second guess them it undermines their work.

Doug said he would like to see people like Walter Pomeroy come to a budget meeting and give input. We could have volunteers examine the budget and meet with Brian when he is developing it. Mike said he thinks that is a good compromise and he would support it. Lois

said people will need to have information before the meeting. That has to be built in. She suggests targeting specific people who are given information ahead of time to be prepared. Doug agreed we might need to invite specific people and make sure they are prepared. The board agreed on that approach.

**17. Planning Commission Vacancy**

Brian said Phil Wilson resigned verbally from the Planning Commission. Brian doesn't have a formal resignation from him. **Mike moved to accept Phil Wilson's resignation from the Planning Commission with thanks for his service, Nat seconded and the motion was passed.**

Eric said the vacancy should be posted as normal. Louis said the vacancy on the conservation commission also needs to be posted.

**18. Fire Service Contract**

Brian said we have a draft fire service agreement with the village. We found we weren't really obeying last year's contract. It began January 1, but we were not signing it until February. And there was no out clause if our budget was voted down or if the village voters decided to eliminate the fire department. The village requests that if we want to discuss the fire service contract at the joint meeting we have a specific counter proposal. He thinks this draft addresses our central concern that there was no out. (*Casey left at 9:26.*) This contract formalizes quarterly payments. It commits us to paying for the remainder of our financial year. Eric said under this agreement the village has to provide fire service until June 30 even if their voters choose not to fund the fire department. Brian said he thinks it would be a good idea to run the draft by our attorney. The board agreed to that

**19. Joint Meeting Agenda**

Brian said there is an updated draft agenda for the joint meeting. Meredith can't come so the village wanted to make changes – leaving out the agenda item about joint employees. He and Meredith didn't get far along on the joint employee discussion. They talked to some other communities and discussed a little about what agreement we could have between the town and the village. They are not ready to make recommendations. They are still researching what is working for other communities.

Eric said the village trustees are asking if we want to invite the consultants who bid on the merger study. He questions the point of doing that. He doesn't see the value since Scott and Nat already sent our questions to them. Nat said he agrees. He sees no need to invite them, but he has no objection to it if it is important to the trustees. He thinks we should be prepared to make a decision that night. Mike said he thinks it is foolish to have the bidders come in. He thinks the trustees must have in mind who they want to hire.

Greg said he wonders if the board could ask the people in the town about merging instead of spending money on a consultant. Board members said the voters gave us a mandate to do this.

Doug said he thinks it is an insult to the bidders to ask them to come in. He doesn't want to be part of a bad process. If the trustees want to invite them, they can, but he thinks they should tell them that the invitation is from the trustees and not the selectboard.

Nat said the consultant who was originally the most expensive seems like the obvious choice now that they have reduced their price to \$10,000 and we would be getting the principal owner of the company to do the work.

Greg asked how a bidder could come down from \$32,000 to \$10,000 if he did not know the amount of the other bids. Eric said all the bids were public knowledge. Brian said this consultant offered a revised proposal of \$10,000 right after the meeting where the board discussed the original bids. Greg said it is not fair that one bidder got a second chance. Board members said all the bidders got a second chance. Greg said, but he knew what the price was. Nat said we had five criteria and one was price. The other companies scored low in the areas other than price. The criteria were explained in the RFP. Price was not the only criteria. Doug said he would not have accepted the other bids no matter what their price was. Eric said the other bidders weren't going to give a good product.

It was agreed that the trustees can invite the bidders to the meeting and should make clear that the trustees are the ones inviting them. (*Lois left at 9:47.*) Brian said Carl Powden can moderate the joint meeting.

**20. Lamoille Economic Development Corporation Annual Luncheon**

Brian asked who wants to go to the LEDC annual luncheon on October 17. Kyle said she can go. No other board members are able to go.

**21. Lamoille County Sheriffs Dept Monthly Report for July & August 2019**

The sheriff's report was emailed out.

**22. Light Industrial Park Update**

Brian said there is no update. Northern Borders hasn't made any awards except for forestry-related ones.

**23. Paying Heather Rodriguez as a Consultant**

Brian said we had talked about paying Heather Rodriguez to consult at the same rate of pay as the rec coordinator. She asked for more than that; she asked for \$125 per hour. It would be helpful to Lisa to have Heather consult. The board could approve an hour or two to be used as needed. Mostly Heather would be responding to emails or phone calls. Lisa has asked for her help. Heather wants more than the recreation coordinator salary because she will not be getting any benefits. Nat said he doesn't see any necessity to hire Heather unless Lisa comes back with a specific need.

**24. Holcomb House Update**

Brian said the work on the Holcomb House looks good. The town road crew helped with getting the moorings in. They did a good job maintaining a safe site. The end product looks good. The old decorative posts couldn't be reused. The \$5,000 price estimate we got was based on reusing materials and some decorative items didn't get replaced because the cost was going up as we were able to reuse less than expected. Brian described some other work on the building that also needs to be done. Some metal posts are rotted through and a section of roof could be improved. Water comes off the roof and onto some wood and vinyl areas. That probably contributed to cracks in the vinyl from ice. The cost for the work on the porch is coming in higher than estimated. Brian hopes the final price is less than \$10,000. He doesn't have a price yet for all the additional work that needs to be done. He will work with Stanley and Brian Krause to get an estimate.

**25. Mine Road Update**

There is still some junk in the Mine Road right of way. The power line is buried in our right of way but our permitting procedures were followed in order to do that. The structures have been moved out of our right away. We told the permittee that he needs to work with us on any changes or seasonal work and that if unapproved items are put in our right of way we will revoke his permit.

**26. Meeting at NVU**

Kyle said she, Doug and Nat went to the college recently for a presentation from the chancellor and the board on current status and trends, followed by public input. The college is compiling the public input and hopefully they won't make rash decisions.

Nat said a white paper from a subcommittee on the state college system recently came out. It contained a lot of doom and gloom. However the NVU Johnson campus is doing well. Enrollment is up. Jeb Spaulding has said that closing a campus is a possibility. At the Lyndon and Johnson meetings, people from the college got the message that those colleges are important to their communities. The college is collecting ideas on how to move forward to sustain the system. They are taking suggestions on their website.

Doug said he would have thought they should be doing exactly what they are doing – looking at numbers in preparation for going to the legislature and drumming up support from the community. He is not sure that the legislature is strongly interested in closing a college. He thinks it has been mentioned for public support. He thinks that those who get money from college students should go to meetings like this.

Brian said there are a couple of other dates to be announced for similar meetings. We should all be able to refute the deferred maintenance figure that was in the paper for the Johnson campus. That was disputed at the meeting. People at Johnson feel that they calculated their figure differently than the other colleges and Jeb Spaulding seems to agree that they did. There was a good turnout at the meeting. They had to move it to a larger hall.

Nat said he thinks we need to do more to be involved and work with the college. We should let them know that as a stakeholder we need to be involved. Eric said open communication channels between the town and the college should be established. Nat said Kyle does a good job of communicating with Elaine Collins. Kyle said she has had a couple of good meetings with Elaine. Elaine is very interested in starting an off-campus co-working space in Johnson.

Doug asked, would we ask to send a liaison to meet with the college or ask them to send a liaison to us? What is the best way? Kyle said her connection is more through Johnson Works. There are NVU people in Johnson Works. Doug suggested maybe we should ask them the best way to communicate and liaison. Kyle said she can do that.

**27. Inclusivity Sign**

Kyle said the idea of putting the inclusivity sign in the municipal building foyer for the winter has been discussed. She thinks that is a good idea. We had talked about redecorating the foyer. She thought we could work the plans for that around the sign. Brian said we can measure the wall and see where the sign could fit. He said we should bring this up at the joint meeting with the trustees.

**28. *Email Response Time***

Kyle said a couple of citizens have voiced concerns about no response or delayed response to emails to the selectboard. For instance, Cal Stanton sent one about the Zuckerman event and got no response. Eric said he saw that email but he was on vacation. Brian said Cal deserved a response to let him know that we could or could not do what he was asking. Kyle said she feels we should be mindful of response time. Brian said he finds it hard sometimes to send an email that just says "I will get back to you," but doing that does make a difference.

**29. *Adjourn***

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20.

*Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths*