

JOHNSON VILLAGE TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2013

Present:

Trustees: Gordon Smith (6:39), Ellis O’Hear, Walter Pomroy, David Goddette

Others: Rosemary Audibert (Clerk), Troy Dolan, Tom Elwood, Steve Edgerly

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. Call to Order

Walter called the meeting to order at 6:13.

2. Changes, Additions to Proposed Agenda

As Gordy and Chris were not present, it was agreed that some items would probably be postponed and a work session meeting planned.

3. Review and Approve Minutes of Meetings Past

Ellis moved to approve the minutes of February 9, 18, and 25, 2015, David seconded, and the motion was passed.

4. Treasurer’s Report: Review and Approve Bills and Warrants / Budget Status Report / Any Action Items

Rosemary said she didn’t have a budget status report as she was waiting for the auditors to close out some journal entries. She will probably have it by the end of March.

David moved to authorize Walter as vice chair to sign the engagement letter with auditors Besaw and Associates, Ellis seconded, and the motion was passed.

Rosemary distributed the delinquent tax report. All delinquent taxes have been turned over to the attorney for collection. A tax sale is tentatively set for July 14.

David moved to place a lien on Cathy Duncan’s property for \$226.18 in unpaid water and sewer bills, Ellis seconded, and the motion was passed.

David moved to place a lien on Alice Godin’s property for \$66.60 in unpaid water and sewer bills, Ellis seconded, and the motion was passed.

Ellis moved to place a lien on Daniel Benoit’s property for \$360.82 in unpaid water and sewer bills, David seconded, and the motion was passed.

Rosemary said the auditor could not find a signed warrant for some fire department paychecks so the board needs to resign the warrant. **Ellis moved and David seconded to sign the orders for the fire department paychecks from June 2014 and the motion was passed.**

Rosemary is working on the village report. Duncan wrote dedications for it. It will go out at the end of the month.

5. ***WWTF Chief Operator Report and Action Items***

Tom said the water and wastewater plants have been running well. There were no callouts in the past month for the wastewater plant. Steve went to school for optimizing pump stations. Tom went to CPR training. There were a few callouts.

There is one frozen line we need to decide if we own. His feeling is that it is the homeowner's line. It is a 4-inch line and if it is ours it would be our only 4-inch line.

Duncan called in at 6:24. Board members told him it would probably be an abbreviated session and he would probably not be needed but they would call or email him if he was.

Tom gave more information about the line that froze, a 4-inch PVC line running along Railroad St. to Diane Geoffroy's house. The line has been cleaned and de-iced twice now and each time we had to wait two days before Hartigan could come out. During the wait, the force main froze. Originally this line was attached to the Wescom house's line. Walter said that indicates to him that it cannot be our line. We would never have accepted as ours a line that attached to line that was not ours before connecting to ours.

Tom said Stowe Insurance has a broken lateral sewer line. They have been told it is their problem. They currently have no sewer. They had portable toilets delivered. It has been weeks since the break and it hasn't been repaired.

Tom said we have \$600 in bills for thawing out the Geoffroy line. Should he bill the property owner? Walter said it is our policy that if we determine the line is the property owner's responsibility then it their responsibility to fix it. There is no evidence that we ever accepted the line in question as ours and it seems unlikely that we ever would have accepted it.

Tom said there is no permit on file for that hookup and if the property owner filed for a permit he doesn't feel he would sign off on it without significant repairs. The line is only 3 feet deep. Tom said the hookup is from 1983. Walter said at that point they wouldn't have had to have a permit, but if they want to sell that property they will have to have a permit.

David and Ellis agreed that if there is no history of the village assuming ownership of the line that the homeowner should be responsible for the bills.

Gordy arrived at 6:39 after responding to a fire call and took over as chair.

Walter moved that the village reaffirm its position that it does not own the 4-inch PVC line running along Railroad St. and that the repair costs are the responsibility of the Geoffroys and Tom should bill them for the work done, seconded by David and the motion was passed.

The board asked Tom to inform the homeowner of the board's decision.

Tom said we are up to 26% water loss, though that could be skewed because this month's meter reading took longer than usual due to deep snow. But he thinks we have been pumping

a little more than we should be since the college leak. He is looking for leaks. He likes to keep loss below 25%.

Tom said a line to the Travis Hill property froze where it goes under Legion Field. The homeowner dug it up. They are claiming it froze after the town plowed snow off the field. The line is only 3 feet deep. Duncan has talked to them and we have assisted them. Tom doubts any easement can be found for that line. He suggested they tap off the school line.

A house on Gillen Ave. has low water pressure. The homeowner claims water pressure has been low since a town truck went off the road in their driveway area. Tom told them they need to dig it up and then they can file a claim with the town if they need to. He said we have done all we can do. If we see a leak we will identify it and ask the homeowner to fix it.

