

JOHNSON VILLAGE TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
ELECTRONIC MEETING VIA ZOOM AND PHONE CALL-IN  
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2020

**Present:**

Trustees: Jena Gould-Hopkins, Scott Meyer, Athena Parke, Brian Raulinaitis, Gordon Smith

Others: Meredith Dolan, Rosemary Audibert, Dan Copp, Eric Osgood, Steve Hatfield, Bari Gladstone, Elizabeth Perry, Shayne Spence, Joey Buttendorf, Cal Stanton, Peggy Williams, Diane Lehouillier, Lotty Roozkrans, Marla Emery, Walter Pomroy, Travis Hill, Rick Aupperlee, Greg Tatro, Kyle Nuse, Lynda Hill, Jackie Stanton, Jen Burton, Margo Warden, Carrie Watson, Shona Sladyk, Brynn Nuse, Jamie Boyden, Kim Dunkley, 4 other community members

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

**1. Call to Order**

Gordy called the meeting to order at 6:00. He said to manage the meeting chat will be turned off. For each agenda item, first trustees will have time to discuss it, then Meredith will give citizens the opportunity to speak. At the next meeting the trustees can evaluate how that went and whether to continue with the same way of managing the meeting. Meredith checked with the village's lawyer who confirmed that Gordy has the right to try to effectively manage trustee meetings.

**2. Changes Additions to Proposed Agenda**

Meredith said she would like to move the Black Lives Matter Flags item to be second to last on the agenda. She thinks there will need to be an executive session as part of that item. Gordy added an item about offering flu shots to village employees.

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

**Scott moved to approve the minutes of August 10, 2020 and the motion was seconded and passed.**

Meredith said she didn't put approval of the August 24 joint meeting minutes on the agenda because the selectboard may want to approve those at a joint meeting. She can let Brian Story know if board members have any problems with those minutes.

**4. Treasurer's Report / Review and Approve Bills and Warrants / Budget Status**

Rosemary said the ten cents on the grand list payment from the town should be coming in October. Meredith said we believe our PILOT payment will be about what we were expecting, maybe a little more.

Scott said he read somewhere that a majority of Johnson residents have lower taxes this year. What is the bottom line for assessed value for all properties? Will we get more or less for the ten cents on the grand list? Rosemary asked, didn't the boards agree to keep the ten cents on the grand list payment the same as last year for this year. Next year the amount should be a little higher. Meredith said there was a special meeting in January where the boards agreed to keep the payment the same as last year because the reappraisal results were unknown.

Rosemary said we received a \$6K payment today from NVU. Meredith said we were told back in spring that they couldn't guarantee they would make their payment. She checked in with them in August and they said they would pay it again this year. She is very appreciative. Gordy suggested sending a letter thanking the president for helping us with our budget by coming up with the

money. Their budget is tight and for them to continue helping us says a lot about how they value the community. Meredith said she can send a formal letter on behalf of the trustees.

We have spent \$9500 on the Pearl St/School St. project. A lot of that is legal fees for work on the easements. We have received all the easements except the ones from the Studio Center. Meredith and our attorney had a conference call with the new Studio Center director last week. She is hopeful we will finally get the signed easements and be able to put the project out to bid. There is only a very small chance we could do the project this year. If we pour concrete too late the engineer recommends we not put salt on it, which is a problem during winter. For the good of the project it doesn't make sense to rush it, assuming VTrans still supports giving us an extension. Realistically she thinks the project will be done next summer.

Retail electric sales are still trending below last year. Meredith thinks we budgeted for a slight decrease so that is not terribly concerning. Low college activity will continue to have an impact on sales.

Scott asked how we are doing on people catching up with their bills. Meredith said the total unpaid amount that is over 60 days past due for electric is \$41,762. That is \$38,367 more than last year. The Arrearage Assistance Program using CARES funding has given each utility a specific allocation. Ours is \$25K, which is not enough to make up the whole amount we are short. The state has said they will look at how utilities are spending their money and if some are not using what was allocated they may reallocate some. So we need to get as many of our customers as possible to take advantage of this program. The state is talking about extending the disconnection moratorium. As of this morning we have had 21 customers take advantage of the Arrearage Assistance Program. We well over 100 customers have balances that are more than 60 days past due.

Scott asked about the possibility of an ad in the newspaper explaining the Arrearage Assistance Program in plain language. Meredith said she can ask VPPSA if they have thought about doing an ad in print.

Meredith said water sales are down. She would say that is primarily due to the decrease at the college. She said there has been a lot of talk at the state level about trying to advocate for funding for municipalities related to the pandemic but other than the Arrearage Assistance Program there has been little related to utilities. The Arrearage Assistance Program will pay for some water systems but not ours. We will try to advocate through VPPSA for assistance for utilities.

Sewer revenue is similarly down, probably due to college activity being down. Dan said for the last 3 months we have only had one sludge load instead of two, saving \$1000 each month.

Meredith asked Dan if we have heard anything back from the person we were talking to about cupola work. Dan said he hasn't contacted him again. He can get hold of him again and see where we stand on that and let the board know for the next meeting.

Rosemary said there were more delinquent taxes this year – 14% of what we billed, compared to 10% last year and 8% the year before. As of today we are at 8.71% uncollected. Last year the figure was 7.54%. We are about 2 weeks later than last year. That could be part of the reason.

**Scott moved to authorize Gordy to sign orders for this month on behalf of the board and the motion was seconded and passed.**

**5. *90 Clay Hill Water and Sewer Permits Preliminary Approval***

Meredith said Travis Hill is looking to purchase 90 Clay Hill. He wants to convert an existing barn into a 2-bedroom single family home. Normally our ordinance requires any structure to have a separate service line. Shared lines can create problems if something needs repair. But there is an exception in our ordinance for hardship, which could include physical difficulties or financial hardship. In the past when the board has made an exception we have said that any future subdivision needs trustee approval and we need a description of how responsibility for the line will be handled if part of the property is sold.

Travis said the owner of 90 Clay Hill is moving out and they have discussed that he would buy the property. He would do minor upgrades to the existing house and he wants to make the barn into an Airbnb property to make sure he has money to cover the mortgage, utilities and taxes on the property. He can either connect to the water and sewer lines in front of the existing house or new lines have to go down the whole property and make a 90 degree turn to the road. The water line there is in the center of road so a patch has to be dug out in the center of the road. There needs to be someone directing traffic and the main water line needs to be cut off. The cost to connect the barn that was would be around \$40K. The cost to connect to the existing sewer and water lines would be more like \$5-6K. That is a pretty significant difference. If he was going to have to spend the higher amount that would probably stop him from buying the property because he would not have the budget to turn the barn into an Airbnb. According to Arjay West the existing piping is sufficient to connect the barn to.

Meredith said in the last few years we allowed this for a property on Main Street and another on 100C when it would have been very difficult to add a separate line. We would need to specify that village permission would be needed for subdivision and to give that permission we would need an understanding about how the service lines would be maintained.

Gordy asked if Travis could put in separate shutoffs for the existing house and the barn. Then if there was a problem with one line that one could be shut off and the other could be left on. Travis he hadn't considered that but it sounds pretty sensible. Scott said for him to agree to this, that would have to be done. There would have to be a separate water shutoff for each building. He would want village crews to be able to isolate one house or the other.

Travis said he doesn't have an intention to subdivide, but he wouldn't want the ability to subdivide to be determined by the village. He is okay with the village saying that if he does subdivide he has to have a declaration in place about maintaining the line. Meredith said what we have approved in the past has stated that the village needs to give approval for subdivision. She can check with our attorney on his thoughts on just saying that if the property is subdivided this is what has to be done. She doesn't think the village would be opposed to subdivision for any other reason. She can write a letter saying we require a declaration regarding maintenance of the shared line should subdivision occur.

Athena asked if Travis is planning on renting the barn out as an Airbnb forever or if he foresees doing longer term rentals. Travis said maybe. The longer term rentals he has had have been difficult for various reasons. College students destroyed a large house he had rented out. Now he is

renting to traveling nurses and that is better. Another building he owns has been an Airbnb and it does really well. He likes having it as an Airbnb because it brings tourist dollars into town and exposes people from major cities to small town Vermont. He probably will keep the barn as an Airbnb.

**Scott moved to give preliminary approval for wastewater permit 001-020 for 210 gallons per day and water permit 001-020 for 280 gallons per day, conditioned on installation of separate water shutoffs for both structures, a declaration clarifying responsibility for shared service lines if subdivision occurs in the future and receipt of state permits, and to authorize Meredith to sign the permits on behalf of the village. The motion was seconded and passed.**

6. *McCuin Heights Wastewater Permit Extension*

Meredith said last June we approved a wastewater permit for Larry McCuin's property on McCuin Heights. The permit was good for a year. He wants to sell the property and thought it would be good to have a permit in place for the sale. It has been over a year since he got the permit. Normally we would require the owner to repay both the connection and capacity fee if the permit was expired. If the permit was not expired he would just have to repay the capacity fee. She doesn't see a big issue with making an exception given the national emergency and just requiring him to pay the additional capacity fee, which he has already paid. The extension would be retroactive back to June.

Scott asked, we are still talking about a single family home? All the numbers are the same? Meredith said yes, it would just be an extension with the same conditions. The capacity is 210 gallons per day.

**Scott moved to extend Larry McCuin's wastewater permit for a year from the previous date of expiration, waiving the \$500 connection fee because of the state and national state of emergency, Jena seconded and the motion was passed.**

7. *Jenna's Promise Excess Water Usage Billing Adjustment*

Meredith said Greg and Dawn Tatro submitted an application for adjustment to the water bill at the Jenna's Promise building. In July they had very high usage because of a toilet running. Our policy states that unless there is clear evidence that the water did not go through the sewer we only adjust the water bill. We usually adjust to 3 times the average for the previous 3 months. The 3-month average is \$20.50 so according to the usual method the bill for the high usage month would be adjusted to 3 times that. But our policy states that if that method doesn't represent an accurate representative sample of billing the trustees can choose a different number. Because there was virtually no usage in the previous 3 months, a more accurate adjustment would be to \$20.50 rather than to 3 times that amount. **Scott moved to adjust the July water bill for Jenna's Promise to \$20.50 and the motion was seconded and passed.**

8. *Food Truck Hours of Operation*

Joey Buttendorf said Mudgies food truck has been doing very well. They want to talk about expansion of hours Thursday through Saturday and see if it is okay to add a day to the days they are open and maybe pick some days they are not normally operating to be open, for instance a Monday holiday. They have Facebook and Instagram pages. Can links to those be on the town website? They are interested in possibly staying through the winter.

Meredith said our current guidelines for use of the village green limit operations until 4:00 pm. That was done so as not to compete with any existing restaurants but we have seen that the

Mudgies menu is different from existing brick and mortar businesses and there is some interest in having additional options in the community. We have heard from some people who were concerned about competition with existing businesses. She asked for clarification on how late Mudgies wants to stay open. Joey said they were thinking of being open from 11:30 to either 6:30 or 7:00. Meredith said there is nothing in the guidelines that limits use of the green in terms of days of the week or holidays. Being open additional days is not a problem. We charge \$10 per day the truck is open. We just need to know the days it is open.

Athena said she thinks it makes sense to extend the hours. It is difficult for college students to get there before it closes now and would be nice to have it open for dinner. Gordy said he thinks it would be nice to extend the hours. We need foot traffic and patronage for the community to seem vibrant.

Scott asked how lighting is going to happen. Joey said there is overhead lighting built into the trailer under the eaves. They will have a phone number for people to call and order. They could do pickup only and maybe some delivery in winter. People won't want to sit outside much longer so it may not be an issue. Scott said he would ask that the lighting not bother neighboring buildings or shine in the road. He feels a food truck draws more people in and merchants in town benefit from it.

**Athena moved to approve changing the guidelines for use of the village green to allow food truck use until 7:00 pm, Scott seconded and the motion was passed.**

Meredith said there has been talk about repositioning the truck. It was agreed that she will follow up with the Mudgetts about that later.

Meredith said we initially said use of the green could be until October 20 because our crew has some concerns about snow plowing if the truck is there. She suggested that can be discussed internally and we can return to that question at the October meeting. She will update the guidelines regarding hours. The revised guidelines will be applicable to anyone, not just this one food truck.

#### **9. *Water/Wastewater Report and Action Items***

There were no callouts for the wastewater plant. We had a phosphorus concentration violation. The laboratory's equipment broke down and it took 3 weeks to get a result. By the time we received the result we were into September and could not resample. It will go as a concentration violation and will only slightly increase our yearly pounds of phosphorus discharged. The state has been notified. We got a 1.3, which Dan questions because we have never had above .6 and this result was from the same month when the laboratory's equipment broke down. The state inspector didn't seem too concerned. The E-DMR and Wr-43 were submitted for review. We passed our Proficiency check samples for in house lab tests that we perform. We started sampling for our permit required Whole Effluent Toxicity Test (WET test) today. We deep cleaned the belt press room and re-installed the oiler/water trap that had been removed years ago because it had failed. We put a new drain plug in it and it is working as it should. We changed the oil in the River Road pump station compressors. We tested all lead/lag floats and high wet well alarms at all pump stations

There were no callouts for the water system. Coliform results were negative. We received results for disinfection byproducts tests and we are well below the State of VT and EPA standards. We purchased stain and roofing for Katy Win pump house #1 and began staining and painting trim.

