

JOHNSON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2020

Present:

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

Others: Brian Story, Rosemary Audibert, Lisa Crews, Scott Meyer, Kim Dunkley, Steve Hatfield, Diana Osborn, Rick Aupperlee, Lois Frey, Beth Foy, Shayne Spence, Lotty Roozkrans, Diane Lehouiller, Brynn Nuse, Robert Moore, Scott Griswold

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

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

1. Call to Order

Doug called the meeting to order at 7:00.

2. Additions, Changes to Agenda

Brian added an update on the job search for the public works supervisor, an update and discussion on the social media policy and a request from the Historical Society for staff support. Nat said he would like to give a COVID response update.

3. Review and Approve Minutes of Meetings Past

Kyle moved and Nat seconded to approve the minutes of October 19, the October 28 Board of Abatement minutes, the October 28 selectboard minutes and the November 2 selectboard minutes. Doug said in the October 19 minutes the statement that Kate Lalley donated a landscape design should be changed to reflect that LCPC is compensating Kate Lalley for the design and donating it. **Kyle and Nat accepted the suggested change as a friendly amendment. The motion was passed.**

4. Additions, Changes to Agenda

Mike said he doesn't see the October 2020 sheriff's report on the agenda. He would like to read something into the minutes from that report. Doug agreed to add that to the agenda.

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

Rosemary said we have not yet received the PILOT money from the state. We usually receive it around November 1. Expenditures to date are at 29% of budget. Tonight's orders include the second installment paid to the school. She sent the board a list of all delinquent taxpayers. She is not sure if the board wants to send them to the attorney for collection in December or wait until after the pandemic is over.

Mike said a lot of other towns have continued on dealing with their delinquent taxes and had tax sales. He is beginning to feel Johnson is one of the few towns that has not had a tax sale this year. He thinks we should move forward with sending the delinquent accounts for collection.

Nat asked how the current amount of delinquent taxes compares to other years at this time. Rosemary said it is probably 20% higher.

Mike said it should be noted that those going up for tax sale were not affected by the pandemic. The vast majority were delinquent way before the pandemic. Rosemary agreed. She said some didn't pay any taxes at all last year. Kyle said the pandemic would certainly make it even more difficult for them to pay. Nat said when they don't pay it increases the burden on the rest of the taxpayers. He agrees with Mike. Doug said he agrees also.

Mike moved and Nat seconded to send delinquent taxes to the tax collector.

Kyle asked how the tax sale will be done – virtually? Rosemary said that is a good question. Mike said we can move forward with sending them to the attorney and then tighten it up. He can look into how other towns have handled it. Nat asked how many people show up to a tax sale. Mike said sometimes only one. Nat asked if we ever get 20. Rosemary said no, never. Brian said he thinks we can decide later whether to hold the tax sale online or in person. We will have time to do some planning with the attorney we work with. The attorney will presumably have a plan and if they don't have a plan we are satisfied with we can work with them to improve it.

Kyle asked if there is an appeal process. What if someone says they have a hardship? Rosemary said we would work with them the best we could. We will send final letters and encourage them to make payment arrangements.

The motion was passed.

Nat moved to authorized Doug to sign the warrants, Mike seconded and the motion was passed.

Kyle asked if the warrants could be sent out to the board a little sooner in the day. Rosemary said staff will try to get them out earlier in the future.

6. *Public Works Supervisor's Report*

Brian showed the board Jason's summary of what the public works department has been working on. They have mostly been preparing for winter – getting trucks winterized, making sure plows are working, etc. For the time being we do not have anyone serving as MSHA safety coordinator so the gravel pit is closed for the season and until we have someone trained.

Nat asked, doesn't the new employee, Mark, have experience with that? Brian said he believes that is the case so we may be able to reopen the pit if we need to but we close it for the winter regardless. Doug said he believes Mark said he was MSHA certified.

Nat asked if we have submitted for reimbursement for paint cleanup from the company involved in the paint incident. Brian said he is helping Jason with submitting the report. Kyle asked about how many hours we spent on that Brian said three or four hours total for two people. We didn't take action as quickly as perhaps we could have because we were concerned about our potential liability if we participated.

Brian said he and Mike interviewed candidates for the public works supervisor position and they have three they would like to advance. Brian is going to take each of them to the garage to give them a tour and meet the crew. At the December meeting the board will interview all the candidates that are being advanced. Kyle asked if these are three new people since last time. Brian said yes. One of them applied very close to the original deadline and just missed it and the others are more recent

7. ***Social Media Policy***

Brian said can some concerning statements have been posted on the town Facebook page as replies to town sponsored posts. He would like to know if the selectboard would be willing to agree that we are only going to allow factual statements on our page, especially about COVID-19.

Nat said the comments are pretty far-out conspiracy stuff that is factually inaccurate. He doesn't want our Facebook page to be a platform for misinformation. He asked if it is possible to disable comments. Brian said we can if we feel it is necessary

Kyle said it would be one thing if the statement was in a post, but it is in a comment. It is not like we are endorsing the comment

Nat said he would prefer just to disable comments so we don't have to moderate comments and make a judgment as to whether a statement is true or not. Someone could write something untrue about a local business or something distasteful. We don't need to be a platform for that

Kyle said Morrisville's Facebook page allows comments. Her only concern is that we are already disabling chat on our Zoom meetings. If we start shutting down every avenue for people to comment, she is concerned. Brian said most towns he is aware of allow comments and perform some level of moderation.

Nat said he can recall a prior instance where someone made a comment on Facebook that was about a local business and Eric didn't feel it was a positive reflection of the community and he took it down. Nat complained to him about that. If we remove some comments it puts us in a position of having to decide if a comment is appropriate. When we start taking posts down it's tricky. Brian said the only other example he is aware of is the one Nat referred to. Whatever we decide to do, we have to do it uniformly.

Doug asked, do we have an obligation to allow the ability to comment? Nat said no. Brian said he doesn't think so. Doug asked if there is significant benefit to the community or the selectboard to having comments. Brian said he is not sure it is significant but he thinks there is a benefit to allowing individuals to communicate. It happens a lot with recreation posts. People answer each other's questions.

Kyle said she is very hesitant about regulating it that heavy-handedly. She would like to hear what the public thinks. She feels like often it is regulated by other people responding. She feels unless it is really hate-filled we can just ignore it. If anyone takes a comment as the truth, that is silly. It is clearly one individual's opinion, not the opinion of the town. She is

hesitant to keep shutting down venues of public comment and expression. She already feels we are doing it too much. She thinks we should keep comments open.

Scott Meyer said if it is a threat to public health and safety due to misinformation he feels a comment should be removed rather than allowing someone to spread misinformation on a town-owned platform. He thinks this comment should be removed. He thinks the board should leave the ability to comment open and what crosses the line may have to be determined by the selectboard every time it happens or the board could give Brian authority to remove comments.

Rick Aupperlee said VLCT has resources on open meeting law and he thinks it would be wise for the board to review their recommendations. He thinks it is a slippery slope to disable the chat. It opens the door for possible further checks on public participation. He would like to try to keep meetings as open and transparent as possible.

Shayne Spence said he thinks a social media policy is smart. Denying people the ability to communicate with government may run into first amendment issues.

Beth Foy said she agrees with both Scott and Rick and she also thinks there needs to be verbiage in the policy related to harassment. She would consider some of the responses on the Facebook page to be harassment. She is strongly in favor of keeping comments. She looks at Facebook daily but sometimes she doesn't see things for a couple of days so she appreciates it if someone can tag her name in the comments so she can see something quickly. She and people she is connected to use that method often.

Brian said an example of substantial benefit from comments comes from the recent paint striping issues. A number of people got contact information for the company that did the painting from being tagged in comments on Facebook, and they were not just Johnson residents.

Doug said he thinks the board ought to come back to this in another meeting. Mike agreed.

8. Road Erosion Inventory Presentation

Brian showed some data from the road erosion inventory provided by LCPC. The majority of our road segments either aren't connected or fully meet requirements. Rob Moore said LCPC applied for a grant to conduct the road erosion inventory required by MRGP. This data is the result of that work. The deadline for the town to submit its data is December 31. Most of this data was actually collected in 2019 before the Halloween storm. The data is a snapshot in time. Conditions can and do change overnight. The Halloween storm is a great example. A section of road being wiped out is an example of a negative change but the highway department can also do work that makes progress toward compliance with MRGP. Any work done after this inventory was conducted also is not captured in this report. Relative to other towns in Lamoille County, Johnson is in very good shape. He credits that to the highway department, Brian Story and the leadership of the selectboard. Almost 29% of road segments that are jurisdictional to MRGP need work in Johnson. Most towns have around 50% compliance. Some towns have 60% or more road segments not compliant. Rob thanked the board for the opportunity to work with Brian Krause. He was a true pleasure to work with

and did everything he could to help Rob out. Rob noted that the status of the road segments is calculated by a software algorithm that does not necessarily account for whether erosion is actually present or not. Segments are assessed by whether they comply with best management practices, not necessarily whether erosion is present. There can be cases where there is no erosion but the road doesn't meet the standards. It can also be the case that all the best management practices required by MRGP are in place but there is still erosion. Both those cases are rare, however.

Kim Dunkley said this is all about roads. How do things like parking lots fit in? She also asked about paved roads. The recent issue with the yellow paint showed issues with road runoff going into streams. Rob said this regulation is one of many outcomes set in motion when the state legislature created Act 64, the Clean Water Act. This particular tool the state put in motion is specifically about municipal roads. It does not include municipally owned parking lots, state roads or state parking lots. The state has its own version of the MRGP, the TS4. VTrans has a road permit they have to comply with on a similar timeline. The MRGP covers paved roads, both those that have catch basins and those that have open ditches.

Rob noted that there are over a dozen, maybe even close to two dozen, catch basins that the state had assumed were owned and controlled by the Town of Johnson, but actually many of them are not owned, operated or controlled by the town. Many are associated with the state road and are state owned and there may be at least one that is privately owned. That component of the data is something he will want to go through with Brian to ensure that the feedback we provide to the state reflects the town's understanding. He will create a draft final report that will be presented to the selectboard on December 7 and he will ask the board to accept it pending any further modifications Brian would ask him to do between then and December 31 when it is due to the state. There is a little paperwork he will work with Brian on to make sure it is submitted to the state.

Rob said he was asked to produce a list of Class 4 roads and their status in terms of LCPCs ability to collect data on them. He did provide that to the Planning Commission and Brian Story. There were well over 30 segments, maybe over 40, which were not accessible by LCPC staff, were not assessed and are not in this data set.

Doug asked, if someone wanted to look at a particular area, how would they match that to the segment ID? Rob said the chart has a segment ID. That is the code that is used to find the location of that segment using the Agency of Natural Resources atlas or the MRGP web portal. He did provide a map in his report but at that scale you have to look very closely. Doug asked if we can get instructions on how to access the information. Rob said he is not an IT expert and couldn't write up an easy to follow summary. He would be willing to go over with Brian how he could zoom into any segment and he can communicate with Doug or any selectboard member about specific locations.

Rob said most of the segments that do not meet requirements have problems with the crown or shoulder berm. A few have issues where a ditch turns and conveys water into a body of water. The priorities were determined by a software algorithm that doesn't account for whether erosion is present or what the town's priorities are.

Brian noted that on a Class 4 road the requirements for meeting the standard are different. Rob said that is correct. No action is required on a Class 4 road according to the MRGP unless the observed erosion is 12 inches or deeper. It does not account for the width of the erosion scour, only the depth. The requirement in the permit is to fix that spot of erosion with appropriate best management practices. Requirements are much more prescriptive for other classes of roads.