Travis Hill was advised to trickle his water for another month or so to prevent re-freezing of his line. He has asked if the board would be willing to consider adjusting his water and sewer bills if they are really high. Tom said we can't shut off the curb stop. We tried, but it doesn't shut off. Troy saw someone who was not a village employee manipulating the curb stop. That might have damaged it.

Walter said this is an extraordinary year and Travis Hill is making an effort to fix his problem but he can't fix it completely until it is warmer. **Walter moved that if Travis Hill has excess water and sewer usage his bill will be adjusted to a 12-month average until such time as he can reasonably fix the leak or danger of the line freezing has passed.** Gordy said he believes Hyde Park has a policy of letting people run their water because it is cheaper than fixing frozen pipes. We might want to think about that rather than handling it on a case-by-case basis. **Ellis seconded and the motion was passed.**

Tom said we recently had our state sanitary survey for water (an inspection of our water system by the state.)

Walter asked if cold affects the plant. Tom said yes. The nitrification process doesn't work below 10 degrees Celsius in the reactors. Our phosphorus reduction process does work in cold weather. For over a year we have had very low phosphorus readings.

Chase Vanderveer applied for an excess water use billing adjustment. The property is on village sewer only. A pipe froze and burst at the property. Water did not actually go into the sewer. The property owner submitted an application for an adjustment in September 2014 due to a toilet running through and the board adjusted the bill. The board's policy states "There shall not be more than one adjustment made per customer (per account) during any one year period following the date of the adjustment." **Walter moved and David seconded to reject Chase Vanderveer's application for billing adjustment because this is his second request within a year and to allow him to set up a payment plan for the bill, with interest. The motion was passed.**

Tom asked if the 290 hours of overtime is a personal limit or a budget limit. Gordy said he believes that is what is budgeted. Tom said the overtime summary Rosemary sent around

included 6 hours he spent moving snow when he was asked to. He and Steve don't want the excess overtime they have been working. They would like to have a third person in rotation with them. They would like to go back to the way things used to be, where they took care of the plants and Water & Light handled customer-related issues. They would prefer not to be called in at night. Steve said many of the overtime hours he worked were at the request of Steve Towne. He described 32.5 hours of work Steve Towne asked him to do. When those hours are subtracted from his overtime it brings his total to 306.

Gordy asked, what about comp time? Tom said the problem he is having is that his comp bank is full and his CTO time is full. He can't take enough time off. Steve has to be here if he takes time off.

Gordy asked if there is a way Troy can use someone else for things like snowplowing. Troy said Tom and Steve haven't been involved in snowplowing this winter.

Tom said he thinks the 290 hours just covers weekend work, not callouts. He and Steve don't have an appetite for comping their overtime because they can't take enough time off. His suggestion is to ask Nate (or someone else) if he wants to get a sewer and water license so there would be a third person to rotate in on weekends. Troy said he doesn't know how that would work out with Nate taking a week to be on call for sidewalks. Tom said he would like to have a third person who has a sewer and water license, as Steve Towne did. Getting a water license is fairly fast. Sewer is a little slower. Some classes would be required.

Walter said the 290 hours was based on covering all weekends, etc. but he also thinks the budget was meant to cover a little extra overtime. The 290 hours doesn't seem to be covering that. Tom and Steve need to examine their schedules and cut back somewhere. Maybe they could stagger shifts or not do some work on weekends. Tom said they do the bare bones minimum required by the state on weekends. When he took over the water department he cut water overtime by half.

Gordy said what started this was the budget process. Duncan suggested letting Tom and Steve see what they could come up with for solutions. Tom said he had heard talk of a time punch as a short term solution. That's not a bad idea. But Steve and Tom both agreed that would probably make the overtime situation worse because now they often run a little over and don't charge for it.

David asked if getting someone else certified would help the situation. Tom and Steve said they definitely thought so. Gordy said we need to weigh the cost of paying more overtime vs. getting another employee. Tom said in the case of Nate we already have that employee.

Ellis said he would like Tom and Steve to keep thinking about it.

Walter suggested we might be able to link up with another muni. Morrisville has an SBR plant. Steve said they are union. Tom said the board would be horrified by their plant. Steve agreed. He said there is no manual for running a plant. It depends on the chief operator's

knowledge of that plant and Morrisville doesn't have anyone there long enough to know the plant inside and out.

David said he is hearing that it might benefit us to look into getting another licensed person. Tom said he is 49 and Steve is 50. He hopes to retire by 60. It takes 4 or 5 years to get up to speed. Walter said we should all start thinking hard about how to fix this. Perhaps we could find someone who already has a license who is interested in part time work. Overtime can be cheaper than a third person by the time we throw in benefits, but a part time employee could be cheaper. Steve said the board needs to consider what would happen if anything happened to him or Tom.

Gordy asked if the East Johnson sewer line will be affected when work is done on the 100C bridges. Tom said it will affect that lift station. We will have to have a way of pumping it down. Rosemary said the town should be paying that. Tom said he has been billing it to the collection system. Rosemary said any maintenance should be billed to the town. *(Steve and Tom left at 7:24.)*

6. Foreman Report and Action Items

Troy showed the board quotes he had gotten for a truck with a dump body and snow plow and for a skid steer with a sander. There is one truck and one skid steer that both should be replaced immediately.

Walter said we need to prioritize which one should be next on the list and decide whether we should try to get two used items or one new item. Gordy said he would like Troy to come up with a realistic time each piece of equipment we own should be replaced so we can prioritize and come up with a plan. David suggested that the board take a tour to see the equipment and others agreed that would be a good idea. Gordy said with Troy's help he would like to develop a 10-15 year capital plan.

Walter said he would like to go to the voters next year and ask for authorization to get a loan. Troy asked, so we are going to keep what we have for another year? Board members said yes, if we can. Troy said we can go on with the equipment we have and then if a big repair is needed we can decide at that point whether it makes more sense to do the repair or buy a replacement. Gordy suggested giving Troy a copy of the fire department's capital equipment plan as an example. Walter said the truck is owned by the electric department, which might have enough cash to buy a new one. Rosemary said we need to justify to the Public Service Board anything bought by the electric department.

Troy said he and Cliff recently met with Woody at JSC. AT&T has some equipment on one of the JSC buildings and JSC charges them a certain amount each month for electric. Woody would like them to get their own service from VOJ. That may be a job coming up. Another job coming up involves moving poles from a line that now cuts through the woods nearer to the road where they will be more serviceable.

The day meter reading was scheduled there was a snowstorm. Meter reading took longer than usual because the employees had to move snow, then the snow was very deep and it was below zero, and at the same time they had to deal with frozen sewer and water lines. Troy

would like to use Jeff Parsons for more work. He is interested. Troy had Jeff take part in CPR certification. Rubber gloves and sleeves were recently sent out for testing as they are every 3 months. Troy has been looking at online training courses for village and town employees on the lockout/tagout procedures in the new policy. He hasn't found anything that is really what we are looking for. He and Steve Smith agreed it would be easier to put something together after snow season. Nate's equipment was evaluated and some new equipment was ordered for him. Troy has been ordering supplies from different distributors and trying to spend some time working in Steve Towne's old office, familiarizing himself with what is there and with Steve's computer.

Walter said he would like the crosswalks to be painted as soon as possible. Ideally he would like them to be painted a brick color similar to the pavers that were removed and then have white stripes painted over that. He realizes there would be a cost issue and Main St. would have to be closed down twice instead of once. The board asked Troy to talk to Duncan about any recommendations we may have gotten from engineers about what would work and what would not hold up well and to find out the additional cost for using a base coat in addition to white stripes. *(Troy left at 7:48.)*

7. ***Municipal Manager Report and Action Items***

Walter moved to adopt the Hazard Mitigation Plan, seconded by David. Gordy said we need to approve this every 5 years in order to get FEMA reimbursement and grants. **The motion was passed.**

Jacob Loeffler has submitted a revolving loan fund application. Rosemary said we have about \$70K cash on hand in the fund. Gordy said in the past we have tried to keep about \$35K on hand. Jacob Loeffler wants to connect to the village sewer on the other side of the road from his property. He is asking for \$10-20K for a term of 20 years. The application lacks detail about his plan.

There was discussion about the board's previous idea that several homeowners in that area could work together to pay for this connection and that we could pay to increase the pipe size to a larger capacity that could eventually be used by the industrial park.

The board agreed to table this request for a month, in the meantime requesting more information from the applicant and doing research on how this could coincide with a possible upgrade.

Walter moved to authorize Gordy to sign the Agreement for Fire Services with the Town of Waterville, David seconded, and the motion was passed.

Walter moved to authorize Gordy to sign the Agreement for Fire Services with the Town of Belvidere, David seconded, and the motion was passed.

Walter moved to authorize Gordy to sign the Agreement for Fire Services with the Town of Johnson, David seconded, and the motion was passed.

Paul Daigle, a Food Shelf volunteer, has offered to replace some damaged windows in the Mill House building for no charge if the town/village buys the materials. He was going to try to pick up some used windows. Ellis asked, what if he gets hurt? David asked, what if he installs the window wrong and it causes an issue, who will pay for it? Board members also questioned how much the windows would cost. Ellis suggested having Parker and Stearns put in replacement casements rather than changing out the whole window. David said he would support hiring a bonded contractor. Gordy suggested getting a price and procedure and discussing this further next month. **Walter moved to defer making a decision until the board has better information about cost and who will do the work, David seconded, and the motion was passed.**

Duncan had included in his report what the job description for his position says about the term “Manager.” Board members all agreed that they are satisfied with the status quo in regard to using “Municipal Manager” vs. “Municipal Administrator.”

It was agreed that discussion of the Morrisville contract should happen in a work session when hopefully Duncan and Chris can be present. Walter said he thought Gordy and Duncan should contact Chris and try to set up a work session.

8. *Adjourn*

Walter moved and David seconded to adjourn at 8:07 and the motion was passed.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths