

JOHNSON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2019

Present: Tim Mikovitz, Howard Romero, Joie Lehouillier, Mara Siegel, Jay Stanton, Declan Stefanski, Lucas Queiroz, Lily Dunbar, Greg Stefanski, Jack Dennis

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Howard called the meeting to order at 7:05.

Tim moved to approve the minutes of September 26, 2019, Mara seconded and the motion was passed.

Howard said the only directors' order is a \$74 payment to Donna Griffiths. **Mara moved to approve the payment of \$74 to Donna Griffiths, seconded by Joie.** Mara asked if there might be other bills from Donna that need to be paid. Howard asked Donna to check her records and see if anything is still owed. **The motion was passed.**

Howard said before January the committee has to come up with a budget and write a letter for the town report describing what the committee has done. Tim asked if we can ask the town for money in that letter as well. Howard said we could. One of the strong points of TNL has been that it has always been self-sustaining. There is something to be said for not asking for money until it is needed.

Declan Stefanski, Lucas Queiroz, Lily Dunbar, Greg Stefanski and Jack Dennis arrived. They are starting a composting business. They will pick up compostable materials from residential customers and create and sell compost.

Howard said our biggest problem at the concerts this year was what to do with trash, compost and recyclables. There isn't much in terms of food waste, but there are plant-based paper products, which the committee has asked all our vendors to use. We didn't have way of collecting them this year, so they went into the trash. We did have compost buckets but we didn't collect a lot.

Greg asked if a relationship with the Lamoille Regional Solid Waste Management District exists. Howard said yes, but they just gave us signage. They didn't help haul anything away. He talked to Black Dirt Farm. They have been providing dishes and silverware at festivals and also providing tubs of hot and cold water and inviting people to wash their dishes before they leave. Howard asked them if their piles are hot enough to deal with the quantities of plant-based dishware we have and they said yes, they will take them. They pick up from the elementary school, the studio center and the college. This past year we tried having several stations for trash. We ended up with 6-8 big garbage bags per week. Howard was told we are no longer welcome to use the dumpster at the town garage because we filled it up every week. Next year we will have our own dumpster. Almost all of our trash was recycling we had no way of dealing with. Howard's idea for next year is to set up one station near an entrance, probably on the elementary school side, to take care of all trash, recycling and compost. We would have a big sorting table with one or two people who could sort trash, recyclables, etc. and put things in the right places.

Declan said he is curious to know how much about the new law regarding composting has been communicated to the committee. Howard said the committee is familiar with it. Declan asked, the committee has not received any information from the state? Howard said no. Joie said she thought she had heard there were some holdups with implementation of that law. Declan said he has heard July 1, 2020 is when the Universal Recycling Law will be implemented.

Greg said he thinks having a person present makes a big difference in how thorough people are in putting things in the right place. He thinks having one collection station makes sense. This composting endeavor is about 3 weeks old. Currently they are focusing on leaf collection and then they will get into collecting organics from residences.

Howard asked how much they know about composting. Greg said they know about it on a residential scale, but this is a big step up. Elly Ventura came and did a site visit, they are going to a training and they reached out to an expert for advice. The composting will take place on the Stefanskis' property. They would love to continue to be in conversation with the TNL Committee.

Howard said the certified compostable dishware is tough. Black Dirt's piles can break it down but it takes a while and they shred it first. Tim said the dishes are compostable only in a commercial-type compost system. Greg said they will do some research.

Lily asked if the committee is thinking about getting reusable plates and having people wash them. Joie and Howard said they don't think we are ready to go there. Howard said probably it is not practical for a concert series our size. Another issue is that we still don't have water. The state won't let us turn on the water at Legion Field until we tell them how we will dispose of wastewater. If we were washing plates he is not sure what we would do with that water that would keep the state happy. Providing hot water would be another issue. The committee encouraged people to bring their own plates and offered some for sale but didn't sell any. Lily suggested offering an incentive like a discount on food for people who bring their own. Howard said that is an interesting idea. Declan said it might be nice to have one area set up where people's dishes could be washed. Howard said that is not an option yet because we would have to have a gray water tank.

Howard said the committee is looking at how this business can work with TNL. Maybe one of them could man the trash station and get compost in return. Greg suggested that they will do some research and let TNL know what they find. They want to be supportive even if they are not involved.

Declan said to some extent this business effort is experimental. They are looking at beginning with weekly pickup from a certain number of houses in Johnson. There will be an educational aspect, explaining what can be composted. They hope to turn organic waste into high quality compost and sell it to the community. Elly Ventura told them that pickup of organics from residential customers is a big missing link in our local area.

Howard said the person he talked to at Black Dirt told him the piles at the LRSWMD composting facility are too small to compost the compostable plates. Lily asked, why not use paper plates? Howard said a lot of the foods are hot and liquidy and people want to take them home. He said pizza boxes are a problem, but if wax paper is put in them under the pizza then they are not soiled and the boxes become recyclable. We need to get the pizza vendor to agree to do that. *(Declan, Lucas, Lily and Greg left at 7:40.)*

Howard asked if Mara can take a first pass at developing a budget for next year. She said she can do that, based on this year's expenses.

It was agreed that there is no need to increase the fee paid to bands.

Joie said she loves being self-supporting but she feels we should not incur more expense unless we are ready to increase vendor fees. Portable toilets are used at times other than TNL and not all trash on the field comes from TNL. Maybe we should for some expenses to also fall on the town. Howard said he thinks we should make clear to the town that at least one portable toilet should not be our responsibility. Tim said they are left on the field for public use so they should be a town expense. Howard said he is sure the town budget will include lawn care for Legion Field. The dumpster will be our expense. It will only be there during the time TNL is in operation.

Joie said she is concerned that if we put a dumpster there it will get abused. Howard said we can lock it. Joie suggested that maybe the committee could just pay for an extra trash pickup on the town's contract. Mara said that would be more aesthetically pleasing than having a dumpster. Howard said we would put the dumpster behind the bandstand. Howard said he explained to Brian that he was unable to find a hauler that would rent us a dumpster for two months because it wouldn't get picked up enough for them to make any money. If we could be part of the town contract he hopes that would be a workaround. Tim said just four green flip-top containers might be enough; we might not need a dumpster. Howard said it would cut down on trash a lot if we could get pizza boxes and compostable clamshells out of the trash. Joie asked where we would keep the recycling. Howard said having two dumpsters would be ideal.

Howard said the selectboard is working on a policy for volunteers. It is mostly about social media. He hasn't seen it. He suggested Mara might ask Nat about it.

Howard said he has been approached by a musician who would like his band to play at TNL. He told them we usually make decisions in the spring and he said that is a little late for them. Samples of their music are available on YouTube. They are happy to pay our fee. Howard doesn't see why we couldn't book them. It was agreed that Sophie should come to the next meeting so this can be discussed with her.

Howard asked if people would rather meet at a different time or on a different day of the week. There was general agreement that the current day and time work.

Tim asked if we are meeting next month. He can't come on the third Thursday, which is November 21. The Thursday after that is Thanksgiving. Mara said she will be gone the week before that, but could probably call in. Howard suggested leaving the date at November 21 for now.

Howard asked for thoughts about this season's concert series. Tim said he thinks we need a volunteer group to help with trash management, people management, etc. Having a volunteer crew and not relying on the committee for everything brings it to the next level. Mara asked if the high school has a community service requirement. Tim said he was told they do. Scouts are another possibility. Jay suggested the Honor Society. Tim mentioned church groups.

Howard asked if we want to charge vendors more or start taking a percentage of their earnings. Mara said she would be hesitant to increase the fee since we just increased it this year, but she thinks the money would be welcome. The fee is now \$175 for the whole season. Maybe we could have a policy that we only raise it every other year. Tim said there are a lot of vendors out there and what we charge is not far off from what others in this area are doing. Joie said she pays a lot more than \$175 to go to a farmer's market where she does not make a profit. She thinks we could raise the vendor fee to \$250 and vendors would still come. We could explain that every year the event gets bigger and we have to deal with more trash, etc. We took trash away from vendors this year and she thinks they liked that. She likes the idea of taking a percentage but that is an administrative task. Howard said it also relies on honesty. Tim said we could hire someone to collect the money and give them a percentage of the percentage. That drives them to make sure they are getting it all. That is how he has seen it done. Joie said vendors at the farmer's market pay 3% plus a fee she thinks is \$350. She is one of the biggest sellers there. A percentage is nice for those making much less money. Howard said he likes the idea of just raising the flat fee and in future years we can consider something different. Mara said she can figure out a reasonable fee based on our expenses.

Howard said the town will probably get portable toilets from Working Dog and not Hartigan because they cost less. Brian suggested calling them now because they ran out of toilets last year. Howard will call and reserve four. Tim said one should be accessible. Howard said he will see if he can get the town to pay for one of them. Joie suggested seeing if the town will pay for all of them. Tim said they should pay for at least two – a regular one and an accessible one. But he thinks they should pay for all four.

Jack Dennis suggested using up to 15 minutes of the half-hour intermission between sets for performances of poetry, animations on a screen, etc. There could be performances by kids. Information about sponsors could also be shown on the screen. He suggested getting a 12-16 ft. video screen. He thinks he could find people willing to donate it.

Howard said those are great ideas but he doesn't think the committee will take this on. We have enough on our hands. Tim said he doesn't think it is a bad idea. But a screen would have to be taken out and put away and there is the question of whether this fits in with the aesthetic of TNL.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths