

JOHNSON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MONDAY, MARCH 19, 2018

Present:

Selectboard Members: Mike Dunham, Nat Kinney, Doug Molde, Kyle Nuse, Eric Osgood
Others: Brian Story, Rosemary Audibert, Brian Krause, Anne Mullins, Raymond Gilcris, Lois Frey, Charles Gallanter, Heather Rodriguez, Kerri O'Halloran, one other Recreation Committee member, Howard Romero, Duncan Hastings, Dean West, David Butler, Scott Griswold, Eric Nuse

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. Call to Order

Eric called the meeting to order at 7:00.

2. Additions, Changes to Agenda

Brian added Conservation Commission appointments. Kyle added a review of town meeting.

3. Review and Approve Minutes of Meetings Past

Doug moved to approve the minutes of February 12, February 16, February 18, February 20, February 26, March 6, and March 7, 2018, Nat seconded, and the motion was passed with Kyle and Mike abstaining because they were not at all those meetings.

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

Rosemary said to date expenses are at 65% of budget and income is at 91%. In April the state tax department will send us a true-up for school taxes. We still haven't received the bill from Tatro.

Rosemary distributed the list of delinquent taxes for last year. The tax sale date hasn't been set yet. Last year it was the middle of May. Probably it will be after that. Current taxes are 77.39% collected.

Nat moved to approve liquor licenses for Johnson State College, River Valley Store, Jolley, Johnson Sterling Market, Bitternut Mountain, Maplefields, and Downtown Pizzeria (with outside consumption), Kyle seconded and the motion was passed.

Rosemary said there will be a recount of the elementary school budget vote on Wednesday.

5. Road Commissioner / Road Foreman Report and Action Items

Brian K. apologized for not bringing up the overtime situation at the last meeting. He intended to bring it up before he went over the allotted amount of overtime, but he didn't. A couple of employees have gone over the 300 hours, partly due to the winter weather and partly due to using up hours in summer to accomplish projects. Employees don't want to get comp time; they want to be paid overtime. He needs to ask if that is possible.

Eric said it would require board approval to go over the 300 hour limit. The issue is that we will potentially have a deficit this year. If we do, we will have to take that amount out of next year's budget in addition to the \$30K we have to reduce the budget by. If we overspend out of this line item that is more we will have to take out of the budget next year.

Brian K. asked if he can underspend in another item this year to make up for overspending on overtime. Eric said that would balance the highway department budget but it all comes out of the same budget. It would help, but the board may ask Brian to underspend anyway. We have to cut \$30K from the budget. If we cut out the fifth employee and authorize increasing the amount of comp time that could put us in trouble with having enough people in summer to do the work. Depending what we do with next year's budget we will have to line up this year's budget to match with it. Probably the board will have a dedicated work session meeting on the budget next week. Eric would recommend holding off on decisions about overtime and comp time until then.

Brian S. said Raymond has pretty much reached the limit for comp time and overtime. Chris is in a similar boat and he doesn't need more vacation time since he is retiring in a month. The highway department won't be able to get the necessary work done if there is a storm. It would be helpful for the board to give them a little relief until the work session meeting.

Anne said she looked at labor laws and they say when covered employees work in excess of 40 hours they must be paid at least 1 ½ times their regular wage rate. They don't have to take comp time. Why are they even taking comp time when labor laws say they have to be paid overtime if they want it? Eric said some are maxed out on overtime. Anne said there is no such thing according to Vermont labor laws.

Eric asked when the pay period starts. Rosemary said Thursday.

Charles asked how employees can be maxed out on overtime. Brian S. said we have a policy limiting employees to 300 overtime hours in a year. We can't force them to take comp time or unpaid time so if they reach that limit then their only options are to take comp time or not work the overtime.

Mike said there are 300 hours of overtime budgeted every year. Somehow employees always get 300 hours. Raymond said when he started the max was 600 hours. We had 3 or 4 easy winters and people said we didn't need that much. Doug said his recollection is that there was a time when there was a lot more overtime being paid and there was a big push to deal with salary and overtime. The selectboard tried to push it backward to get more control.

Brian K. said he understands the 300 hour limit. He takes responsibility for not keeping overtime under that. Now we are at that point where he won't have the workers to accomplish what he needs to accomplish if there is a storm and employees can't get paid overtime.

Eric asked if Brian can wait until next week. Nat said he thinks we need to do something for this week. Eric asked, will everyone be over 40 hours by Thursday? If a storm comes this weekend employees won't have extra hours until later in the week and we will have time to react. If it snows this weekend the first 40 hours will be straight time. Brian K. said that is not how it works. Hours worked on the weekend are overtime because employees are not scheduled to be working.

Brian said he doesn't think we will need any overtime this week but he would suggest authorizing 10 hours per person until next Monday.

Doug moved and Mike seconded to authorize 10 additional hours of overtime per person for highway department employees in this pay period, with any unused portion to expire after March 26.

Anne asked, what about Raymond, who was forced to take 40 hours of comp time last week? Will he get paid for that? He doesn't want comp time. Brian K. said the highway department met with Brian S. and he explained that nothing could be changed before meeting with the board, so the overtime Raymond worked went into his comp bank. Eric said that is a separate issue from the motion on the floor. Mike asked if labor laws address this. This is actually kind of a contract between employees and an employer. Does labor law supersede? Anne said the employee policy doesn't say employees have to take comp time. It doesn't say there is a limit of 300 hours. Vermont law says they are to be paid. The town is breaking the law if they make a limit.

The motion was passed.

Eric said if he remembers correctly Hyde Park manages its highway work with 200 hours of overtime. They have a similar amount and type of roads. He asked if we can reach out and find out how they are doing it. Do they have a larger crew? Do they plow less?

Brian K. handed out equipment price lists from 3 local contractors – Tatro, Dodge, and Percy. If we ever get a FEMA event, the state and FEMA like to see the town using a contractor whose price list has been pre-approved for the first 70 hours. That way we know we are not getting ripped off because it is an emergency. Eric asked if it is Brian's recommendation that the board approve all the contractor price lists. Brian K. said he recommends approving all of them. We will select which contractor to use depending on the event. (*Howard Romero arrived at 7:27.*) Doug asked if this could be put on a future agenda so the board could study the price lists. Eric asked Brian S. to get copies of the price lists for board members.

6. *Administrator's Report and Action Items*

Eric said the voters are requiring us to cut our budget by \$30K. There are a lot of ways we could do it. It is a little over 1% of our budget. We could in theory cut every line item 1%, but that doesn't work in practice. For instance, we can't make a 1% cut in the amount we have to pay for insurance. We could cut large ticket items. Or we could go through line by line and find smaller amounts to cut along with a significant cut to add up to \$30K. Tonight we will take testimony from people who may be impacted by whatever cut we make and we will have a special board meeting next Monday to discuss the budget. He has heard from Scott Griswold that the NEMS budget is all or nothing. If we cut the NEMS budget we will just not be in the contract. Roger Marcoux is willing to make cuts but the cuts would have to be spread among all participating towns.

Anne said her first thought is to cut contributions to all those non-profits that ask for money, except for Home Health because they do so much. Eric said those contributions total about

\$30K. Anne said Home Health is very important. She feels the rest can be cut. She hates to see the town cut the fifth person for the highway department. She thinks that is needed because Brian K. has so many responsibilities that he is not able to help the crew with work that much. She would give up her raise to get the fifth person. She feels it is important for the highway employees' mental health.

Lois said she also wants to support the highway department. Having safe and good roads is very important. She would hate to see the fifth person gone. It seems like we have hit the balance point where a fifth person could make a big difference. She feels it would not be unreasonable to cut some of the money budgeted for each group. The Conservation Commission talked about their budget. They got more money this year than last year and they would be willing to give that back. (*Duncan Hastings arrived at 7:33.*) Susan Lovering couldn't be here, but the Tree Board could get by if \$150 were cut from its budget, though they would rather not see that cut.

Kerri O'Halloran said the Recreation Committee definitely doesn't want to see their budget cut. They think they have been underfunded for a long time. They feel they could afford a 15% cut to the growth part of their budget, but not more than that. (*Dean West and David Butler arrived at 7:35.*)

Duncan Hastings said the Historical Society budget is a little different from that of many other groups in that they raise the vast majority of the money themselves. They aren't making a specific recommendation for the selectboard to cut. In fairness they think the only piece the selectboard should look at would be the increase in their budget due to tax revenues. The net increase from last year to this year was \$1235. They strongly feel that is the piece the board should look at if they are going to make any cuts at all.

Another thing the Historical Society wants the board to think about is the difference between estimated and actual expenses and revenues for 2017-18. The estimated difference between revenues and expenses was \$1850 but the actual difference could be as low as \$1285, so on June 30, instead of receiving \$1850 from the town the Historical Society would only get \$1285. The difference of \$565 is way more than 10 or 20%. That \$565 is as much real money available to the town as anything cut from next year's budget. He encourages the board to look at that before going after the increase to next year's Historical Society budget. He thinks the Historical Society has already made a considerable contribution if they get less from the town at the end of this year than they did the previous year.

Dean said he thinks the focus should be on that part of the Historical Society's revenue that they get from taxes. They are willing to sacrifice some of what they get from the town.

Brian S. said what he emailed the Recreation Committee was the difference between the revenue they generated and their expenses. Kerri said that amount was \$1486.

Brian S. said he worked up two budget proposals. There are 2 groups that couldn't be here tonight. The library does not feel they can cut anything without reducing services too much. The Lamoille County Planning Commission said if we do not pay their full amount we will

still be a member, but the process for us working with them will get more complicated. Their board will have to determine some fee for service for work with us and their board will need to approve any work they do for us.

Lois asked, is that if we send them nothing? Brian S. said that applies even if we short them by a penny. There is no difference in their bylaws between anything less than the full amount and zero. David Butler asked what the full amount is. Brian said he would look it up.

Eric asked about the skate park. Brian S. said the skate park has reduced spending for next year.

Brian S. said our payment to LCPC is \$1,877.

Eric said one line item pertaining to the Planning Commission is an amount for a meeting minute taker. He thinks that is about \$1500. He highly recommends that the Planning Commission have a meeting minute taker. David said Phil Wilson is willing to take minutes. Eric said he has always felt it is difficult to participate while also doing meeting minutes. David said that was the choice of the Planning Commission. He doesn't know what it would cost to have an independent minute taker. They could look into it.

David said he feels the LCPC payment is very important. The Planning Commission relies on LCPC a lot. Meghan Rodier of LCPC is currently coming to every meeting to help the Planning Commission work on the energy chapter of the town/village plan. He would like to see the payment to LCPC maintained, especially going into the future with work on the Jewett property and possibly form based code.

Duncan said the town will also have a lot of extra requirements with the Municipal Roads General Permit. LCPC has been instrumental in the past with mapping and consultant services. He is the town's representative to LCPC.

David said if we don't pay LCPC we will end up spending a lot more or spinning our wheels.

Doug said he wonders about mud abatement. We thought that program was really important. Brian K. said he and Brian S. discussed cutting that some. Doug said part of the cost for mud abatement is personnel and part is materials. If we don't do the projects, we would probably still have the personnel costs. Brian K. said we also have to pay to hire a contractor to do some work. Eric said he believes the amount budgeted for mud abatement is about \$30K.

7. *Planning Commission Report*

David said the Planning Commission is working through the energy chapter of the town/village plan. He expects they will probably see a rough draft at the next meeting. The changes being made strengthen our position in siting of renewable energy resources in the town.

David said he looks forward to working with the selectboard on getting form based code up and running if that is what the board chooses to do. If the board chooses to enact the code we

need to get the word out, come up with a board and an administrative officer and an application form. There is a lot of work to be done to enact the code.

The Planning Commission is willing to help with the Jewett property if that is needed. (*Anne, Raymond, Dean, and Duncan left at 7:53.*)

8. Administrator's Report and Action Items (continued)

The board agreed to schedule a budget related work session for Monday, March 26 at 7:00 pm. (*The 3 Recreation Committee members left at 7:53.*)

David said the Planning Commission has a vacant seat. Eben Patch has verbally resigned. Eric said it would be good to have that in writing. (*David left at 7:54.*)

Eric said he and Brian S. have discussed having working sessions most months for a while because we have a number of major projects. The board should plan on having a couple of meetings each month.

Scott Griswold arrived at 7:55. Eric invited him to comment on the budget. Scott said if the selectboard decided to cut 1% from the money given them they would have to reduce the other towns' contributions by the same amount. Last fall they presented two different budgets – one they really needed and one they thought they would accept – and all 5 towns went with the lower budget amount, so next year they are expecting a loss on top of the loss this year. They can't continue to do that year in and year out. The cost per capita for their services is \$31.83. Morristown's cost per capita for emergency services is \$71.17. One percent doesn't sound like a lot, but Johnson couldn't cut that and expect the other towns to pay more than Johnson. NEMS could probably survive a year with a 1% cut from all towns but they would have to increase the amount they asked for next year.

Lois asked about an insurance policy for emergency services that was offered to citizens a number of years ago. Was that not cost effective? Scott said the money that came in didn't cover the cost and very few people took advantage of it. (*Eric Nuse arrived at 8:00.*) NEMS gets paid 55 cents on the dollar for Medicare and 40 cents on the dollar for Medicaid. Those calls are 45% of their business and every time they go on one they lose money. (*Scott left at 8:01.*)

Nat said we spend \$26K a year on dust control. That seems high to him. He asked if Brian K. could give insight on why that is so necessary. Brian K. said dust control is to keep the fines on the road. Without the control it is really dusty and people complain. And that dust is the fines that bind the stones together. If roads are dusty for too long we lose the fines and the road surface. We grade less with the fines kept in place through dust control. Nat asked if that is an area where we could cut. Brian K. said he would rather not cut from there. Mike said we would end up paying more in grading. Brian K. agreed.

Brian S. said he had brought an updated purchase and sale agreement for the Jewett property. The board had asked Brian to approach the owner about the town starting regular payments after we finish making payments on the Holcomb House and he agreed to that. We will still

be financing the purchase over 5 years and will end payments on the same day, but principal payments will start January 6, after the close of the loan for the Holcomb House.

Mike moved to authorize the chair to sign the updated purchase and sale agreement for the Jewett property, seconded by Doug.

Charles Gallanter said he is a little concerned about the board's due diligence. One of the selling points was transportation. It was stated that trucks could leave the Jewett property and get on the interstate at Milton. He drove the road to Milton and found that it is a 24,000 pound road and it is now posted for the spring thaw. That negates the potential for using that road. He voted for the purchase because he was under the impression there would be a great transportation route. He is not clear what the 24,000 pound rule is. Brian S said that would be a weight limit. Brian K. said that would be the GVW limit. Brian S. said that is lower than he had believed it to be. Charles said what really caught his attention was that it was posted for the spring. The board was misled and failed to do due diligence, which raises questions in his mind about proposals that come from the selectboard. That is an expensive mistake.

Doug said vehicles can take Route 104 to St. Albans. That probably adds 17 miles. Mike said they don't have to go to Milton; they can go through Fairfax and Georgia. Charles said they want the shortest route. Mike said if you were headed north that would be the shortest route. Charles said John Mandeville said vehicles could get on at Milton. Mike said as far as he is concerned it's easier to get on in Georgia anyway. Howard said if someone was going south they wouldn't want to go through Milton anyway; they would want to go through Stowe. Brian S. said the time it takes to go through Stowe village is a concern. Howard said it would be interesting to see what the time would be for going left at Clark's to get to the interstate.

The motion was passed.

Brian said a question we still had about the proposed quit claim for the Sweetser property was about reference in the quit claim to a right of first refusal. That is not likely to be something we can actually exercise based on the way it was inherited and transferred. If the board is okay with the terms of the quit claim in principle he will post a notice that we intend to transfer our interest in the property. We need to make it public that we intend to transfer it and the board can sign off on it at a future meeting. **Doug moved to authorize Brian to post the town's intention to convey a corrective deed, Nat seconded and the motion was passed.**

Brian said the town had a request from a resident for a dead end sign on Lendway Lane. Nat asked if it could be put in a place where people on the rail trail won't think it applies to the rail trail. Brian K. said he will try to place it that way. The board agreed Brian K. should put up a dead end sign on Lendway Lane.

Brian S. said Howard had brought some suggestions to him about the detour on Rocky Road and Sinclair Road during the twin bridges project. Nat said he thought the state said their signage would not send people onto those roads. Eric said they admit locals will know their way around and will use those roads.

Brian S. said they are putting weight limits up on the road and bridge. We will be putting up some speed carts, maybe one in each direction. Brian is hoping Roger Marcoux can loan us one and we may have to rent a second.

Howard would like us to lower the speed limit on Sinclair Road to 25 mph. Howard said he heard when he was on the board that the state would not let the town lower a speed limit but he has asked people at AOT and they have told him the town can do it. Eric said it may require a traffic study. Brian S. said the state in general often seems to want to abdicate responsibility on town roads even for things they should be responsible for. Doug said he recalls hearing that we needed a town wide traffic study in order to change speed limits. He thought that might have been changed. Eric said he thinks we need a traffic study unless it is a school zone. It used to be that all unposted roads had a speed limit of 50 mph and they changed the law to allow towns to make the speed limit 35 mph without a traffic study if every entry into town was posted.

Nat said he would like to see if we can change the Sinclair Road speed limit to 25. There is a lot of foot traffic on that road. Eric said he thinks there may be a provision where we can temporarily reduce a speed limit. Maybe we can do that during construction. Doug said we have never looked at it from a temporary point of view. Let's look into it.

Brian S. said there is a proposed modification to the school bus route that would run over Scribner Bridge, but the buses would be over the weight limit we have for the bridge. Some board members said buses used to go over the bridge. Eric said our town truck goes over it. Brian S. said our town trucks are exempt.

Nat asked when construction starts. Brian S. said they would like to start as early as May 1. Howard said they have 40 days to stop traffic on 100C and force the detour. They will work 7 days a week, 12 hours a day. It is a short window.

Brian S. said he has heard the weight of a school bus is between 15,000 and 20,000 pounds.

Howard said no school kids live on Rocky or Sinclair roads now. Brian S. said they believe they will need to send a school bus over the bridge and they want the town to grant a permit to send an overweight vehicle over the bridge.

Mike moved and Kyle seconded to grant a permit for school buses over the weight limit to go over Scribner Bridge. Brian S. said he would like them to pay for an engineering study before we grant permission. Mike and Kyle agreed to a friendly amendment to say that the permit would be contingent on an engineering study. Doug suggested having the engineering study first and then revisiting the question. Mike and Kyle agreed to withdraw the motion. Brian S. said he will ask them to have an engineering study done.

Howard asked about the 25 mph speed limit. Eric said we will follow up and see if there is a provision for a temporary speed limit.

Doug said he represents the McCuin estate so he has to recuse himself from voting on accepting the deed for McCuin Island.

Brian said the deed for McCuin Island was reviewed by attorney Richard Fox. He found it a little odd. It does what we expected it to do but he thought it was a strange arrangement. The island is proposed to be given to the town. The River Conservancy would like to maintain it as a primitive camping site. The town didn't want to maintain or manage it but thought it would be okay to possess the island so as long as someone else would take care of it. The deed says that if we take some action that interferes with the River Conservancy's ability to access the island they can give us notice and after that they can take the property back from us. The issue is that there is no review of that other than by the River Conservancy. It doesn't obligate us to do anything, but it lets the property be taken by the River Conservancy with little review on our part. They could act in bad faith and there would be no third party to say that they had. But we had earlier expressed that we didn't want to own the property. (*Howard left at 8:33.*)

Eric asked if we can remove the River Conservancy's rights if they don't hold up their end of the bargain. Brian said that isn't in there. We could add it.

Charles asked, if the River Conservancy takes it back, do they pay taxes on it? Brian said he is not sure.

Lois asked, did something change since 2012 when the selectboard agreed to accept the property? Eric said no, the town hasn't had the property given to us yet since we agreed in concept to accept it. Brian said nothing has changed. Things have just progressed to the point where they are ready to transfer the property.

Lois said the members of the Conservation Commission look at it as a great site because of its location in the river. She is sure there would be members who would be willing to paddle over and maintain the site, just as they do on other properties we have.

Brian said the deed is not doing anything we weren't expecting it to do. It is just that this new lawyer thinks it is kind of a strange arrangement.

Eric Nuse described where the island is. He said it is built up of silt and sand maybe 6 feet above normal river height. Probably it will erode on one end and fill in on the other. We could never put anything permanent on it. The concept of the campsite is part of the Lamoille River Paddlers' Trail. The River Conservancy is their fiscal agent. There are stewards that take care of portage trails. Just upstream of that island the Paddlers' Trail has a campsite with a picnic table, toilet and sign. That is starting to erode away. The thought was that the downstream end of the island would be good place to camp. The campsite would just be a small cleared area. It is hard to imagine a scenario that could lead to what Brian was talking about.

Mike said there is no downside to this. Let's just move forward with it. **Mike moved to accept the deed to McCuin Island as presented, Nat seconded and the motion was passed with Doug recusing himself.**

Mike moved to approve the noise ordinance waiver requested by James Lawrence for a wedding at 505 Collins Hill Road on June 9 from 2:00 to 11:30, Nat seconded and the motion was passed.

Brian said the board should probably plan on having a work session each month in addition to the regular meetings. Do we want to set a particular time or do it as we go? Mike said we should do it as we go. Kyle said that seems to be working. (*Brian K. and Eric Nuse left at 8:45.*)

Brian said we got an opinion from our attorney that the passage in the form based code referring to Johnson Village form based code could be viewed as a typographic error. The code was probably trying to refer to itself. We can correct that without it being seen as a substantive change. If we made a substantive change it would have to be sent back to the Planning Commission. Since we are not planning on any substantive changes we are free to set up the second public hearing.

Doug asked, what about Charles Gallanter's point that the Planning Commission is missing a public hearing? Charles said that is not his point. He asked if Brian told the lawyer that in the minutes of the Planning Commission establishing the hearing it was stated that the Planning Commission would not allow changes to be made based on testimony at the hearing. That was in the minutes but at the hearing it was stated that changes could be made. Was that specific question addressed by the attorney? Brian said he believes it was. Charles asked if he had that in writing. Brian said no, it was part of a phone conversation.

Charles said he is willing to let the board move forward. Doug said we can sort this out. If the answer from the attorney is no then we have to redo steps. Mike asked, the changes made weren't big, were they? Charles said his concern was that people wanted to testify about changes they wanted but they didn't testify because they were told their voices wouldn't be heard.

The board agreed to schedule the second public hearing on form based code for next month's regular selectboard meeting.

Charles asked if there will be time between the public hearing and the selectboard's vote. Eric said he does not anticipate that there will be.

Charles said there can be a petition by 5% of the voters after the selectboard vote to undo what the selectboard did. He is going to try to petition in order to kill form based code entirely.

Brian asked if the board would like a statement in writing from our attorney about the validity of the Planning Commission's public hearing. Most board members said yes. Nat said he doesn't feel it is necessary.

Brian said Vermont Emergency Management offered to do a debrief and review on the ice jam. Eric said Emily from Vermont Emergency Management would provide us whatever we are looking for. It could be about a 3-hour "hotwash" meeting with department heads to critique what we did during the ice jam. Or it could be shorter. He thinks there would be the most value in the hotwash. Nat said Eric and Gordy won't always be here. If they hadn't been here he thinks we would not have been well-prepared. The more triage we can get, the better. He is in favor of the hotwash. Other board members agreed.

Kyle asked, if Gordy is not elected to the trustee board, will he still have his emergency management role? Eric said yes.

Eric suggested around 5:00 to 8:00 pm could be a good time for the meeting. He will reach out to Emily about scheduling.

Brian said he has spoken with Lea Kilvadyova about LCPC involvement in marketing and helping promote redevelopment of Railroad Street Brownfield sites. He and Meredith met with Lea and representatives from Vermont DEC. DEC is pretty satisfied with the monitoring we are currently doing on the talc mill site and the progress it is making. But we will need a Phase 1 assessment and probably a Phase 2 assessment, given what we know about contamination of the site. We could do a Phase 2 assessment on just the portion of the property we thought we would be likely to redevelop and sell. The recommendation from Lea is that we endorse the idea of doing a Phase 1 study that would look at historical documents.

Kyle said she was on the Brownfields steering committee and was under the impression that the firm hired to do the plan had done some study about contamination. Brian said we have a pretty good idea of what is there because of the monitoring we are doing but he doesn't think we have anything that will qualify as a Phase 1 study. But because of the work done in the past the study shouldn't take as long as it might on other sites.

Doug said we have a significant asset in the right spot and the first thing we need to do is have a Phase 1 assessment. We can do that on the whole property and we could just do the Phase 2 assessment on certain parts. This is an economic development move to move forward with a plan the consultants thought was doable. If we approve this hopefully the village would also.

Mike moved to do a Phase 1 assessment of the former talc mill site with no cost to the town, seconded by Doug. Charles asked how it can be done with no cost. Brian said LCPC will do it. **The motion was passed.**

The Lamoille County Sheriff's Department report was emailed out.

Brian said there are some current Act 250 projects and projects requiring wastewater permits. An existing lot on Fox Lot Road is being subdivided. A new building to serve as a wedding facility is being built by Jill and Eben Patch on Plot Road. John Peinert is converting a barn into a one-bedroom residence, which requires a wastewater permit change. He is doing a second project as well. Nat asked if we have the assessors going in to look at the changes. Brian said they get copies of these permit requests.

Kyle asked if there is an update on Dollar General. Rosemary said they purchased property.

Brian said he recently filled out a local impact report for some modifications to Landmark Tavern. It hasn't been filed and come back to him yet. The administrative amendment for the bike terrain park has been filed but not granted yet.

Eric asked the board to approve a proclamation for Chris Perkins on the day he retires. Nat moved to approve a proclamation declaring March 31 to be Chris Perkins Day, Mike seconded and the motion was passed.

9. Conservation Commission Appointments

Lois said two people have applied to serve on the Conservation Commission – Jackie Stanton, who served for a couple of terms and would like to come back, and Hilary Emick, whose family is new in town. Hilary has a background that complements everyone else's.

Nat moved to appoint Jackie Stanton and Hilary Emick to the Conservation Commission and the motion was seconded and passed.

10. Town Meeting Review

Kyle said she thought it would be good to debrief after town meeting and get people's thoughts on how it went. Eric said it was the longest one anyone remembers – without the school board. And it was the first time he ever recalls a motion to reduce the town budget being approved. It was a little disconcerting to him who made and seconded that motion. In the past there was always an unwritten professional courtesy that one board didn't undermine the other's budget.

Doug said he thinks next year Eric should talk about where the board made cuts in response to the motion to decrease the budget, why we made those cuts, and what the effect was. Eric agreed.

Doug said he thinks the school budget passing by 2 votes is an indication of how voters were feeling about the budget. We know these are hard times. Lois said she thinks part of what affected the school vote was that people aren't participating in any planning around the school. Most people don't know who the school board members are. The new school board hasn't integrated into our town. Perhaps they could do that better. Eric said Dave Williams suggested providing a platform for school board members similar to what we provide for legislators during town meeting. Kyle said the school board does little outreach in outlets like Front Porch Forum. Doug said town residents don't feel part of the school. He thinks people were influenced by the pressure from the state to consolidate, the effect of CLA on taxes, and the idea that we are building a school for Hyde Park.

Nat said he would like to figure out a better time for legislators to speak. It kills the momentum of the meeting if the discussion is interrupted for them to speak and then we break for lunch. Mike agreed. Nat said he thought the time allotted for lunch was long. Eric said he thinks it was too long. Nat suggested maybe people could talk to legislators during lunch. Doug said maybe they could address the whole room during lunch. Kyle said hearing from the legislators uses up a lot of time. She asked if we are their last stop. Eric said he thinks Rich Westman goes on to Cambridge after Johnson.

Lois suggested there could be a candidates' forum in advance of town meeting. We could get information out before petitions are due. No one even runs for open offices. Eric said we had not one contested election this year.

Kyle said she wanted to talk to Dave Williams about paying a little more attention to what she considered inappropriate behavior in the back toward the end of the meeting. There was loud joking and laughing which was disruptive and made it hard to hear what people were saying. Eric said he thought people were participating better during the first half of the meeting because there were no tables out. Once tables are out many people sit further back. Board members suggested picking up the tables after lunch.

Brian said he thinks we should do something to make it obvious which people are not town residents. Some towns use orange stickers. His other thought is that it might be better to have wireless mikes and runners to take them to people instead of a mike stand in the center. A lot of people are reluctant to get up and move.

Doug said he thinks we should write a letter thanking Mark Woodward and everyone who helped to make pizzas and ask if they would make them again next year. He said it still felt like we were a community after the meeting, even though there were divisive issues. Kyle said coffee, pie and cake sold out and the childcare was always full. Rosemary said she thought it was a good meeting. The number of people there was a little more than average. There were good comments and most of the time people were respectful. Lois said many different people spoke. Kyle said she felt there were more diverse age groups represented than in the past. It makes her feel the communication is probably helping. This year childcare was completely full the entire time. Last year there were just a couple of kids. Doug said the demographic with children is important. We have a significant population of young people here compared to a lot of communities.

11. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths