

JOHNSON VILLAGE TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2020

Present:

Trustees: Scott Meyer, Brian Raulinaitis, Gordon Smith, Bob Sweetser, Phil Wilson

Others: Meredith Dolan, Rosemary Audibert, Troy Dolan, Dan Copp, Roger Demars, Dennis Cote, Shawn Enterline, Arjay West

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. Call to Order

Gordy called the meeting to order at 6:00.

2. Changes, Additions to Proposed Agenda

Meredith added discussion and possible action on a Transco equity call and an executive session to come before the budget discussion.

3. Review and Approve Minutes of Trustee Meetings

Bob moved to approve the minutes of February 10, February 23, February 24, and March 3, 2020 and the motion was seconded. Meredith said she forgot to include the minutes of the joint meeting on January 27 on the agenda. Those should be added. Doug Molde had asked for an addition to the January 27 minutes – the answer to his question about the electric department fund balance clarifying that it is \$300-400,000. **Bob and the seconder of the motion agreed to a friendly amendment adding approval of the January 27 minutes with the suggested addition. The motion was passed.**

4. Treasurer's Report / Bills and Warrants / Budget Status Report / Action Items

Rosemary said she didn't have a chance to do a budget status report. She has been working on cash on hand and can discuss that during the budget process. Some computers are being replaced this week.

5. Roger Demars – Sewer Service Line at 245 Lower Main East

Roger Demars said when sidewalks were put in by his property a vibratory roller was used and after that his sewer got plugged up his sewer line got plugged up and he had to have Hartigan come unplug it. Every year since then he has had to have it unplugged. It has broken at 20 feet and at 26 feet. Duncan Hastings told him the village would check into it. He wants it fixed. He thinks either Kingsbury or the village should be responsible for fixing it. Last time he had it worked on, it cost him \$270. If the village wants to see footage of where the breaks are, he can print out that information. Twenty feet is at one edge of the sidewalk and 26 feet is at the other edge. He only wants the town to replace the line. He will even buy the pipe, but he doesn't want to do the work himself and risk damaging sewer, water or electric lines.

Gordy asked if we can check with our insurance company to see if this might be covered.

Meredith said she will check and see if we can file a claim. Roger asked if the village can go back to Kingsbury. Gordy said he assumes that after one year we own it. Meredith said she thinks this was done during the Main Street project, at least 8 years ago

Troy said he thinks it would be better to have a contractor do the work then to have the village crew do it.

Meredith said in the past the board had discussed having a policy or ordinance that discussed the extent of the village's liability in cases like this. We had a draft ordinance that Stitzel Page reviewed but they didn't think that was the way to go. Brian Monaghan also did not think an ordinance was the way to go. He recommended that when we hire a contractor we very clearly stipulate that they are responsible for the work. But that doesn't help us for things that were done in the past. Neither lawyer felt we could craft an ordinance that would make sense in every scenario.

Bob said he thinks it ought to be fixed. Meredith said she will reach out to her insurance company to see if they think it is covered under our policy. Then the next step would be to get an estimate.

Roger asked if the village wants footage of the breaks. Scott said we might need that information for insurance. Other board members agreed it could be helpful. Board members suggested that Roger provide any other records he has of work he has done. Meredith said it would be good if he could provide the date of the first time he had to have work done so we can figure out the date when the issue started. *(Roger left at 6:17.)*

6. *Water/Wastewater Report and Action Items*

All water samples met state requirements. The E-DMR and WR-43 were submitted for review.

There were two callouts for the water wastewater plant. Both were due to power bumps. Annual monitoring samples were taken. Some PLC issues were fixed. Office and lab floors were scrubbed and waxed floors. Rust is being ground off of pipes in the sludge room. The pipes will be repainted.

There was one callout for the water plant for a power bump. Coliform samples were negative. Both wells were sampled for nitrates. All samples were below state thresholds. Levels at the Nadeau well were higher than at the Osgood well but Dan thinks that has to do with not having much flow at the Nadeau well.

Dan worked with Meredith to deal with a customer complaint about high manganese. The customer had had a test done by Manosh. We had normal readings at the plant on the day she sampled and we provided her with those results. Dan thinks the high reading may have been due to improper sampling. If you don't immediately run a manganese test you have to preserve the sample in acid. The customer sampled 8 days before Manosh had a lab report. She sampled again 10 days later and the manganese level was much lower.

Luke is taking a 10-day class to be certified as a water operator.

We were notified that the CUPSS program that the water asset management plan is integrated with is no longer supported by the EPA. They will discontinue it after this year. Dufresne is looking at other options.

Water loss was 20%. That is higher than it has been but 20% and under is still considered good.

7. *Water Bill at 333 Lower Main West*

Meredith said the Cotes' meter passed its testing. Dennis Cote said he had seven adults and three children at his house last month. They used a lot of water but the bill was \$400. He is still trying to figure out where 200 thousand gallons went. Meredith said we believe the meter is working right so she is inclined to believe the readings. But no evidence of the water was found. The total bill for water and sewer was about \$4,000.

Bob said if he understands correctly Dennis had previously said he had a problem in Texas similar to this. Dennis said no, he had a problem where his nephew left a garden hose on. He had a problem in Oklahoma where there was a leak and a million gallons went through but in that case there was a large amount of water in a field that he could see. Here he can't see any sign of water.

Gordy asked how we treated the other customer with a similar situation. Meredith said her excess use was a smaller amount. She similarly could not explain the high water readings and because she couldn't explain and couldn't confirm that the problem had been fixed we declined to adjust her bill. We gave her the option to pay her water and sewer bill in installments over time.

Gordy asked if we have any later readings since the leak. Troy said usage was up for the past month but nothing like what it was when the Cotes were away. We had the meter tested and the test results came back last week. In the meantime we had put in a new meter.

Scott asked what size the pipe is. Dennis said he believes it is half an inch. Scott said a half-inch leak from a water line with a pressure range of 40 to 100 psi is 840 gallons per hour. There are 720 hours in a month so that adds up to 604,000 gallons. So 200,000 gallons is doable with a leak. But it would have been a full-blown leak. The amount of water indicates someone had a tap wide-open probably for a two-week period. Dennis said he was gone the whole month. After he got home and turned the water on there were no more problems. Scott asked if there was an outside tap someone might have interfered with. Dennis said there is an outside faucet but it was shut off and there is a snow bank in front of it. There is no evidence that water went out that way. There was water in the driveway but that was probably from snowmelt. It was not a ridiculous amount.

Meredith said his sewer bill is \$2,613.79 and his water bill is \$4,013.07. The highest combined water and sewer amount in the last year was \$199.38 and the lowest was one month where there was no usage and the bill was \$47.60. Dennis said he was out of town then.

Dennis said the other time he had a leak he was out of state and the person who was watering his garden left a nozzle off the hose and let it run for 24 hours. He had a \$900 bill then and he paid it. The problem he has now is that there is no trace of water anywhere.

Gordy said in line with our policy and the way we have treated people in the past, Dennis will be billed for the whole amount but we can come up with a payment plan with no interest. Meredith said if we keep to the policy, when there is no proof that the water didn't go into the

sewer we generally don't adjust the sewer amount so he will owe the whole amount. She thinks we can be flexible with the payment plan. We could even go a few years. The water charge is lienable so she doesn't think there is a risk to us in pushing the payments out over a few years. Gordy suggested two years. Dennis said he could pay \$2,000 next month and \$2,000 the month after. Meredith suggested \$500 a month.

Bob moved that Dennis Cote pay \$500 a month with no interest until his water and sewer bill is paid off, Brian seconded and the motion was passed. (Dennis left at 6:36.)

8. *Discussion of Next Integrated Resource Plan*

Shawn Enterline of VPPSA reviewed what will be in the integrated resource plan. This is a report every electric utility in Vermont has to do every three years. They ask you to look out 20 years and answer the question of how you are going to meet your demand for electric supply. We start by forecasting electric demand. The prediction is for very slight growth, maybe half a percent of year initially. After 2030 there is a good chance that we could start to see faster growth due to increased use of electric vehicles, heat pumps, etc.

Johnson has about half a dozen wholesale sources of electric supply – nuclear power, market power, landfill gas, solar, a little bit of wood from the Ryegate facility, and hydro. The resource plan looks at energy, capacity and renewable energy credits. VPPSA will run a financial analysis and try to pick a path forward that is low cost and low risk.

Johnson is part of the Lamoille County regional energy plan. Meredith said Johnson also did its own enhanced energy plan. She said energy committees have not always had a good understanding of what was happening at the utility level. We should probably share this with the Planning Commission.

Board members suggested 3 possibilities for custom tier 3 rebates – the Vermont Studio Center, a possible switch to electric power at the Nadeau gravel pit, and a possible switch to hybrid fleet vehicles at Northern Vermont University.

Bob asked how the cost of electric power is compared to gasoline for vehicles. Phil said he saw figures indicating that pure electric vehicles were about \$2 cheaper per gallon equivalent vs. gasoline. Shawn said for fuel cost it is hard to beat electric. Phil said they are supposed to have less maintenance also.

Shawn said there are three decisions the board will be faced with in the next two years. Currently Johnson's largest source of supply is the Seabrook nuclear station. The contract with Seabrook will expire at the end of 2022. Johnson can negotiate an extension with the company that owns Seabrook. They are large and credit-worthy. Shawn proposes modeling financially what it would look like to extend that contract for 5 or even 15 years. Benefits of extending that contract are that it would be price competitive and would give Johnson emissions attributes.

An alternative is to look at a large hydro source and sign a contract for a similar volume. If the source is large enough they will give our utility the exact amount needed each month of the year. Johnson currently has a little small hydro in the system. Small hydro sources peak

in April and dry out by August. We don't need more of that. We would end up with too much power in April and not enough in August. This recommendation would be for a much larger source of hydro. The cost is likely to be greater. A large hydro operator may charge a premium for providing more power when needed and less when less is needed. But we would be able to capture renewable energy credits.

Another possibility is a solar purchased power agreement. VPPSA has developed a partnership with Encore Renewables. VPPSA has developed a couple of projects with them meant to fulfill Tier 2 of the renewable energy standard. Projects have to be in-state and less than 5 megawatts. They generally cost around ten cents per kilowatt hour. Shawn thinks Johnson will need about 250 to 500 kilowatt hours of that over the next decade. That is a relatively small footprint. He doesn't know about siting possibilities around Johnson. Scott said siting in this area is tough. There are not many potential sites. Shawn asked if Johnson is open to building outside its service territory. Meredith said she thinks so. We want to meet our requirements as cost effectively as possible. She hasn't gotten the sense that the trustees have a great desire to have our own solar or to have as much solar as possible. Scott asked if siting is critical to make sure we can get additional load on the lines. Shawn said if a project is built north of the SHEI interface it is subject to curtailment. It is better to build south of that.

Shawn said he can size the analysis to fit only Tier 2 requirements or he can size it larger to fill part of Johnson's Tier 3 requirement. He asked if the board has any preferences. Phil said he thinks we will have a hard time filling Tier 3 in this community. Meredith agreed.

Shawn said it sounds like Johnson is an excellent candidate to participate in a VPPSA level project that may be developed on a member's site. Meredith and board members agreed.

Shawn said he has written some of the chapters of the plan and he will share them with Meredith.

9. *Foreman Report and Action Items*

Troy said his crew changed out 3 ballasts on the Main Street lights. Currently all are working. They have been changing about five ballasts per year. Most of the ballasts are ending their useful life. They cost about \$200 apiece. Last week the crew worked on removing snow and ice from oil containers at the substation. They installed new rubber goods boxes on the small bucket truck. The crew completed meter reading, high/low readings, and disconnect/reconnects. They have been removing snow and maintaining snow removal equipment. They removed snow around all the fire hydrant. They changed out a water meter at Katy Win Park. All our rubber goods were sent out for three months testing. We have been meeting with different vendors investigating a replacement for the Bobcat. Troy should have pricing by the end of next week.

Troy said a representative from Efficiency Vermont came to the shop. Their recommendation was to upgrade our lights to LED. They thought that would be the best use for the Efficiency Vermont money that is available. Board members asked, they had no recommendations regarding insulation or heat loss from the door? Troy said no. They don't like to get into doing anything with overhead doors. Troy likes the idea of replacing lights. The lighting is

very poor and some people may get headaches with long exposure to fluorescent lights. Phil said he thinks new overhead doors could save quite a bit of money and it could be cost-effective for us to do it even if Efficiency Vermont is not offering funding for it. Troy said there are bigger issues with the building beyond the doors.

Troy said the cold storage building needs some maintenance. An issue there is the way the heating system was set up. A stove pipe runs up through the floor and out through the wall. It has been like that for 15 years or more but that does not meet code.

Troy met with a property owner on Sinclair Road who will be moving forward with a new primary underground. We got a reimbursement check for the bus-pole accident on Hogback Road. The new furnace was installed on March 11. We did not need to get a new fuel tank.

Scott asked if there is any follow-up on the light pole that got hit by Maplefields. Troy said he went to Maplefields. They had a video which they let him see. A Subaru car was clearly visible in the video but it did not have a front license plate so he was not able to get the license plate number. Troy had the pole repaired at a cost of about \$260.

Meredith said we are still trying to track down the person who hit a pole going up the gulf. Our insurance company sent a letter to the address the person gave but it was sent back. Meredith found a PO box address for the person and asked the insurance company to resend the letter to that address letting them know that we are seeking payment and it is in their best interest to give us their insurance information. The person is from Morrisville.

Dan said we have a sanitary survey coming up on Thursday. The last one that was done was three years ago and at that time there were two recommendations. One had to do with improving the Katy Win pump houses and the other had to do with an emergency power back-up plan for the Clay Hill booster station. He thinks he has taken care of the booster station well enough. Meredith said after the last sanitary survey she sent a response that the board would look at the budget and consider work at Katy Win but it got dropped.

Troy said we are trying to determine who has ownership – Ship Sevin or the village. He has a high level of concern with the condition of the buildings and the way the plumbing is set up inside. He showed the board some pictures of current conditions. Dan said one recommendation was to combine two of the three buildings into one. A concern was that the buildings do not have concrete floors so rodent infestation is not prohibited. Troy said we are trying to determine what kind of agreements were made in the past. Rosemary said the village pays for the electricity for the buildings. Troy said another concern he has is that two of the buildings just have milkhouse heaters. If those fail when it is very cold outside there would be big problems. There are three pump houses. They are just little shacks. There is a lot of green on all the copper, which is usually a bad sign.

Scott asked how we find out who owns the buildings and is responsible for them. Bob asked what the cost will be if we do something with the buildings. Meredith and Troy said we probably would need to construct new buildings. Phil asked if Katy Win has a private well. Meredith and Troy said there is a private home on the property with a well but the well only

feeds that house. Meredith said she doesn't think there is any documentation of an agreement concerning the buildings. Troy said the Katy Win repairman goes into the buildings whenever he wants. Scott said if we take ownership the buildings should be locked. Troy said he did put locks on the buildings recently when his crew checked them as they usually do once a week and found that someone had gone in and turned off the heat on two of them. Fortunately the pipes didn't freeze. Meredith asked if the Katy Win repairman has a key. Troy said we will unlock the door for them when they need access. Scott asked if that is a confined space. Troy and Dan said no.

Scott asked if we can have just one building there. Dan said he doesn't think we can combine all three. Just following the recommendation to combine buildings 1 and 2 would be difficult. They are 100 yards apart and the distance to the third one is about two hundred yards. Meredith said if we combined buildings there would be an expense to Ship Sevin to rerun individual service lines. Troy said if we put in cement floors the pipes would have to be in conduit.

Gordy said the village bought all the material and George Desmarais dug and put in the pipes. There was an agreement between the trustee board chair and George Desmarais. Phil asked when the pipes and pump houses were put in. Meredith and Gordy said it was in the 1970s.

Scott asked if we have an easement. Meredith said she looked in the land records and didn't see an easement for us. Scott said if we don't have an easement it isn't ours.

Dan said he is wondering what we will tell the person from ANR who conducts the sanitary survey. Doing something with those buildings was only a recommendation last time but it may be a requirement for us in the next three years. Meredith said we can say we are researching responsibility for the buildings. Troy said he would like to see the customer responsible after the first shutoff. Scott said if there is no record of an easement and no written legal documentation, any handshake agreement made in the past means nothing. If we don't have an easement, it's not ours.

Meredith said in the water department budget we budgeted \$15,000 for a well pump VFD, which was our number one priority in the water asset management plan. We did not have our consultants look at these pump houses. We may need to incorporate them into the water asset management plan. If we decide we own them and we have a mandate to do something with them we could delay the well pump VFD purchase and use the \$15,000 in the budget for work on the pump houses.

Scott asked, if we don't own them or have an easement and the owners of Katy Win park say they will give us an easement, do we want it? Dan said he would rather not have it, because of the condition of the buildings.

Phil asked who the owner of Katy Win Park is. Meredith said Ship Sevin. Rosemary said they own several trailer parks in the state.

Bob asked how we bill Katy Win customers. Troy said each home has a meter. It is just like when there is service to a house. We only own the meter and any other repairs need to be done by a plumber.

Scott said when Ship Sevin bought the property there should have been a title search and this should have been figured out. He is wondering if there is some legal document saying that there are three buildings owned by the Village of Johnson. Meredith said she will keep looking into it. Gordy said he is willing to look through old minutes. Scott said even if it is in the minutes that the village and the owner of the park would work together, he doesn't know if that is legally binding.

Troy said we sent an email to VTrans asking for a bump sign at the Railroad Street/Main Street intersection. Gordy said he thinks we need a bump sign there as a courtesy to residents.

10. Fire Department Siren and R2 Replacement

Arjay said a couple of months ago Eric Osgood inquired about the community warning siren at the fire station. Eric understands that Arjay has resistance to turning it on because once we set it off there is not a good way of sending out information about the emergency. Arjay has always been fearful that setting it off would create more chaos. Eric would like to try to come up with a new operating procedure for using the siren in an emergency. We would use it only as a siren and not try to transmit a voice message because it is too hard to understand. Eric would like to look at using Vermont Alert, Facebook, the town website, etc. to get the message out about the emergency. Eric would have liked to have a plan and make an announcement at town meeting but that was too fast for Arjay's comfort. If the board is in favor of the concept Arjay can negotiate with Eric about it. He thinks there should be a protocol that tells who has authority to operate the siren, what the run cycle would be, what devices and methods we will use to distribute information, who will educate the community on the use of the siren, and who has access to a way of entering information to be sent out. The way he understands it, now the town emergency management director and his helpers are the only ones who can enter things into the EMD system. In Eric's absence, he wants to make sure the village has a way to enter things.

Gordy said Eric told him that now only Eric and Brian Story are able to enter information but Eric is hoping that some others can get the training and have the authority to do it.

Scott asked who Eric's alternate is under ICS. Gordy said he is second after Eric for emergency management but he thinks Nat is going to get involved. He has gotten some training.

Meredith said she thinks once a framework and procedures have been sketched out it should come back to the board. Gordy said before it goes to the public the boards and the fire department all need to know about it.

Brian suggested that maybe the college radio station could be used to communicate about emergencies. Arjay said the college also has an inter-campus system similar to Vermont Alert. We need to identify the resources that we want to use.

The board agreed that Arjay can discuss this with Eric and bring a plan back to the board.

Gordy mentioned a new system the fire department is using and suggested that Arjay talk about it. Arjay said the system is a year old. The fire department just renewed its subscription last month. It provides an app on firefighters' phones that calls can be broadcast to. Firefighters also still carry pagers. Firefighters can open the app and give their status (respond, delay or unavailable.) It will pop up on others' phones and on the TV screen in the station. Arjay uses it for bigger calls. It allows him to see who is coming and make decisions about how to assign trucks. It has been a huge help.

Arjay said the plan is to find a way to do a system test of the siren without activating the siren so that people don't have to distinguish between a test and an emergency event.

Arjay said R2, a 1 ton pickup, is due for replacement in 2020. It was originally ahead of R1 for replacement but due to concerns about R1 the replacements were swapped. R2 is anticipated to cost \$51,700. The intention is to just write a check for the purchase and not take out a loan. The condition of the current truck is okay. If it is helpful from a cash flow perspective, the fire department could probably hold off on purchase of a replacement until early next year. Rosemary said there is a sufficient amount in the capital equipment fund now.

Arjay said if there is no benefit to holding off on the purchase the fire department could start looking at what is available. Gordy asked how this fits into the capital plan to ensure that the fire department doesn't get put behind a year. Arjay said if they delay a year it won't do anything. If they delay for 2 years it will double up with purchase of a pumper.

Phil asked about how customized the truck will be. Arjay said fire department doesn't need to go to a fire truck vendor for it, just a local dealer. Phil suggested maybe if it isn't needed immediately there could be cost savings by purchasing at the end of the model year. Troy said the municipal pricing that is available provides a good discount. Cost-wise, it is better to find a vehicle on the lot than to order one that is specially built. Gordy asked Arjay if he would rather switch trucks before winter when the fire department is busier. Arjay said it is a little easier to be down a truck in the summer.

Arjay said the existing truck is set up to pull a trailer but the new Rescue 1 will be tow-capable so the replacement for R2 could potentially be a smaller vehicle as it will not be needed to tow a trailer. But that would require that the next forestry truck be a little heavier and that one does not need to be replaced for another 8 years. So it could be good to buy a replacement for R2 that is a little heavier so we don't have an 8-year period with two lesser trucks.