The roof will be removed and metal roofing installed this week. Total cost for supplies will be under \$300. We also started removing the foot of silt from the concrete floor that is buried under it. Water loss was 1%.

Meredith said the state application for a planning loan for design work on the River Road pump station is completed. The engineering services agreement language is finalized and she will send the application tomorrow. The engineering services agreement is contingent on funding from the state. We expect the loan will come with 50% forgiveness given the demographics of our area. Next month we will probably be reading to start talking about a bond vote.

#### **10. Foreman Report and Action Items**

On September 9<sup>th</sup>, we had a broken pole that caused an outage on Clay Hill. A delivery truck made contact with the phone wire in a driveway, snapping the pole off. The outage affected 25 customers and lasted for about 4 hours while the village crew replaced the pole. On September 10<sup>th</sup>, we had to have a second outage on Clay Hill to repair a broken neutral in the woods. We believe this was caused by the broken pole the day before. The outage affected 30 customers and power was restored in one hour. The crew completed a 1250 foot primary underground line extension at 1111 Sinclair Road. Two pad-mount transformers were installed that will serve two new accounts. We continued our pole transfer work in the right-of-way on Gould Hill that was started last month. We continued right-of-way cutting in the gulf, East Johnson, and French Hill.

Jeff and Chan have continued their NEPPA online training. They have completed and passed 4 of the 6 online tests needed to complete their apprenticeship course work. The final two tests will be completed by October 15<sup>th</sup> and that will close out the school portion of their apprenticeship. They have both met the qualifications to make the next step to lineman second class B.

We received a load of new utility poles this month. The crew also completed monthly meter reading, high/low checks, and Dig Safes.

The new suction pump ordered earlier this summer came in and is ready for use when needed. The crew picked up and stored the sand for winter sidewalk maintenance. The crew worked with the Johnson Tree Board and dug holes for 11 trees for the new arboretum. The crew also removed the metal backstop poles at Duba Field at the request of the Tree Board.

Within the last month, we discovered some issues with the control panel that operates the three-phase breaker on the R2 circuit. Because of its age, components are no longer supported by the manufacturer. Troy has been working with a distributor to locate a replacement panel, which has proven to be very difficult. The distributor has reached out to the manufacturer and Troy hopes to have more information this week. If we are able to find a replacement panel, depending on cost, he may order a total of three because I anticipate similar issues with the other two breakers.

Troy worked with Meredith reviewing and editing the Transmission & Distribution chapter of our new Integrated Resource Plan. He worked with the property owner at 1111 Sinclair Road to complete the installation of the primary underground. He has a meeting with a customer this week who is interested in installing a 1500 foot primary underground line extension on Foote Brook Road. He has scheduled hydrant flushing, catch basin, and sewer main cleaning for October.

Scott asked about the second issue Troy thinks is related to the delivery truck accident – is that billable? Troy said he will bill for it. The only reason they could find that would have caused the problem was lines shaking and making contact due to the truck.

**11. VPPSA Board Alternate**

Meredith said Phil Wilson was the alternate representative to the VPPSA board but he has left the board so VPPSA is asking us to select a new alternate. They meet monthly on the first Wednesday from 9:30 am to about 2:00 pm. There will be the option to participate remotely. If no board members are interested maybe Walter Pomroy could do it again. The alternate doesn't have to go to every meeting, just review materials and keep updated with what is going on.

Scott would do it for a limited amount of time if no one else wants to do it.

Athena asked if we would want to approach individuals from the general public. Meredith said ideally it would be a board member if no board members are interested we could open it up to others.

**12. Vermont Transco Equity Call**

Meredith noted that the agenda said VELCO when it should have said Transco. Periodically Transco issues equity that becomes available to utilities. All VPPSA members have the option to purchase the equity. Johnson's share would cost \$45,260 cost. We can purchase it directly with cash out of our pockets or have VPPSA purchase it on our behalf. That would be her recommendation. That is what we have historically done. **Scott moved to purchase the equity to be issued by Vermont Transco in December and to assign our shares to VPPSA and finance through VPPSA. The motion was seconded and passed.**

**13. October Trustee Meeting Date**

Because the second Monday in October is a holiday it was agreed to schedule the October meeting for Tuesday, October 13.

**14. Reallocation of Holiday Jubilee Funds**

Meredith said the Holiday Jubilee will not be held this year. Instead, Johnson Works will put its efforts into lighting up Johnson. Kyle Nuse asked if the village would be willing to help in that effort. They might want to put additional lights on some Main Street poles or on small Christmas trees. She and Troy are reluctant to take on responsibility for putting up additional products. Utility grade products are quite expensive, but we allocated \$1400 towards insurance for the Jubilee and \$500 for general Jubilee support. Would the board support reallocating the \$1900 and talking with Johnson Works about how that could be used to support their effort? Perhaps lights could be purchased to put inside businesses in their windows. That may be less costly than buying outdoor utility grade lights.

The board agreed Meredith should work with Johnson Works to come up with a proposal.

Kyle Nuse said Johnson Works is meeting tomorrow and they are going to discuss their plan. They need to know what kind of money they have to work with. It would be good to know that the village is open to the idea of reallocating funds. The idea is to light up Johnson to make it look festive for the holidays. That encourages people to stop in town and support local businesses. It will bring joy to people's lives and support the local economy.

Board members agreed they would be open to reallocating up to \$1900 for this effort.

Kyle asked if the issue with outside lights is that Troy's crew does not have time to put them up or if it is more of a money concern. Meredith said it is both. There is a storage issue. And in winter the crew has to work with snow. Ideally we would provide materials to business owners to manage themselves and we would not put them up, take them down and store them. Kyle asked, if Johnson Works could find storage space and people power to put things up, could they ask for authorization to put additional things on lamp pole? Meredith said yes, if there were volunteers to do it. Scott said he is thinking about safety and health. The products would have to be rated. He doesn't want to put line crews in jeopardy. He would want Troy involved in the discussion if we are talking about energizing lighting off the street poles.