Scott said he has concerns about Clay Hill Road in front of his house. It has no crown and water ends up in his house whenever it rains.

Rick said he has similar issues in front of his house. He lives on Railroad Street and there is a perennial puddle in front of his house. There have been several major building projects that have no stormwater runoff restrictions and have made the flooding in the road worse. The discharge goes to the river. Where can we go from here in terms of trying to mitigate some of those problems?

Brian said issues like what Scott and Rick brought up are going to be included in discussions about what our priority projects will be. He will make sure Scott's and Rick's items are inventoried in the report. Doug said he thinks Brian, in consultation with Rob, should put together something for our web page so people can find information on a specific section.

Diana Osborn asked about the 12-inch erosion standard. Is that in the permit that will be enforced starting in 2036 or is it enforceable before that? If there is that much erosion it seems like the adjoining homeowner would need to address it right away. Once they fix it, how is that documented? Brian said the inventory is a snapshot in time. He agrees that 12 inches of erosion is pretty bad and in most instances it would be addressed before it got to that level. The town did some work on Basin Road after the storm last year because it exceeded that standard. The responsibility for meeting these requirements does not take place until 2036 but before then we are annually certifying to the state what work we are doing on our way to 100% compliance. We will not receive any sanction between now and then if we are making progress and working toward compliance, but we have to reach 100% compliance by then. Before then we have to demonstrate progress. *(Rob left at 8:17.)*

9. Newport Emergency Medical Service Annual Budget

Brian said he received information on the town's share of the updated NEMS budget. Our cost is going up. There is an increase that all towns are experiencing but not as much as last year. Our total cost would be \$141,507, an increase of 3%.

Diana Osborn said as an EMS provider in Morristown she suggests it might be worth the selectboard's time to do an analysis of EMS service with a committee similar to what is being done with law enforcement. She thinks it would benefit the town to look at what we are getting for what we are paying and how well the services are being provided. Mike said that is a good idea. Diana said the different services always cover for each other. Morristown had a hard time and NEMS covered for them quite a bit and now it is the reverse. It is worthwhile for the town to know that that is happening. She feels the public should be aware of the situation and have a say as to whether that is the way they want it to be.

Doug said his recollection is that NEMS's cost per capita was substantially under Morristown's. If Cambridge or Morristown are covering for us disproportionately we ought to be asking them questions about that.

Scott Griswold from NEMS said NEMS is asking for roughly a 3% increase. That is for the town's fiscal year. They work off a calendar year but they made a change last year so they request money from the towns for their fiscal year. It has been a difficult year. There were virtually no calls for a couple of months. They received money for COVID testing. They just learned that their PPE loan has become a grant so they won't have to pay it back. They received two COVID relief grants from the state. They are receiving \$225,792 for those grants and for COVID testing. Combined with the loss from their operating budget that leaves them \$121,886 to the good. They are asking for a slight increase because they expect another shutdown. Their payroll in Johnson is \$70,000 a month, so that extra \$120,000 can be eaten quite quickly. They did not level fund because in his experience level funding means they would have to ask for larger increases in the future. They received \$22,800 from the state for hazard pay to employees. All of that goes to employees. NEMS loses money on that because they have to pay portions for workers comp, social security, etc.

Kyle asked, the increase is because they are projecting there will be a shutdown and a loss of revenue, not because they need the extra money for equipment, etc? Scott said the cost of salaries, fuel, insurance, etc. is increasing. They are looking at money from COVID grants and testing to get them through this fiscal year. He expects that in the next couple of months they will eat up a major portion of that. Kyle asked, what if they don't? Scott said there are different ways they could use the extra money. They could talk to selectboards about lowering their budgets or they could use it in capital expense accounts to avoid increases for future years

Kyle said the increasing trend in cost is concerning for us. Scott Griswold said 3% is basically the cost of living increase and they have no clue whether they will have any of their grant funding left over the next few months because call volume is down. For 17% of their year they were pretty much shut down for transports and 911 calls were way down.

Regarding mutual aid, Scott said we can get statistics from the State of Vermont. So far this year they have provided mutual aid 56 times and received it 44 times. Mutual aid is something all services depend on. NEMS has two crews for one 12-hour shift and one crew for the other 12-hour shift. They have no idea when calls will come in. If they went to more crews they would have to have huge budget increases. He does not think there is an issue with NEMS receiving more mutual aid than in the past.

Nat asked if it is possible that the mutual aid NEMS is receiving is coming disproportionately from one surrounding town and not necessarily going back to that town but being provided to other towns. Scott said mutual aid is set up based on the location of the call. Morristown and Cambridge are the neighboring communities. He thinks Morristown receives mutual aid from NEMS and from Stowe and Cambridge receives it from NEMS and from Fairfax. Nat said if there was an impression that Morrisville was giving an unusual amount of mutual aid to

Johnson and Hyde Park and not getting as much mutual aid it could be because NEMS is providing more mutual aid to Cambridge. Scott said he can get that information but the bulk of mutual aid NEMS provides still goes to Morristown. Nat asked, you are not feeling you are understaffed or staffed less now than in the past? Scott said no. There have always been two crews for the day shift and one for the evening shift. They have no control over when calls come in. *(Scott Griswold left at 8:40.)*

10. Racial Justice Committee and Law Enforcement Study Committee Request Minute Takers

Brian said the Racial Justice Committee and the Law Enforcement Study Committee have both requested funds to hire a professional minute taker. The Law Enforcement Study Committee is an intermunicipal group so presumably we would only be paying a share of the cost. The racial Justice Committee is a town and village committee and we could request village support if we desire.

Mike said he supports the request. It is hard for someone within the meeting to take minutes. That may result in cursory minutes. With a dedicated minute taker we get a full reading of what happens.

Kyle agreed. She said she thinks it is important to support our committees in this way. Where in our budget does it come from? Do we have a line for minute taking? Brian said we have a line for minute taking for the DRB and the Planning Commission. We don't have line items for minute taking for these two groups. He doesn't believe the cost will be too high. He believes we can afford it.

Nat said he agrees with Mike and Kyle but he also thinks that if we approve this we need to be prepared for other town committees to ask for the same. Brian said that would start to add up to something that we can't afford in the middle of this budget year. Nat said we should have some distinction about when we do and don't provide funds for minute taking. Doug said another item on the agenda is the Historical Society asking for administrative help. Kyle said she thinks the Rec Committee could also use minute taking help.

Doug said he feels it is important for these organizations to have a record. He is in favor of this. Kyle said especially while meetings are being held remotely, the more transparent and communicative we can be, the better

Mike moved and Kyle seconded to pay a share of the cost for minute takers for the Racial Justice and Law Enforcement Study Committees, sharing the cost with the other municipalities involved.

Rick Aupperlee said he would like to be in congruence as much as possible with VLCT and open meeting law requirements. So he supports a transparent, objective and impartial assessment and transcription of Racial Justice Committee meetings. He would like the board to consider the request from both committees.

Beth Foy said her initial thought was similar to Nat's. If we open this up for two new committees existing committees will want the same thing. The board needs to be unbiased in the way funds for minute taking are allocated. If they approve it for some groups they should

approve it for all. She believes Zoom will give a transcript from the recording. She has seen the output. It gets words correct most of the time. It doesn't always assign the right person's name. She would encourage the town to use transcription services like what Zoom or other technology offers for all committees. That would save money. She would guess that it would cost less than paying a minute taker. She would caution the board to vote thinking about all committees, not just one or two groups.

Scott Meyer said he would caution about including the Racial Justice Committee and the Law Enforcement Study Committee in the same motion. The village has no gain from the Law Enforcement Study Committee. He does think we need really good notes from the Racial Justice Committee but he is wondering about using technology for a written transcript and how that would work. He would support it as a trustee but he can't speak for the other trustees. The trustees don't have a say in the Law Enforcement Study Committee. Nat said his understanding of the motion was that the cost share for the Racial Justice Committee would be with the village and the cost share for the Law Enforcement Study Committee would be with the other two towns that have members on the committee. Mike agreed. Doug said that is what he understood also.

Rick said the Racial Justice Committee will be asking the trustees for support at their next meeting. They have only had one meeting, which was informal and informational. They have one coming up on Thursday night. They appreciate the selectboard considering this given that they have a meeting coming up.

Mike said we haven't decided who the minute taker is going to be. We need to do a cost analysis of what Beth is talking about – getting the transcript from Zoom versus using an individual. Are we just going to move forward in concept and decide who will do the minutes at a later time? Doug said his understanding is that the motion doesn't have any designation as to who the minute taker is.

Kyle said when we look into doing this we should look into whether a transcript is a legitimate way of documenting the meeting. Brian said the Recreation Committee tried to use transcription from a recording device and found it pretty unsatisfactory. It was very difficult to get the speaker right and it took a lot of editing time. Zoom could be a lot better; he doesn't have experience with that.

Diana Osborn said as a member of the Law Enforcement Study Committee she feels she would get minimal value from a transcript of the meeting. There would be an enormous amount of irrelevant information to plow through. That would not meet her needs. She would rather have a minute taker record the minimum amount of notes required legally than have a word-for-word transcript to plow through.

Nat said he sees the points people are making about the importance of good minutes but he doesn't think we have a full understanding of what this would cost us, especially once other committees start asking. He thinks he will probably vote no for this reason.

Lois Frey said as far as she understands, recording meetings and having minutes are part of open meeting law. Brian agreed. There is a requirement to have both a recording and minutes from all meetings held electronically. Recording is not a requirement for in-person meetings. But minutes are required for every meeting.

Nat said the baseline expectation is that all committees will follow open meeting law. Minutes are required but they can be pretty minimal, showing attendance, when the meeting starts and ends and any motions. This isn't about whether to follow open meeting law. It is about whether to pay a minute taker.

Mike said many years ago when he was a village trustee the board would have one page of cursory minutes for a many hour meeting. Those minutes were legal but did not tell much about what actually happened. The minutes we have been getting lately provide a narrative and allow everyone to figure out the true sense of the meeting. But Nat makes a good point. We are going to open up Pandora's box. Everyone will want a professional minute taker. Possibly we should look into how we can fund that and how much it will cost us. Brian had mentioned that we don't really have a line item for this. Brian said we have it only for the groups the DRB, the Planning Commission and the selectboard. Nat said those three groups have statutory obligations under state law. Brian said that is right. It is not unreasonable that any of those groups might end up in court. There is an argument to be made for providing a minute taker for all our committees but at this point in the budget cycle we could not afford that for everyone.

Lisa Crews said if smaller committees could provide more minutes there might be more interest from the community.

Mike said he agrees in concept with the motion he made but paying for it is another story. He thinks we need to decide how to pay for it before we vote to approve it.

Rick said he appreciates that the board is considering that many committees may want a professional minute taker but at this point in the budget cycle he thinks the selectboard could approve it on a case-by-case basis. He agrees with Mike that this should be budgeted for in the long term. He thinks given the way we are now holding the majority of public meetings, clarity is important. Maybe the board should just consider it on a case-by-case basis while looking toward a longer term solution.

Doug said the Law Enforcement Study Committee will be making a report. Their minutes will be very important in town meeting. And he thinks the Racial Justice Committee needs a record. He understands the slippery slope but he feels this is essential.

Kyle said she agrees. These two committees are before us now. She thinks it is incredibly important that both the committees have good notes. If we can find the money to pay a minute taker for these two now she thinks we should move forward with it.

The motion was passed in a roll call vote with Kyle, Doug and Nat voting yes and Mike voting no. Mike said he would have voted for it if we had funding for it.

11. Healthcare Cost Increases

Brian said the healthcare cost increase is considerably more modest this year. The Blue Cross Blue Shield Gold plan, which is what we use as a basis for cost sharing with employees, has risen by 2.4%. Mike asked what the average cost is for employees. Brian said most employees are on a two-person plan. We were paying about \$17,000 a person last year and that will go up by 2.4%.

12. Scheduling and Agenda for Joint Meeting to Discuss Healthcare and Compensation for Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk

Brian said the selectboard and trustees will have to discuss pay and benefits for Susan and Rosemary at a joint meeting. It is worth thinking about our commitment to keeping costs equal for all office employees, which has been a priority in the past. The trustees had asked Meredith and Gordy to meet with Eric and Brian to draw up reports and models for the joint meeting. With Gordy and Eric out of town Rosemary, Meredith and Brian met and worked out scenarios that they will bring to the joint meeting.

13. COVID Response Update

Nat said the emergency management team met today, mostly in response to the governor's latest order, which said that to the maximum extent possible municipal governments should reinstitute work from home. He thinks our office staff will now work alternating days in smaller groups, socially distanced with masks. Access for essential business continues to be by appointment only. We have asked our highway crew not to share vehicles. Otherwise their work is already pretty socially distant and we are not able to have them work in shifts.

Brian said interior access to the municipal building will be more highly restricted than it has been. There will be two separate teams of office staff. On any given day people should be able to receive most services by phone but with fewer people in the office they may need to leave a phone message more often. We will make greater use of dropping documents outside for people.

Nat said 34 cases have been reported in Lamoille County in the last 2 weeks and 1 to 5 cases were reported from Johnson very recently. This should be taken seriously. The public needs to know that they need to do masking and social distancing and limit Thanksgiving gatherings.

14. Scheduling and Agenda for Joint Meeting to Discuss Healthcare and Compensation for Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk (continued)

Brian said November 23 would be a good day for the joint meeting. If the two boards come to an agreement on healthcare then, that gives employees a good amount of time to make their healthcare selections. Board members agreed that November 23 would work for a joint meeting. Brian said the trustees always prefer to meet at 6:00.

Nat asked if at the joint meeting the boards could review maintenance needs for jointly owned properties, including the cold storage building, the house used by the scouts and the municipal building.

Kyle asked if we are in a position to talk about the merger study again. Brian said he can put a call out to the consultant and ask for an update. Mike said probably there will be no town meeting except by Australian ballot. Probably the best thing would be to put the merger study

out with the ballots for town meeting. Nat suggested that could be discussed at the joint meeting.

Doug said the village garage is a town and village owned building and it sounds like there might be exceptional costs coming up for that building. He asked if Brian has suggestions about what portion of that might have been studied or talked about during the area-wide Brownfields study. Brian said he thinks that is a good topic for the meeting. It came up during the Brownfields study. It didn't seem practical at the time to repurpose that site but before the village invests a lot of money it may be worth talking about. Doug said he read the most recent trustee board minutes. It sounds like that is a sick building with black mold and it needs to be almost destroyed or have a new wall built inside.

Scott Meyer said the situation with the building is bad. He does not like to use the words "black mold." No mold samples were taken. It is health department protocol not to sample for mold. If you see it, you have it. The best way to deal with it is to remove all water damaged materials and rebuild from the studs up. That is a huge project. There are some bandaid approaches you can use to alleviate problems. He promised Meredith he would try to come up with a few ideas based on his background. He is not sure what the cost will be, but it will be expensive it is not clear what the other buildings in that area have for air quality and mold buildup. The village garage does have visible mold, wet insulation and sheetrock and a dripping roof.

Mike said the town garage isn't the best in the world either. He thinks it would be better if we had a study and looked for grant money and looked into building one big building for both the town and village. There would be savings even if the town and village merged. Space would still be needed for the water and light department so nothing would be lost. He thinks we would see a gain with efficiencies.

Scott said it is a huge conversation. They can do a tear-out of the garage but the slab of the building will still be there and he guesses that it doesn't have a vapor barrier and will still wick moisture into the building. Is it more doable to have one building – to start from scratch and bond for a rebuild? The current site is something of an eyesore and a little chaotic. It looks like an old factory site because that is what it is. It is not the best introduction to our village. Either path we take will be expensive. There are no standards for mold because reactions to it depend on individual immune systems. Some people can handle it and some can't. The CDC and the EPA have good information on moldy buildings. The EPA has a timeline for wet materials in buildings and we are way over that. Nothing in there with the exception of the steel is really salvageable.

Nat said we are very possibly headed toward the same path with the cold storage building. At another meeting he would like to know who actually owns the buildings and what the maintenance agreement on the two buildings has been over the years.

Scott suggested it might be worth looking into whether there is any money we could get through the Brownfields program to clean the buildings up. Brian said it appears there is some funding available for a new developer. If we go down the path recommended by the

Brownfields committee – redeveloping that property and relocating the municipal employees – we may be able to access money for redeveloping for a new purpose. Kyle said she recalls the consultants recommended that that be the first area we consider redeveloping since it is important to the rail trail and we already own it.

Doug said Lea Kilvadyova ran the Brownfields advisory committee. She would be a good person to involve in a discussion like this. She would add a lot of information at the joint meeting if this were a subject. Brian said he will suggest this to Meredith as a topic for the joint meeting with the suggestion to invite Lea as a guest speaker.

15. October 2020 Sheriff's Report

Mike read some information from the October 2020 sheriff's report. Hyde Park had 13 tickets and 19 warnings. Johnson had 5 tickets and 26 warnings. Wolcott had 5 tickets and 5 warnings. Elmore had 1 ticket and 3 warnings. Hyde Park had 5 arrests, Johnson had 7, and Wolcott had zero.

16. Historical Society Request for Staff Support

Brian said the Historical Society has a lot of projects they would like to do but they are reaching the limits of what they can accomplish using volunteers. They would like to use some staff time. Brian had mentioned to Duncan that Lisa Crews is down a little on her hours because of the cancellation of recreation activities. If the board and Lisa are willing we might assign some of her time to assisting the Historical Society. Her job description would have to be modified. We are under budget for Lisa's time.

Mike said he thought the Historical Society was supposed to take care of themselves. Nat said he wouldn't want to leave it open-ended. He would want specifics on project scope and time. The Law Enforcement Study Committee had also asked if there were staff resources to help them out. It could be that other committees would want staff time. Kyle said she agrees with Nat that it would be pretty important to make sure we are clear about the timeline and that Lisa is not in the middle of a Historical Society project and unable to work on recreation when recreation is able to be up and running again.

Doug asked Lisa what she thinks of this. Lisa said she is happy to help with whoever needs it. She is hoping to develop the multi-use hiking and biking trail system Walter Pomroy started. She can't think of a time otherwise when she would be able to work on developing that and there are other recreation things she could develop while she has downtime. But she would be happy to help here and there as needed.

Brian said it sounds like maybe we need to ask the Historical Society if they have a specific request with a timeline. Doug said it sounded like Lisa had uncommitted time but that may not be the case. She may be doing important work now. We need to look at that aspect too.

17. Executive Session to Discuss Ongoing Negotiations of Improved Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Building and Naming Rights

Mike moved to go into executive session to discuss ongoing negotiations regarding an improved Lamoille Valley Rail Trail building and naming rights as Allowed by 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1), Nat seconded, the motion was passed and the board entered executive session at 9:46. The board came out of executive session at 10:13.

Mike moved and Nat seconded to seek an Act 250 amendment for Old Mill Park and to make a request to VTrans for work in the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail right of way. The motion was passed.

18. Executive Session to Discuss Employee Evaluation

Mike moved to go into executive session to discuss employee evaluation as allowed by 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3), Nat seconded, the motion was passed and the board entered executive session at 10:17. The board came out of executive session at 10:42.

19. Adjourn

Mike moved to adjourn at 10:42, Kyle seconded and the motion was passed.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths

UNAPPROVED