11. Coronavirus Contingency Plan

Meredith said we should discuss whether there is anything we can do now to help prepare for a reduction in workforce and think about the minimum number of people we need to maintain essential services.

Scott said the NIOSH CDC web page has information related to wastewater. The advice is normal hygiene, as far as contracting coronavirus. Dan said we use proper care. It is not even proven that it can travel through wastewater. The disinfection we use inactivates the virus before it goes into the river. The water/wastewater plant is in pretty good shape because there are four people who have cross training to run the plant. They could run with one person in Johnson and one in Morrisville. Even if they were down to only two people each person would have every other weekend off. He has the ability to pull in a couple of people working at other locations who are familiar with Morrisville. He is not concerned with regard to workforce.

Arjay said the Department of Health and Emergency Management in conjunction with the fire academy have started publishing EMS and response guidelines. He has talked with the NEMS chief. They have in place a method where any warnings about coronavirus can be communicated to the incident commander by phone, not radio. If the fire department is called to assist they can take a pause and assess how many people are really needed before entering into the working zone. Those procedures are in place now. EMS has garments available for firefighters. If they have to be deployed they can take a pause and make sure it is necessary for them to be on the scene and then put on the PPE.

Scott asked if remote work is available for staff now. Meredith said she can do a lot of her job from home but others are very limited in how much they can accomplish from home. For Susan and Anne a big part of their job is interacting with the public.

Meredith asked if the board wants to make a decision about what will happen in terms of pay if staff have to stay home. It would be helpful for them to have a sense of how it will be handled. Scott said it is a huge incentive for people to stay home when sick if they know they will still be paid. Otherwise they may try to come to work. For him, it is a no-brainer. He would rather have someone home and not spreading flu or COVID-19. The village and town should be doing the same things as far as practicing social distancing and hygiene, as they share a building

Scott said if people become ill or are told they have to stay home we can run out of available staff quickly. Phil said under best practices he believes that if anyone is suspected of being exposed they should all stay home. Scott said employees may need to work if the power goes out or there is a public water supply problem or water main break. Billing can be delayed. Meredith asked about going a month without billing from a cash flow basis. Rosemary said we will be all right going a month without billing. If we go more than that it would be a problem.

Troy said his crew generally has two staff members working in any situation. Hopefully he can maintain that. If not he would reach out for mutual aid. Scott said if there is a state of emergency the state EOC will open and we can make a phone call and ask for help. Meredith said we signed a mutual aid agreement with NEPPA so there is a wider pool of people we can draw from throughout New England.

Meredith said she would love to be able to tell employees that they will be paid normally if they need to stay out of work. Rosemary said we have an employees' bank that has close to \$1000 in it. Board members agreed employees should be paid if they need to stay home.

Scott asked if the town is doing anything. Meredith said Eric has been sending out emails. There have been updates about a school trip that went to Italy and about concerns with the studio center.

Meredith said office employees are trying to keep the window closed up front. Rosemary said they are trying to wash down the counter more often.

12. Stormwater Master Plan Update

Meredith shared a memo about the stormwater master plan that is in process. She said the initial step was to go through a long list of potential projects. The consultants narrowed them down to the top 10. She reviewed the top three sites which will receive a 30% design. Railroad Street is number one. Sterling Market is number two and the college apartments at NVU are number three. Mike Stevens from the college has been attending the meetings on the plan. There is a pond and dam at the college that is being treated separately because it has more immediate needs. Scott said they could do better by not plowing snow into the stream. Meredith said she will bring that up. Meredith said what will be proposed for Railroad Street will not be to rebuild exactly what is there. This is through the conservation district. They got grant funding for this study. This is an important step in getting future grants.

13. UVM Stormwater Research Project

Meredith said Brian Story and Rob Moore of LCPC talked to Meredith about how the town and LCPC have been working with UVM researchers who want to see if MRGP requirements actually help stormwater management. They are looking for sites around the state to measure the effectiveness of the requirements. They identified two culvers on Clay Hill. They will not change one of the culverts and the other one will be changed according to MRGP recommendations. Researchers will look at both culverts over a year. Meredith doesn't think any village infrastructure is affected. They want Troy to participate in a site visit.