**15. Fire Department Air Pack Update**

Meredith said the fire department formed a committee to research air packs. They found two companies that stand out and they will have a formal proposal and request to purchase for the October meeting.

**16. Discussion of Proposed Legislation – S. 237**

Meredith said Duncan Hastings had sent out an email expressing concerns about this proposed housing and zoning bill. The intent of the language is to try to advance development of affordable housing. In his email Duncan advocated for Johnson opposing the bill. From his perspective the law is quite prescriptive about what zoning has to allow. It says if a town has a zoning bylaw it needs to do certain things to allow dense development. In Johnson we have form based code, not traditional zoning. Meredith didn't have immediate concern when she read the bill. She doesn't think we currently have anything in our form based code that is in conflict with what this bill says. She thinks some language would need to be added that says we are abiding by the law. More dense development is good for the village utility and for vibrancy in the village. Her recommendation is that we not oppose this. VLCT is opposing elements of it and encouraging the legislature to be less restrictive.

Scott asked if Brian Story has reached out to the Planning Commission about this. Meredith said she doesn't know. She saw it was discussed in a selectboard meeting. Scott said he would love to get the Planning Commission's opinion on it.

**17. COVID-19 Response Check-In & Utility Update**

Meredith said we have over \$41K in unpaid electric balances 60 days or more overdue, a significant increase over last year. We have an allocation of \$25K from the state Arrearage Assistance Program. If we can get customers to take advantage of the program we may be able to get more or if we do not use all of the \$25K some could be reallocated to another utility. She will do another push to try to get as many customers as possible to take advantage of it. The disconnection moratorium is due to expire September 30 and is up for possible re-extension. VPPSA members are submitting comments through VPPSA. If we are able to send out disconnect notices we want to send out information on the Arrearage Assistance Program at the same time.

**18. Flu Vaccines for Employees**

Meredith said she, Rosemary and Brian discussed seeing if we could have a nurse come to the municipal building and offer flu shots. Hopefully we can make that happen but if that is not possible and people need to go elsewhere to get flu shots they talked about allowing employees to do that on village time so they would not have to use their benefit time and paying any charge. Rosemary said Susan has contacted Copley and they are not able to come until at least the end of October. Meredith said we will need to research what other options there are.

### ***19. Racial Justice Committee Next Steps***

Meredith shared what she believes is the final language the selectboard has approved for the committee charge. If we don't have any adjustments we could also approve it so town and village are operating with the same framework for the committee and we could talk about our efforts to recruit for the committee. Meredith noted that they added a reference to social justice to all the - bullets. They also added the inclusivity statement and anti-racism statement as appendices. The committee is encouraged to use the document Municipal Engagement for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, which offers guidance on what communities can do and how to have these conversations.

Kyle said her recollection is that that document came to the selectboard as a recommendation from VLCT. It was created in response to many towns having this same conversation. The selectboard thought it was a helpful document. Nat said this is the document he brought up at the joint board meeting and emailed to all trustees and selectboard members in advance of that meeting. It got a favorable reaction from board members. His hope is that the committee's work would be focused by this document.

**Scott moved to approve the charge for the Racial Justice Committee as presented, Athena seconded and the motion was passed.**

Meredith suggested we could talk about having a list of specific interview questions and a specified interview process. Maybe the board should hold a special meeting for interviews.

Athena said she thinks it was good that Meredith was proactive and put a notice soliciting candidates in the village newsletter. She really likes the idea of a special meeting. She thinks it is important that we have another point of contact with these people beyond a letter of intent.

Gordy said a letter and then an interview process is similar to what was done when the board was seeking new trustees.

Scott said at the last selectboard meeting he heard that some members of the public are hoping for a consistent selection process for the town and village. He agrees with that. He thinks both boards and the people on the boards haven't come to agreement on who should represent the community on the committee. He is in favor of hearing everyone's views. There is some pushback he has been hearing that committee members should be only people totally committed to the cause. He wants to make sure that if there is someone who may not be on the same path as everyone else their concerns are heard – not concerns about whether people have racial equality but concerns about messaging and how we go about seeking racial justice. His biggest concern is we might have a committee who only sees things one way and doesn't really want to hear any other way. There was a letter in the News & Citizen that compared having other viewpoints on the committee to putting a rapist in a rape trial. He hopes that is not how this is being seen. He thinks there are community members who feel like they are not being heard. He is looking for a balanced approach with people who seek true justice. He doesn't want to make it so tight that other good ideas are not being heard.

Meredith said she thinks she and Brian both walked away from the joint meeting thinking the village would select their three committee members and the town would select their three. It sounds like Scott is advocating that both follow the same selection process.

Scott said yes. He thinks both should have the same guidelines. But from the village perspective he wants to hear everyone – not racist rants, but if someone has a cool idea about moving things forward he wants to hear it. He is worried about coming up with a document that is too limiting in picking people for the committee. He thinks we all have to be on the same page but there has to be a little respect for people. We don't need a detailed document on how we pick the committee members.

Meredith said her impression was that we were going to agree on a committee charge and we would each figure out in our own way how we were going to select committee members. If the trustees want to have a mirror image of what the town is doing she thinks we will need another joint meeting. Or do board members think it is okay if each interview is asking different questions? That was the path she thought we were going down but we can adjust.

Gordy said his point of view was that we need people with all kinds of ideas and ways of looking at these issues and solutions. If we just get one segment of our community and they come up with solutions, unless everyone had a chance for input the solutions won't get accepted by a majority of people. That is how form based code got accepted. Everyone was involved in meetings, including those who were against it. He likes the idea of us doing an interview process like what we did with board members. He feels it is up to us how we pick members and up to the selectboard how they pick their members.

Carrie Watson said she assumes Scott was referring to what she wrote in her letter. She doesn't understand why he is afraid that excluding people who don't think those are issues would be a problem with coming up with solutions. Who is he concerned about excluding?

Scott said it's more about bringing the community together. If they have ways that don't align with Black Lives Matter and have solid ideas about racial equality he doesn't want them not in the picture. He gave an example. His idea was to fly Black Lives Matter flags on Main Street. He did not check in with community members and he got a lot of heat and learned a lot from it. During the following conversation there were other ideas like moving the flag to the municipal building. One idea he valued was having the flag at the village green on its own where there could be a place to reflect and not just having it on a flagpole that already has flags on it. Because he didn't reach out for conversation he missed all that. That was a misstep on his part because he felt it should be done the way he wanted it to be done and he didn't check in with community members. One bullet point in the document just accepted is the topic of where we show our support.

Carrie said she understands that the ultimate goal is to make our community more cohesive and make sure more people are heard and valued. She appreciates that he is trying to do that. She wants to make sure this doesn't get unduly stalled for fear of process. She thinks all the board members really care to put people committed to equity on the committee.

Athena asked if Scott is saying he wants our criteria as a board when selecting people for the committee to be as broad as possible. Is that accurate? Scott said he wouldn't phrase it quite that strongly. If people are applying to be on the committee to disrupt things and they are not into racial justice he does not want them on the committee.

Meredith asked, are we saying that there is no litmus test to apply, but we will be more discriminating when we ask interview questions? Athena agreed. Meredith said she thinks we should come up with some questions we think are important to ask so we can have an apples to apples comparison. Scott said that sounds good. He would like to start working on questions. He is in favor of a special meeting for interviews.

The board agreed to have a special meeting for interviews on Wednesday, October 7. It was agreed that board members will send Meredith suggested questions for her to compile and send back out.

#### **20. Board Resignations and Next Steps**

Meredith said Brian sent her an email saying this would be his last meeting. He will not be a village resident much longer. He didn't give a firm date when his resignation would take effect. Jena also intends to resign. Jena said she is flexible and doesn't have a specific resignation date in mind. Meredith suggested it be effective October 12 so new board members can take the oath at the regular October meeting. Gordy and Jena agreed to that.

Scott said he thinks it is important that we not be challenged on a vote because it is questionable whether Brian is still a village resident. Meredith said if he participates in any meeting after tonight we would have to be very clear about whether he is still living in the village.

**Scott moved to accept Jena's resignation effective October 12, seconded by Athena and the motion was passed.**

Gordy said the community is in a lot of turmoil. There are major differences of opinion. What is happening now is not how the trustee board has worked for most of the years he has been on it. He is sorry Athena and Jena had to join the board at such a divisive time. He hopes maybe Jena can reconsider someday.

Diane Lehouillier asked why Jena is resigning. Jena said unfortunately she thinks there are people in this town who do not believe equity should be applied to everyone and everyone should have the same privileges and that was made abundantly clear to her. Diane said she is really sorry that happened to her and she thinks the town leaders should say something about that kind of behavior towards public people. She thinks we need to speak up and say that kind of behavior cannot happen. Gordy and everyone else on the trustee board need to be clear about how people should speak to public people. She would like a public statement at this meeting about that kind of behavior towards trustees.

Scott said over the last year being a trustee has been more and more difficult. It has made it hard for most trustees to sleep at night. The village is losing one of the best village managers we have ever had. The comments have been nonstop. He has already told Gordy he will be finishing up in April as well. He wants to get his life back together and not be dealing with the negativity he has seen over the past year. He thinks the selectboard has the same issues. He feels for Jena. The only reason he is not resigning is to make sure Gordy is not left alone as the elder of the trustees. With Meredith leaving the village is in a major crunch. He is saddened by the whole thing. It is not one individual, it's a collective group. He would love to do something about it but he doesn't know how to deal with public input.

Cal Stanton said he is sorry for everyone's strife and stress. It has been difficult but he has been tuned into a lot of the recent selectboard and trustee meetings and he hasn't seen disrespect. Is he right to believe it is happening outside of meetings? If it is happening behind the scenes he thinks that needs to be addressed. At meetings he has seen people being respectful but passionate.

Scott said it's behind the scenes and it's also microaggression during the meetings. Most meetings leave him not getting sleep for weeks. We all should think clearly before we speak and before we act. Sometimes when we are passionate about a subject that falters.

Gordy said he knows Meredith has been challenged by trying to carry out policies of the board. She has to keep going to lawyers to address emails and other forms of communication. She finally reached burnout. He wasn't going to stay on the board this last time around but he wanted to see village electric employees protected with a contract. There are a lot of things going on in this community. We need better communication. We need to know how to agree to disagree. It is getting so personal, us against them. He used to enjoy trustee meetings, but he doesn't now. There are times he can't sleep and Meredith told him that there are times she can't. He wants to see some young people get on this trustee board. He wants to get the merger question settled. A lot of employees are not sure if they will have jobs. Who will want to come work here in this environment? It's not a rosy picture. We need to come up with ways to get good conversation going, move ahead and not hold grudges.

Peggy Williams said she agrees with everything Diane said. She thinks the trustees should make a statement about expectations regarding respect for public officials. If they don't she is not sure they will get any candidates for the Racial Justice Committee or trustee board. Maybe those who have been critical should be invited to run for the trustee board. She has lived in Johnson many years and she thinks we are in a terrible place. The racial bias training in January is something that should happen again. She thinks we need to do those things multiple times. It is hard during COVID, but we need a community conversation about what is going on that is making us all so disagreeable.

Kyle said her heart is broken for Jena. She doesn't know the details about what happened but it sounds awful and unacceptable. She wants to remind everyone that we should not be at a loss for words. We voted on words in our inclusivity statement. "We reject racism, bigotry, discrimination, violence and hatred in all its forms." It sounds like whatever Jena experienced was hatred and potentially violence. The village should be stating and upholding what is in the inclusivity statement and supporting Jena and anyone else who has experienced that. She thanks Jena for her sacrifice. She is sorry her term was cut short. She is an asset on this board.

Rick Aupperlee said he would also like to offer his sympathy and support for Jena. He doesn't know the circumstances. He has worked with her on another board. She was a valuable asset. Her judgments are sound and her insights are valuable and he feels her resignation is a great loss to this village. She offered her service to this community. At another meeting a community member offered a solution that the board was on board with. That community member left a message on his phone and Brian Story told him he should take it to the sheriff's department. He previously asked the board to take a stand and stand up to the bully. He is hearing that board members are receiving troubling messages that cause them not to sleep at night. Board members took an oath to do justice. He asked them to get ahead of this and not allow it to happen and the next day it happened to him.

It happened to Kyle. She was misrepresented in the newspaper. It is time for the board to take a stand and not allow this disrespect. This is not a time to be disrespectful. It is time to do what is right. That is what he has asked the board to do. It is frustrating that we have been on the flag issue since June 15. There are not two sides to justice. There is either justice or injustice. People who may be disrespectful are being heard above people trying to use the fair and democratic process this country is founded on. If there are voices in the community being disrespectful the board needs to call that out. If those people want to be heard, let them be heard but they need to be civil and respectful. They can't drive the conversation. The board members are the elected representatives and have the moral and legal power to do something about this.

Carrie Watson said she is outraged and disgusted for Jena. She is so sorry this happened to her. She has put much of her life on hold to do what she feels is good faith toward the community. She hopes she will reconsider. If the rest of the board allows this to go unaddressed it sends a clear message that this type of intimidating behavior is okay. She knows board members are making people unhappy with decisions they have made and are afraid of doing it further but the board can do something about this. The board needs to make a very clear, loud statement about the unacceptable nature of this event.

Diane agreed. She thinks the board needs to make a statement and not let this stuff keep happening. *(Brian Raulinaitis joined the meeting at 9:18.)*

Scott said it's not a one issue item. It is not clear to him how the board could legally come up with a policy regarding the ongoing pushback they have been receiving. Their emails and phone numbers are posted. People know who they are. He has had vulgar comments left on his message machine just on the food truck. On almost everything the board possibly can do, someone is reaching out and letting them know they are doing it wrong. He is hearing that it is the trustees' issue for letting it occur. People have the right to speak. If they want to leave a vulgar, nasty comment on his home phone for his family to hear he doesn't know any policy the trustees can adopt to make that stop. There are microaggressions. At the selectboard meeting all hell broke loose because Meredith put in the village newsletter that the village was looking for committee members and she did it without selectboard members knowing about it. But the town administrator did know about it and didn't say anything about it. Meredith took the brunt. We should be careful in how we speak to each other. If anyone has an idea of how to make people act like human beings again and be able to disagree in a polite manner he would be all for it, but he doesn't know how. He keeps hearing it is the elected officials' problem, but it's a community issue. We are a community that should be able to overcome things like this. The comments tonight are a little upsetting for him to hear. He wishes people wouldn't do microaggressions, call people out, or leave vulgar messages on answering machines. Don't put this on the trustees' backs. They are doing the best they can. It's a community issue.

Gordy said some of the people speaking tonight should look in the mirror. A lot of people are doing things on email, threatening businesses. People trying to do good things in the community are not being treated well and are thinking of leaving. If you say the wrong things you are called a racist. No one should sit on a high pedestal and tell the trustees what is good and what isn't. No one is higher than anyone else.

Jen Burton said she thinks a lot of this stuff could be helped if the village and town merged. There are a lot of disagreements between the two boards.

Kyle said there is a big difference between what is said during a democratic process and what is happening outside of meetings in people's private homes and spaces. At meetings people challenge each other and have conversations and disagreements. That is a healthy conversation to be having. That should not be lumped into the same conversation about things we need to be actively rejecting such as horrible voice mails and emails or showing up at people's homes. That is wrong and a statement needs to be made about those actions. What is happening here is healthy democracy.

Meredith said the board was hoping for a specific resignation date from Brian. Brian said September 30. **Athena moved to accept Brian's resignation from the board effective September 30, Jena seconded and the motion was passed.**

**21. *Black Lives Matter Flags at the Municipal Building***

Meredith said there was a lack of clarity about the motion regarding the Black Lives Matter flag. Brian's motion was to hang the Black Lives Matter flag on the central flagpole underneath the American flag. That motion was passed and after that there was a lot of discussion about where to put the flag. The board seemed unclear about placement but the motion was very specific. She wanted to make sure everyone was clear that the motion passed was what they wanted. Athena, Brian and Jena all said they were clear on that.

Meredith said the board never set an amount of time to hang the flag. Maybe after the executive session the board should have that discussion.

Cal Stanton said from what he has read it is not proper flag etiquette to fly a Black Lives Matter flag under the American flag. He thinks maybe the proper thing is to fly it under the state flag. Meredith said she read through the flag code and looked at what other communities have done. Burlington, Winooski, South Burlington and Burlington High School all have multiple flags on a single pole including the American flag and a Black Lives Matter flag. She doesn't know if that means it is correct. Before she realized that the actual motion was to put the Black Lives Matter flag on the center flag pole, her recommendation was to put it under the state flag. That seemed more similar to what other communities are doing. She wanted to make sure that putting it on the center flag pole was the intent, even though we had long discussion after that motion about where we would put it.

Scott asked how half mast occasions would be dealt with. For him, any flag touching the ground is pretty disrespectful. Meredith said she thinks in other communities they just lower all the flags on the pole, but they may have a much higher pole. She agrees this could be an issue. That is why she tends to think putting the Black Lives Matter flag under the state flag is a better approach. Even if putting it under the American flag is not specifically prohibited she thinks visually it works better under the state flag. Scott said the flag code said the American flag always has to be higher than other flags. That is why all 3 flags come down when the American flag is flown at half mast. So we would have the same issue of the flag maybe hitting the ground even if it was on the state flag flagpole.

Rick Aupperlee suggested putting the state flag under the American flag and putting the Black Lives Matter flag on the pole closest to the municipal building. He said that would not put the fire

station in harm's way because the BLM flag would be closer to the municipal building and it would deal with Scott's concerns. It is true that no flag can fly higher than the American flag but the poles have plenty of room to be able to lower the flag. The center pole has room for the American flag and state flag to be lowered to half mast without touching the ground. He thinks we need to look into fire department ownership of the flagpole. He believes the fire department is accountable to the village trustees and that they don't own the flagpole. He said he would also like to know what the reason is for the executive session. Meredith said it is related to a personnel matter with some village employees. Her recommendation is to have the executive session before any motion.

Scott said adding the Black Lives Matter flag under a flag that is already there seems like an afterthought. He would not like to have a flag with this much meaning as an afterthought. Rick's idea of moving the state flag under the American flag and putting the Black Lives Matter flag on its own flagpole takes care of that, but are we not then doing the same thing with the state flag – having it as an afterthought? A while back a citizen came up with the idea of doing something more dedicated on the village green. He likes that idea a lot. It is an issue that deserves as much respect as we can give it. He doesn't want it competing with other flags. He would much rather see a place where people can go and reflect about their past and future and think about what a lot of people, including Native Americans, have suffered in this country. Last year he and wife went to Charleston, South Carolina and they saw a memorial for slaves in granite. It was emotional. He would much rather see something of that nature with a great deal of respect for this topic. He drives by a lot of flags and it does not affect him like that. He believes we can do better.

Peggy Williams said she is confused. She believes the trustees adopted a resolution at the last meeting and now Scott is talking about another solution. She thinks it is time to simplify this. What is the resolution that was adopted and when does the board plan to implement it? If there are other good ideas, she thinks that is the next step. Why are we still talking about other ideas? Meredith said there was a motion voted on last month to fly the Black Lives Matter flag on the center flag pole under the American flag. After that motion was passed there was a lot of discussion about where to put the flag even though the motion was very specific. The subsequent discussion was in conflict with the motion passed. Peggy said she thinks the board could do other steps later.

Meredith said the board would plan to go into executive session for a personnel matter and come out of executive session by 10:15, at which time members of the public could rejoin the meeting. **Brian moved to go into executive session with Meredith to discuss a personnel matter pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(3), the motion was seconded and passed and the board entered executive session at 9:53.** The board came out of executive session at 10:18.

Meredith said before executive session we were having discussion about placement of a flag. In executive session there were concerns about emergency response capabilities and it sounded like maybe there was some desire to reconsider placement of the Black Lives Matter flag at this point.

Gordy moved to fly no flags on the flagpoles beside the fire station other than the three currently flown at that location but to ask the Racial Justice Committee to take up the question of whether and where to fly a Black Lives Matter flag with public input. The motion was not seconded.

Scott said he would second the motion if it included committing village property for the location of the Black Lives Matter flag.

**Gordy moved to fly no flags on the flagpoles beside the fire station other than the American flag, the Vermont state flag and the firefighters flag but to ask the Racial Justice Committee to decide where on village property a Black Lives Matter flag will be flown. Scott seconded.**

Peggy Williams questioned how the reason for the executive session meets the criteria when the firefighters are volunteers. Meredith said they are technically village employees. They receive payment and have workers' comp insurance.

Peggy asked, there is some issue about the firefighters and the flag? Meredith said yes. Peggy asked if someone could explain it a bit. Meredith asked Gordy if he wanted to explain. Peggy said that is all right; she is done.

Carrie Watson asked if Gordy's motion could be explained. Gordy said the motion is for the 3 flags on the monument to remain as they are. It will be part of the mission of the Racial Justice Committee the trustees and the selectboard will be forming to decide where on village property the BLM flag could be flown.

Brian said it feels like there is an elephant in the room. Meredith said we can acknowledge that we have heard concerns from the fire department about taking what they view as a political stance. They are village employees. We had a discussion in executive session regarding the issues they brought forth and now a motion to reconsider the previous decision has been made. The personnel matter language has to do with employment of public employees. Peggy said she doesn't see how this counts. The discussion is about a political stance, not someone's job being at risk.

Rick Aupperlee said we just had a public discussion. Any fire department member could have spoken openly and freely about their concerns. Conflicts of interest have been brought up at other meetings. He feels there is a little of Gordy's influence and the fire department's influence. The board chose to go into executive session to hear the concerns of the fire department. If they are employees and members of the village they have just as much right to speak at this meeting and the public has just as much right to know what was said. By using executive session privilege the board is undermining the democratic process we are all trying to be participants in. He thinks it is important that what was said be part of the public record. If they have concerns he thinks they should go on public record.

Carrie asked, if this motion passes and the Racial Justice Committee proposes placing the BLM flag on village property where it was originally proposed, will that be allowed to happen? She is concerned because two major topics were addressed in this meeting and both were heavily backpedaled. She is not seeing much progress. She is concerned about that.

Scott asked what the two issues were. Carrie said selection of Racial Justice Committee members and Black Lives Matter flag placement. Scott said formation of the committee will have to be teased out with the trustees. He would love to get that figured out quickly and then he will be more than happy to share it with selectboard and community members. He just doesn't think we are there yet.

Lynda Hill said as she understands it initially it was asked that a Black Lives Matter flag be put on one of the poles between the fire department and the town clerk, then the board discussed putting flags on Main Street, then maybe the village green, then putting it below the American flag. It seems like there has been a lot of give and take but even when the board settles on something they back down. They finally settled on putting it on the flagpole by the town clerk's office but because the fire department doesn't want it there, they are backing down. She thinks it is a good compromise to either have it under the American flag or to put the state flag under the American flag and put the BLM flag on the other pole. It feels like the fire department holds us hostage. She doesn't know what they said to the board but the whole thing is ridiculous to her. She doesn't know what the problem is. She feels so bad for Jena. It should not be a political thing. It has nothing to do with politics. If the politics in our country weren't the way they are now this wouldn't be an issue. It is sad how negative and nasty people can be. It's a recent change in Johnson. There are a lot of common sense people in this town and people who are willing to give and take. It's time for people to start being nice and if they can't be nice, don't say anything at all. People don't need to be mean and nasty to people serving on these boards. She doesn't understand how a few people can be loud and vocal and cause all these problems. She thanked board members and Meredith and said she is sorry Jena and Brian are leaving.

Jackie Stanton said this feels like major stonewalling and stalling going on. She agrees with Rick. The letter from the fire chief is questionable. The rationale is questionable. People have questioned it but no one from the fire department has defended it. It's not acceptable. Can someone speak to that letter? She is assuming there was more talk about it in executive session.

Kyle said she wants to echo a lot of what is being said. She hopes there will be responses to some of the questions raised which really deserve answers. The fact is that the Black Lives Matter movement is not a political movement. It is federally protected under the Hatch Act. It is not a political movement; it is a human rights movement. The argument that this is political is putting people in danger. It is politically divisive and factually untrue. She hopes with that information in hand the board makes the right decision.

Kim Dunkley said if it's not a safe move for the trustees to move forward with putting the flag where they had voted to put it, it is important to put it somewhere. She thinks it would help to find a place to put it up on village property and put it up tomorrow. Then the board can talk about whether it can be moved to another location. She feels it must be that the trustees are putting the safety of our village first. People need to think about what impact it would have if their house had a fire. A motion was made to put the flag up and if it is not okay to put it where the motion called for, it needs to go somewhere, and tomorrow.

Lynda asked about Gordy's motion. At the end of the motion he said it would be up to the committee to decide where the flag could go on village property but at the beginning of the motion he said only the current three flags are to be flown on those flagpoles. Does that mean the committee couldn't decide to put the flag there? Gordy said the committee would make a recommendation to the board and the board would have the final say. Lynda asked, if the committee decided to put the flag on one of those poles, that could be done? Gordy's motion wouldn't negate that? Gordy said he doesn't know. Meredith said the committee will be recommending a location. It is up to the trustees to approve it. It sounded like the intent of Gordy's

motion was to put the flag on other village property and he was intending that those flagpoles were off the table. Gordy agreed.

Peggy said let's be clear that we are kicking the can down the road to the committee. The committee may never recommend putting up the flag. That is a possibility. Scott said if the committee comes up with nothing he will be making a motion to fly the flag on village property in another location. Scott said he feels that was a disrespectful comment about kicking the can down the road.

Rick asked for clarification. Does the fire department own the flagpole? Gordy said the fire department, through an Eagle Scout project, did all the work on the flagpoles. The fire department is under the jurisdiction of the village trustees. Rick asked, so who owns the flagpole? Gordy said the village would be ultimately responsible.

Rick said the request was brought to the trustees by the Be-Longing for Justice group. It was their intent to fly the flag at the municipal building because it is the symbol of our governance. The idea of other village property is a separate but equal statement. This country has a long history of separate but equal. That was found to be unconstitutional. He is all in favor of a freedom park and putting a flag there but we don't even have a flagpole there. There will have to be meetings about funding and how to put it up. It's another delay and the board does have a motion that was passed that needs to be cleaned up a little bit. He is in favor of the committee but at the end of the day it will come down to 5 people voting on this. Everyone has been willing to give little but it always comes back to the fire department. If the fire department feels threatened, who do they feel threatened by? Are we talking about black people coming to Johnson to attack the fire department because we put a Black Lives Matter flag up or are we talking about white on white violence? If we are talking about community members making threats, that is the problem, not the flag. He has heard that up to 8 people in the fire department are threatening to quit if this flag goes up. Is that true? Gordy said he can't speak to that. He said when the tone goes off it doesn't matter what color skin the person has. If there is a car accident, a drowning or a house fire the firefighters don't ask about the person's age or race or sexual orientation.

Brian said he still stands with the last motion he made. He heard those rumors as well.

Meredith said the fire chief included in his public letter that he has strong concerns about the force and whether or not he would lose membership.

Scott said it would be nice to have comments from the Racial Justice Committee but he is fearful that will be way down the road. He would love to hear the community's views but he would like to get this done. He is not really clear on the motion. Is it up to the committee to give us a recommendation or does it fall on our shoulders to put the flag up? He understands timeliness is an issue to people on this call. It could take a few months. He doesn't want to delay the process any longer.

Gordy suggested withdrawing the motion on the table and making a new motion. Scott agreed to that. **Gordy and Scott withdrew their motion.**

**Gordy moved and Scott seconded that the only flags flown on the fire department monument be the American, Vermont, and firefighter flags flying there now and to fly a Black Lives Matter flag on other village property as soon as possible.**

Brian said he wishes we already had the flag up by now.

Jena said this town has an inclusion statement and it doesn't seem to be more than words. You have to live the words, otherwise they are meaningless.

Jackie asked who will speak to the fire department letter – the rationale, the fear. It doesn't make sense to many people. It doesn't pass the credibility test. Will someone please speak to this?

Meredith said Gordy is the best connection to the fire department we have. What she has taken away from the letter the fire chief sent is that they feel like it's putting them in the middle of a political debate. There are people who feel it is a political movement and they are being put in between groups that feel one way or the other about that political movement.

Jackie said she is asking for someone to talk about their fear of retribution. The letter mentioned fear that other agencies would refuse to work with them. Have they gotten an indication of that or is that pure conjecture? It doesn't make sense. It is not rational.

Brian said we got that letter but no one joined the meeting to put any weight behind it, which is pretty disappointing. Jackie said the letter is from the fire chief. Where is the fire chief? Brian said he feels as a trustee he failed in not having much interaction with the fire department. They are part of our municipality and we need to be a little more cohesive. A lot of things get relayed through Gordy but a lot of board members think differently than Gordy and don't communicate well with the fire department. The only time he has seen them at a meeting is to talk about the budget and a new truck. This is his last meeting, but he would like to have met with them more for a variety of reasons, not just about the flag. He has nothing but respect for them but the fact that they respond so viscerally to this is concerning to him. He is asking the same thing Jackie is and he hasn't gotten any answers. And what if a lot of them quit? Is there a procedure in place to deal with that? He stands with what he said previously.

Gordy said he can't speak for the fire department. If anyone from the fire department had come here they would have been attacked viciously. He thinks it would have gotten ugly and nothing would have been accomplished. The letter should speak for itself. If we had firefighters or the chief here, they would have been thrown under the bus.

Brian said we can't really have dialog without someone here. Gordy said Meredith tried to set up a meeting with Arjay and maybe some of the officers and only Scott responded. Meredith said Athena also said she would be interested.

Gordy said these items are consuming the trustees and the selectboard and keeping us from doing our regular business.

Cal Stanton said he feels it is important that the Black Lives Matter flag flies with the American flag. We have to be cautious about segregating the BLM flag. Shuffling it to a particular part of

town won't do it for him personally. He thinks we have to fly it proudly with the rest of our flags at the municipal building.

Rick said he would echo what Cal says. His belief is that the flag should fly at the municipal building. It is the symbol of our democracy. We will be making this a more welcoming place if people come to town they see the Black Lives Matter flag. If this town is going to grow it is going to grow in new and different ways.

Carrie said it sounds like a cop-out when the people who have secretly told the board they don't want the BLM flag to fly are not here and not speaking up. Everyone here is speaking civilly toward a democratic process. Everyone here cares about the community. It is a cop-out to say the reason someone can't speak their voice is that they will get thrown under the bus. Everyone here has been listened to and everyone here is trying to work towards a better community. It is important to answer the question about who is threatening the fire department if a BLM flag is flown. We should be looking at defending them. We should let the flag fly and back up the fire department.

Lynda said she agrees with Carrie. She disagrees with Gordy about the fire department being thrown under the bus. Everyone here and everyone she knows that has been involved with this has had pleasant conversations about it. The fire department are the only ones who haven't spoken their minds face to face. And what happens to the vote that was taken a month or so ago to fly the flag? Isn't that still on the table? Has that been undone? Gordy said Brian's motion is still in effect. The motion that was made this evening will negate that motion if it passes. If that motion doesn't pass Brian's motion will stand.

Gordy said maybe that wasn't a good answer he gave about the fire department but it is late and he is tired. Lynda said she thinks it would be good if one of the firefighters was part of this discussion and could answer some questions people have.

**The motion was passed in a roll call vote with Athena, Scott and Gordy voting in favor and Jena and Brian opposed.**

Meredith suggested doing the other executive session that was on the agenda at a different time.

Scott said he heard Cal loud and clear about the American flag and Black Lives Matter flag being flown together and he will push as hard as he can to make that happen.

Gordy thanked the trustees and said they should let him know if any of them are put in an uncomfortable position and he will try to address it.

## **22. Adjourn**

**It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 11:27 and the motion was passed.**