14. Approval of 2020 LEDC Membership and Fee

Meredith said every year for the last few years we have signed up for a membership to LEDC for \$250, paid for by the electric department. She thinks they do good work. They have been helpful when she asks for things. She got the annual request for us to get a membership.

Scott moved to pay \$250 for an annual LEDC membership, Brian seconded and the motion was passed.

Phil asked what LEDC helps Meredith with. Meredith said they have given her information about opportunity zones and helped to answer real estate questions.

15. Executive Sessions - Personnel

Meredith said she would like two brief executive sessions for personnel matters – one that Troy wants to stay for and one just with her and the trustees. **Scott moved to enter executive session to discuss personal matters, Bob seconded, the motion was passed and the board entered executive session at 8:40.** The board came out of executive session at 8:55.

Bob moved to offer village employees 5 days of bereavement pay for immediate family members (parents, children, siblings, siblings-in-law or parents-in-law), Scott seconded and the motion was passed.

16. Vermont Transco Equity Call

Meredith said Vermont Transco is issuing subscription agreements for an equity call in April. The amount is very small so VPPSA is encouraging members to purchase units directly. If that is not possible the option of assigning units to VPPSA is available. Most times we go through VPPSA, but the total is usually in the thousands of dollars. This time the total cost is \$590. Meredith doesn't think there is any reason to subscribe it. It is to our advantage to buy the units because we make money from it.

It was moved and seconded to purchase units directly in the amount of \$590 in the Vermont Transco equity call and the motion was passed.

17. Approval of 2020 Department Budgets

Meredith reviewed the general department budget. This draft still includes \$500 for byway support. She heard at the last meeting that the consensus on the board may be that it is double charging village residents if we contribute that money. Phil asked if they are expecting this payment every year. Meredith said she thinks it is currently proposed as one-time funding to get marketing off the ground but there will need to be cash put in at some point in the future. Meredith suggested that if the board does not want to contribute \$500 for byway support that \$500 could be moved to beautification to increase that amount to \$2,000. The board agreed to do that.

Meredith said she did not make changes to vacation time allocations because the numbers work as they are now even though there is a different split between departments for benefit time compared to regular time.

The general department budget is balanced.

Gordy noted that we are not putting any money into the sidewalk reserve fund. Phil said it is the second year in a row that we are not adding any. Meredith said in a year when we don't have a sidewalk project going on we should be able to put more money in. Gordy said he thinks our next project should be crosswalks on Main Street. Meredith said we will try to get as much of that covered by the state as possible.

Meredith reviewed the water budget. It is balanced.

She reviewed the wastewater budget. It includes \$52,000 coming out of the reserve fund – \$35,000 for the cupola and an additional \$17,500 to prevent a deficit. We may not need to take out all that money.

Dan said he may have figured out why electric was up last year. There is a heater in the influent wet well that wasn't working. They put a new fuse in last fall. He has a feeling that heater hasn't worked for years. He is wondering if that was the cause of the increased electric usage. They shut the heater off. It will be interesting to see if there is any difference in electric usage.

The wastewater budget is balanced with money from the reserve fund.

Meredith said before making any decision on a rate increase she would like to see how at least this half of the year goes. Phil said it would be interesting to look at rate structures too. Meredith said we have gotten a lot of comments that we don't have a commercial rate for water. It may make sense to look at different models.

Meredith reviewed the electric budget. Since the last draft she showed she has increased merchandising and jobbing by \$5,000 as we already have some jobs lined up. She added \$106,000 from the reserve fund to balance the budget. That is less than what we budget for depreciation every year, which is not actual cash we pay. She talked to Ken Nolan about budgeting for depreciation. We don't do that for our other three budgets. Electric rates have to be approved through a formal process and we need to show depreciation expenses if we want those costs to be considered in our request to raise rates. In terms of cash we can balance our budget without needing the \$106K from the reserve fund but we have to put it in there to balance the depreciation.

Meredith said this budget includes money for our cost for the GMP work. The public service department is skeptical that GMP will get their CPG for that project by the beginning of April. If the CPG is not issued by April 8 meeting we will have to have a special village meeting, as will Morrisville.

Meredith said she thinks the time is not too far off when we will need to do an electric rate increase. She probably will say something in her report to start preparing people.

Scott moved to approve the 2020 department budgets as presented, Bob seconded and the motion was passed.

18. Adjourn

It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 9:52 and the motion was passed.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths