

JOHNSON VILLAGE TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
MONDAY, MAY 11, 2015

**Present:**

Trustees: Gordon Smith, Walter Pomroy, David Goddette, Scott Meyer, Bob Sweetser

Others: Duncan Hastings (Manager), Rosemary Audibert (Clerk), Tom Elwood, Troy Dolan, Susan Tinker, Anne Mullings, Rene Audet, 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**

Duncan asked to add a discussion with Lea about a grant.

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

**Bob moved to approve the minutes of April 13, April 27, and April 29 as printed, Scott seconded, and the motion was passed.**

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

Tom said the wastewater plant is running well. Flows have been low up until today. The water plant was running at about a 43% loss, but he thinks it is back down to about 5% after fixing a couple of leaks. There was a water leak near the lumber yard that resulted in loss of about 35,000 gallons a day, if not more.

Tom said the Audets on Gillen Ave. have a temporary water supply now. The line to their house is leaking under the river or somewhere between the curb stops. (*David arrived at 6:10.*) A temporary line has been run from a spigot at the house across the bridge. The water is non-potable and the arrangement is very temporary. He thinks the easiest way to replace the line would be to put it across the bridge, with a heat trace and insulated pipe. If we were to use the existing pathway the pipe would have to have 2 feet of cover and we would need a permit. We would have to dig. Would they give us a permit for a surface water crossing?

Bob said we are allowed to go in there to repair the line. Tom said we could do that if we could find the leak, but he was unable to find it. Bob said he asked someone who has done a lot of work for him to look at the site this morning. That person thinks he could dig and put a pipe 2 ft. down in a sleeve for \$1500 if we furnished the material.

Tom said he doesn't think we are allowed to dig across the river with a machine without a permit. Scott agreed. Tom said if we get a permit then the rule about 2 ft. of cover would apply.

Gordy suggested putting air in the line and looking for bubbles. Tom said we could do that. It is up to the board whether he should try to pursue fixing the existing crossing. Gordy said hopefully we can decide tonight whether we own it.

Bob said if it is a well vs. putting a pipe back across the river, it seems like a no-brainer to him to replace the pipe if we can get a permit. Duncan said we would need a stream

alteration permit in addition to a water supply permit. He thinks we are unlikely to get a stream alteration permit to dig in the river. Tom and Scott agreed. Duncan said if the homeowners own the line, then they would be responsible for any permits.

Scott asked, if we decide tonight that they own it, could they come to the village and say they will drill a well? There would be costs associated with getting a permit. They would probably need to hire an engineer, not just a contractor, in order to get a stream alteration permit.

Bob said there are two properties affected and one is in the village. The college owns the other one. Duncan said the Audets' house itself is outside the village. The property is close to the village line. Walter asked, do we even have a responsibility to supply them with water? Duncan showed a map of the property. Maybe just a small corner of it is in the village. He suspects the water line went to the college-owned farmhouse first. The Audets said they gave up some water rights they had on the farm property and in exchange they got water to their house.

Scott asked if it would be a big deal to pressurize the line with air to check where the leak is. Tom said he will do it as soon as the water level goes down. Scott said if it turns out the line just needs a patch we can legally do it without a stream alteration permit. Tom said that depends on where the leak is. In some places there are large stones over the pipe that we would need an excavator to move. Scott asked if it is worth trying to find the leak. Troy said he doesn't think it is a big issue just to try. Tom agreed.

David asked what the cost of a permit would be. Tom said we don't know yet. Scott said he thinks a professional engineer would be needed in order to get a permit and that's where the cost comes in. Duncan said an engineer would cost at least \$100 per hour.

Walter said the air test will just confirm there is a problem. We need to decide whose problem it is. Then whoever owns the line can deal with air testing, permits, etc. David agreed.

**5. Discussion with Office Employees**

Gordy said he had invited the office employees to come in and talk about the electric department. He was curious about what Susan did for Steve Towne and what she does for Troy and whether she has more time or not. The board would like to hear any input the office employees have.

Susan said she did provide some administrative help to Steve Towne, but not a lot. She has mentioned to Troy that she is happy to do the same for him. She doesn't have tons of time, but she can fit some things in, especially if it is something he can schedule. Scott asked, is that a couple of hours a week? Susan said she would say yes, but there are probably a couple of days a month when she has no spare time. There are some things she isn't able to do – providing an estimate for the college, for instance. She would have no idea what materials were needed. She doesn't have the training or knowledge to talk to a customer about a service upgrade.

Gordy said one concern about keeping the electric department is giving Troy administrative support so he doesn't have to be on the computer all the time.

Anne said she has no time to help Troy. When Susan isn't here she does both their jobs.

Susan said with Duncan leaving and other transitions, we have to look at the big picture. If Duncan's replacement needs more administrative help that will have an effect on available time. Duncan said realistically he doesn't think anyone has a lot of extra time. Anne said Jan said she would be willing to help Troy, but she doesn't know how much time she has.

Walter asked how much administrative help Troy needs. Troy said he thinks he is probably working an average of 8 hours a week on the computer now. Every week is not the same. If there is a lot of work in the field he spends more time in the field. Walter asked how much of that could shift to someone without electrical knowledge. Troy said Susan is more familiar with entering information into computer programs. As far as materials, etc., that is what he can provide. Jim Fontaine is willing to spend about 4 hours a week helping out, but that will be a short term arrangement. Walter asked if Jim will be working on safety. Troy and Duncan said probably not. Duncan said not unless we have him do some of the basic data entry. Troy said for safety record keeping he has a spreadsheet with all employees listed and he puts in dates and marks what applies to each employee. He keeps a paper record as well. Just updating the spreadsheet doesn't take much time, but being fully involved in the safety program will take more time. Duncan said if Troy were to give Susan all the data she needed to provide an estimate it would take enough time that he might as well do the whole thing himself.

Scott asked about documentation for climbing poles. Troy said for any big or hands-on job there are paper records filled out that go into a folder at the end of the day. Scott said he wonders about scanning those forms so as to have electronic versions. Troy said he sees no record of that having been done in the past. Scott said he thinks records are easier to manage if they are on the computer. Walter said he would disagree sometimes. Troy said he thinks having both electronic and paper versions is a nice way to go. Duncan said he thinks Steve used to keep scanned copies. Troy said he hasn't seen them, but he has found paper files.

Duncan said he would expect that the amount of administrative work Troy needs to do will pick up now that winter is over. Susan said there might be certain tasks she could help with, but she doesn't know what they would be.

Anne said in general things seem to be going well and morale is high. David asked if there are any issues or problems. Anne said the office employees think things are headed in the right direction. They have seen a lot of turmoil and they are glad it is ending. The outside employees all seem to think things are going well. *(Susan and Anne left at 6:38.)*

**6. *Organizational Meeting***

**Walter nominated Gordy for chair, David seconded, and the board voted to elect Gordy as chair.**

**David nominated Walter for vice chair, Scott seconded, and the board voted to elect Walter as vice chair.**

**Walter moved to appoint Duncan as Water and Light Commissioner, Scott seconded, and the motion was passed.**

**Walter moved to appoint Rosemary as Collector of Taxes, Scott seconded, and the motion was passed.**

**Walter moved to appoint Duncan as VPPSA director, Scott seconded, and the motion was passed.**

**David moved to appoint Walter as alternate VPPSA director, Scott seconded, and the motion was passed.**

Duncan asked if anyone had any ideas about who could serve as LCPC director. Scott asked if the person could be on the Planning Commission. Duncan said he doesn't see why not.

Rosemary said she had received an official resignation letter from Kim Dunkley as auditor. **Walter moved to accept Kim Dunkley's resignation as auditor, David seconded, and the motion was passed.**

Rosemary said we have 2 auditors now. The board agreed she should advertise the open auditor position in the newspaper. Walter suggested advertising the LCPC position too.

Walter said he would be happy to serve on the search committee for Duncan's replacement but he thought it would be a good idea to have Gordy as a representative instead because he has the best electric knowledge and also some of the best credibility amongst the citizens of the town and village. Gordy said he is willing to do it if the board wants. **Scott moved to appoint Gordy as representative to the municipal manager search committee, David seconded, and the motion was passed.**

***7. Treasurer's Report/Review and Approve Bills and Warrants/Budget Status Report/Action Items***

Walter asked why we have phone expense in the general department when it was not budgeted. Rosemary said that is not right. She thinks it was supposed to be entered under heat instead. She will fix it.

Walter asked why the social security match was so high. Rosemary said it includes everyone, not just the office employees.

Rosemary said the college has paid their share of Lea's position.

Gordy asked about right of way trimming. Troy said he would like to finish trimming the part on French Hill that was started last year. He wants to look at the right of way conditions and see where trimming is needed most. Gordy suggested that he look into getting reimbursement from Fairpoint.

Scott suggested checking whether any of the white pines the college is taking down are in our power line right of way or will affect it. Troy said he would. *(Rene Audet arrived at 6:53.)*

Tom said the water department supplies and chemicals David asked about last time were miscoded.

David asked about miscellaneous buildings and grounds expenses. Tom said he will do a line item check and get an answer.

**8. Audets: Water Line Issue**

Rene Audet said he came to find out what will happen with the water line to his house.

Duncan suggested crediting Rene for the water bills he has been receiving while he has been having serious water problems. **Scott moved to credit Rene Audet's water bills from January 1, 2015 until the problem with his water service has been rectified, David seconded, and the motion was passed.**

Gordy said now we have to make a determination where our water line stops. Walter asked what was done in terms of updating our records on easements during the water project. Duncan said easements were investigated for the areas where we did construction. Work on 100C was done as a separate project from the main water project. As part of that, the engineer who was checking the easements would have looked at any areas within the highway right of way and made sure there was an easement for anything he considered one of our mains. As far as he knows, there is no easement for the line crossing the river.

Walter asked when the Audets' house got attached to village water. Rene said he doesn't know. When they bought the house from Jim Gillen he said his father had traded water rights to the house for a piece of land. He would guess that was the same time the house was hooked up to the village water system. Probably Donnie Gillen would be the best person to ask about that. Bob said at the time that would have happened he doesn't think the village obtained any easements.

Duncan said the village water policy was adopted in July 2009. That was the first water system ordinance we had. Under the current policy we wouldn't allow piggybacking of service lines. Walter said this clearly predates any policy.

Walter said during the water project the easements would have had to be cleared up if this had been determined to be a main. At that time the project went forward on the basis that the line under the river was a service line. That is the conclusion we have to draw from the fact that no easement was obtained or corrected or filed.

Duncan said he believes the plans even indicate it is a service line. Walter said he doesn't know of anywhere else in the village where we have this double curb stop situation. David asked why the curb stop on the property side was put in. Tom said he thinks it was to make it possible to shut off water to one house without shutting off the other. Walter said to say the main goes past a curb stop goes against everything he knows has ever been done in the village. His feeling is that there is a service line from the college house to our main and at some point they added a second service line. We have to assume the first curb stop on this side of the river is where our service stops. Our responsibility stops at the first curb stop. Bob said without having dug up all the other lines and looked at them, Walter is doing a lot of assuming. Walter said he doesn't know of any place else like this. We have to look at where

we have consistently drawn the line. It always has been at the first curb stop. That is our working policy and for the last 8 years our written policy.

Gordy asked how it works at the Lamb and Parker houses. Duncan said we have a master vault and all the lines after the vault are treated as private lines. Gordy asked, don't they have shut offs after the vault? Duncan said yes. Walter said that is the same situation. We stopped at the first curb stop. Duncan said there are other situations like the Audets'. Travis Hill's line, for instance. There is a curb stop by Legion Field. The line from there originally went to one building. There is a separate curb stop for the garage. Walter said again we stopped at the first curb stop. Duncan agreed. Walter said we have been consistent. We can't have different policies for different places. We have to have a consistent policy throughout the village. We own up to the first curb stop.

David asked if JSC would have any responsibility on that line. Even though their house is not currently connected there are still water rights. Would they be responsible for repairs along with the Audets? Duncan said he thinks JSC has pretty much abandoned their water rights for that property. David said if they were to sell the property water rights would be part of the value. Duncan said not if they completely gave up water rights. They are not a customer. If they wanted to put water service back he thinks they would have to coordinate with the Audets. Under our new rules they would have to have separate service. Alan Beard is another example of a similar situation. When he wanted to put in water, the board told him he could do one of three things: get concurrence of the other property owners, run a separate line to his house, or work with the other two parties to put in a line that met village standards for a water main and the village would take it over.

Scott said he thinks the college should be given the option to retain the ability to get water to its building. If the Audets replace the existing line or drill a well and the college sells its property to someone who wants water to it, the line that originally supplied water to that house won't necessarily be theirs anymore. Rene said if he replaces the line, he thinks it will be his line after that. He would guess that the village put the line through to the two houses. Tom said he doesn't think the Audets can replace the line without an easement from the college. Rene said he had heard the college was going to get rid of the house but something was said about keeping water for the rugby field, although they don't have water there now. Duncan said they might be willing to share in the cost of fixing the problem. Scott asked if we should talk to someone at the college. Walter said he doesn't think it is our issue if our line stops at the first curb stop. As per our policy, both parties may come to us to ask for a joint service line. Scott said he agrees with everything Walter is saying about our policy, but Rene Audet pays taxes and his water bill and if he has to deal on his own with talking to the college, getting an easement or drilling a well, that is a huge thing. Walter said Travis Hill is dealing with the same thing. It is not necessarily government's responsibility to fix everything.

Scott said we have two landowners. One is a state entity with the water line at least partly on their property. He is uncomfortable saying they are on their own. Bob said this is an existing line. If they were starting new, he would go along with Walter, but he is sure in his mind who put that line in. Scott said if the village installed that line that would make it a distribution

line in his eyes and our responsibility. Duncan said it was a very common practice in the past for the village to install water and sewer lines on a fee for service basis.

Scott said he thinks the village should give some assistance. Tom asked if there are loans we could give them. Walter said we could give them a CIG loan. Scott said he thinks it would be nice to facilitate a conversation between the college, the village, and the Audets. Duncan said he would be willing to contact Woody Dionne. If the college wants to maintain water to its property, he thinks the smartest thing to do would be to have the line cross the bridge. If it was done to our village standard, the village could accept it as a main. We could possibly provide a low or zero interest loan and the college might kick in. Then we would have an identified end point to our line. Gordy said he thinks that is the way to go. Rene said the town road right of way goes up to his flagpole. Duncan said we could put the line in the highway right of way. Scott said then if the college wanted to sell the property it would have water.

David asked for clarification about what we are talking about providing. Scott said we are talking about facilitating a conversation between the village, the college, and the Audets about possibly putting a water line across the bridge so both properties will have water. Then if the college wants to sell the property it will potentially have water. Otherwise the property loses value.

David said he agrees with Walter that we need to pick a direction and stay in that direction. Scott said he thinks legally it is gray. There are 2 curb stops. David said if an engineer drove down the road and looked at maps and considered that a feeder, he is leaning toward saying it is a feeder. Scott said he doesn't know that they realized there were two curb stops. Duncan said they did. David said he wants to make sure we stick to a direction. Scott said we also have to take care of our residents. We should at least have a conversation with the college. David agreed we need to have a conversation with the college. Scott said the worst thing that could happen would be if we forced the family into putting in a new service line and the college refused to give them permission.

Gordy said he would like Duncan to facilitate the meeting with the college. Others agreed. Gordy said we are not making a decision yet. We want more information and want to get the college involved.

Tom said the temporary connection to the Audets' house is very temporary. Water is provided from the outside spigot of another house and it is considered non-potable. They do have good chlorine at their taps. He thinks we need to revisit this next week. Duncan asked what could be done to provide a longer lasting temporary solution. Tom suggested the possibility of hooking up a line inside the house now providing water, tying in before the meter.

The board agreed that Tom should hook up an air line to the pipe and look for bubbles to try to locate the leak while Duncan contacts the college. Walter said that still doesn't resolve the issue of where village responsibility stops. Gordy said that will be at the next meeting. There can be a special meeting after Duncan facilitates a meeting with the college. Duncan said he thinks Woody will be busy until after graduation, but he can contact him. *(Rene left and Lea joined the meeting at 7:42.)*

### **9. Possible Grant Opportunity**

Lea said she wants to revisit a project she had talked about with the board in the past – extending the sidewalk on Railroad St. in the area of Parker and Stearns. The board decided previously not to go forward with that because the finances didn't make sense. She is working on a scenario where we could potentially build the sidewalk without any requirement for a local match but she doesn't have that confirmed yet. She showed the board a map indicating the location of the sidewalk. She thinks when Otter Creek Engineering looked at it the length was 350 ft. The updated cost would be around \$123K. There is a VTrans bicycle and pedestrian program that funds 90% and requires a 10% match. There is another grant program through the Northern Borders Regional Commission. She hopes that could cover the 10% match. She doesn't have coordination of the two grant sources figured out yet, but she needs to move forward with the VTrans grant. A cautionary approach would be to assume that we might be on the hook for the 10% match. Walter said we could always apply for the grant and then turn it down. Lea agreed.

Gordy asked if it would be like the School St. project where we would have to pay for all the engineering if we backed out. Duncan said that would be once we reached a certain point. Lea said she thinks we would find out if we were getting the second grant before we even had to sign with VTrans.

David asked what we would be improving. Lea said we would build a segment of sidewalk where it is missing on Railroad St. between the rail trail crossing and end of the currently existing sidewalk. David asked what a sidewalk there will offer. Lea said safety. This is a safety improvement project. David asked if we have had safety issues like people getting hurt or people calling and saying they don't feel safe. Lea said engineers identified safety as a concern there. From her personal experience she feels it would be helpful. It is wide open with a lot of truck traffic. And we will see more pedestrians in the area with the trail open.

Walter said we want to encourage people to leave the rail trail and come to the village. This has economic benefits. David asked if this will encourage that. Are there other things we can do? Scott said Hyde Park has done it and is nice to have. Gordy asked if it will hurt Parker and Stearns.

Walter said we will be getting more people using the trail. We want a safe route.

Scott asked which side of the road the new sidewalk would be on. Lea said the same side as the existing sidewalk. She would like to make the project work so it doesn't impact Parker and Stearns.

David said even if the grant covers 100% of the cost, all grants have strings attached. We will still be responsible for maintaining the sidewalk and replacing it if it cracks. It will cost money. Hopefully it would not impact commercial business when it is being installed. Is putting this in going to encourage any additional traffic? Are we receiving traffic from the trail as it is? He doesn't see this small strip encouraging more traffic. Walter said if nothing else it is a road marker saying "go this way."

Gordy said there are still going to be trucks there. He is against this. We talked about just painting white lines across the parking lot. Bob said if the sidewalk is going to be flush with the parking lot, he doesn't see why it wouldn't work just as well to paint lines. Gordy said he thinks a sidewalk will give people a false sense of security.

David asked if we have any numbers yet on rail trail use. Walter said it's technically not open yet. Scott said he is familiar with a bike trail in Colorado that is a booming economic jewel and another busy trail that goes from Ontario to the coast in Canada. There is a lot of traffic on those trails. Duncan said the bike trail between St. Albans and Richmond and the Stowe bike trail are economic engines.

David said he is all for bringing business to town. He is not sure if this is going to make a difference to whether someone comes to town or not. Lea said we are one of the few towns on the rail trail where the trail doesn't intersect our downtown. We are competing with towns where it does. Anything we can do to make the connection to downtown safer would be beneficial. Scott said he thinks there are a lot of people who want to bike commute.

Duncan said he wouldn't be surprised if the selectboard were willing to pick up the match if the other grant source is not available.

Scott said Parker and Stearns will have bike and pedestrian traffic going through there anyway. Now it is a free for all. With a sidewalk, they would know where the people would be. They wouldn't be all over the place on both sides of the road and down the center. Duncan said he thinks it could be designed to enhance in and out movement for Parker and Stearns. Walter said he would like to bring in Parker and Stearns and make sure they are in agreement with our plans, like we did with DJ's.

Walter said the rail trail is a gold mine waiting to happen and any way we can tap into it will help our downtown businesses. He thinks the future 10 to 20 years from now will be amazing.

Gordy asked how soon Lea needs to know if she should apply for the grant. He would like to talk to Chan. She said she could hold off until the June meeting but she would like to have some sense of the board's wishes. Scott and Walter said they like the idea. Gordy said he doesn't. Walter said if the existing business can't be made happy about the plan then he would back off, but he would like Lea to get moving on the grants. Bob said space is so limited there he doesn't see how we can funnel people through. David said he not convinced putting in a sidewalk is going to help.

Scott said he has heard the guys at Parker and Stearns complain about the speed at which people drive by. If there is a way to slow motor vehicles with a bumpout or sidewalk that would be helpful. He thinks a sidewalk might slow people down. Walter agreed. Lea said the engineers look at the place as a whole, including traffic calming, crosswalks, etc.

David said he doesn't see the benefit. He isn't necessarily convinced we will see the traffic on this rail trail. He asked who the potential customers are. Duncan said bicyclists and pedestrians in summer. Scott said people who do bike touring. This could theoretically hook

up to the bike trail in Canada. Bob asked if he thinks they would rather ride on the trail than on blacktop. Scott said yes, definitely. Walter said two bicyclists have already been killed by motorists on the road this year.

Bob said he would rather hold off on the sidewalk. David asked if this is an annual grant opportunity. Lea said yes. David said he wants to do more research. Scott said Hyde Park and Morrisville have sidewalk to the rail trail. Other communities have done it or are well on their way. He would hate to see Johnson lose another opportunity. *(Lea left at 8:08.)*

#### **10. Municipal Manager Report and Action Items**

Duncan said we have final plans for the School Street project. We are at a point where we need to go out to bid if we want to do the project this year. Is the board comfortable going out to bid or should there be a work session meeting to go over prints and plans first? Gordy and others said they would like to see the plans. Duncan said he thinks it is somewhat critical to try to do the project this year to coordinate with paving and structures grants. **David moved to authorize going out to bid for the School Street project, Bob seconded, and the motion was passed.**

Duncan said the designing engineer can't be the construction engineer so we have to put out an RFP for construction services. We will get proposals from engineering firms then pick a consultant.

Scott said he doesn't want a situation like the Main St. project where there is a problem and no one takes responsibility. Will the consultant be the inspector that qualifies work as being done according to the plan? Duncan said yes. Scott asked, if that is incorrect and the work is not done correctly, is there any pushback where the contractor is held solely responsible for the quality of the work? He would like something written into the contract. Duncan said he thinks we have it as solid as we can make it. We were able to convince VTrans to adopt a different standard for the concrete mix for the sidewalk, which should be better. And after considerable effort we have gotten the bid specs to include what is essentially a one-year warranty. We will hold onto the performance bond for one year. That is about as good as we could get. He thinks it is much better than what was in place for the Main St. project.

**Walter moved to authorize Lea and Duncan to move forward with an RFP for construction services for the School Street project, Scott seconded, and the motion was passed.**

Duncan said State of Vermont Financial Operations is asking for more information on the single audit finding from Gene Besaw that the village was overpaid \$4528 on the Main St. Project. Lea put a lot of time into research and we filed a response. It looks as if they may have underpaid us. *(Lea left and Arjay joined the meeting at 8:19.)*

#### **11. Follow-up to Large Equipment Capital Plan**

Arjay distributed an updated capital truck plan for the fire department. As he mentioned before, he would like to change the rotation of a couple of trucks. R1 is not holding up as well as he would like, so he wants to replace it before R2. The board agreed to accept the updated plan.

Duncan said we got the PACIF equipment grant. Arjay said last month he had said he planned to use some of last year's rollover money to replace bunker gear, but one set of gear was repaired so now only the 4 sets covered by the grant need to be replaced.

A property on Library St. had been converted to a duplex without sewer and water permits. The new owner is trying to correct that now. Arjay has been working on this. **Walter moved to authorize Gordy or Duncan to sign the preliminary sewer and water permit when it is complete for James Gustavson at 31 Library St., Scott seconded and the motion was passed.**

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

Troy said he still strongly feels we need to replace a Bobcat as soon as we can. He had a quote from Essex Equipment but they are no longer a Bobcat dealer. The dealer that is now handling Bobcats thought they could give us the same price we were quoted, but they need to look at our Bobcat to confirm the trade-in value. We were offered \$8500 for a trade-in. If we have a major problem with the Bobcat we will lose that value.

David asked if we are talking about paying cash or borrowing the money. Troy said they gave us some finance options. The cost will be about \$22K after the trade-in, including a brand new sanding unit, which costs about \$4700. David asked if we have money available to pay cash. Rosemary said she would rather borrow the money. She got quotes for an interest rate of less than 1.5%. Duncan said we need voter approval to borrow for more than one year. We could take out a one year note and try to roll it over at the annual meeting. The advantage of taking out a loan is that if we spend the cash it's gone. With a loan, we still have the money in case it is needed. The interest rate is very low. Scott suggested borrowing for a year and then if the voters say no to continued borrowing just buying it for cash.

Gordy said next year we should have a capital budget plan in place.

Scott said he would like to finance the Bobcat for at least a year to save our money in case something happens. There was discussion about how much of the cost can come from the electric department budget. Walter suggested buying it and financing it and having Duncan and Rosemary get information about past practices for the Bobcats and then we can decide how much will come from the electric department. Duncan said any borrowing for the electric department needs Public Law Section 111 approval, so the general department should borrow the money. The electric department can still make a contribution.

**Walter moved to authorize Troy to purchase a Bobcat if the trade-in value for the old Bobcat is approximately \$8500 and to authorize Rosemary to arrange one-year financing by the general fund, Scott seconded, and the motion was passed.**

Troy described the cause of an outage on April 15. It was the first outage since January.

Troy said he and Duncan met with Larry Wheeler about the twin bridge project. Larry wasn't comfortable with the plan Troy had but they came up with a plan that involves moving one of our poles that should work out well for all concerned.

All customers have been moved onto the new line we installed on Clay Hill. We still have to move 3 old poles. We had a voltage reduction test on April 15. There were no issues. At the last safety meeting, hard hats were discussed. It came to Troy's attention that Cliff's and Nate's hard hats were due for replacement, so they are being replaced. Gloves, sleeves, and blankets were sent out for testing. Fire extinguishers were all tested. Street sweeping has started and is about half done. Troy arranged for the state to do sweeping on Lower Main, which saved us time and work. They wanted to keep their catch basins from filling up. Troy got a permit for crosswalk painting. Once sweeping is complete and the asphalt is the right temperature he will start painting. He has been working with Tom on water line issues and going through tools on the trucks, changing out things that are not in good condition.

Gordy asked if fertilizer and seed could be put on the green areas on Main St. Duncan suggested waiting a couple more weeks to see if they green up on their own. The board agreed.

Troy asked if he can get a list of things he needs to keep track of for reporting, like right of way cutting, and when the reports need to be sent in. Duncan said reporting is mostly tied to the calendar year. Probably when he gets the VPPSA report complete he will sit down with Troy and go over it.

**13. *Municipal Manager Report and Action Items (continued)***

Duncan researched what other municipal utilities use for invoicing adders. We add 25% to all material that gets billed out. All the others that responded to Duncan's email also use 25% except Hardwick and Morrisville. Is the board okay with a 25% adder?

Scott asked, if we are moving forward with village power are we going to need more cash flow for safety oversight to make that happen? Do we need to find money elsewhere? Duncan said this would not be a big money maker.

Duncan did a study of our employees and their benefits and wants to change the benefit adder from 55% to 65% based on what we are actually paying in benefits. The board agreed to that, as well as keeping the 25% materials adder.

Duncan reminded the board that last year both boards decided to go with an asphalt shingle roof for the municipal building and to hire Steve Pitkin to develop a bid specification. Duncan recommends also hiring Steve Pitkin to oversee construction. He has asked him to prepare a proposal for providing this service.

Scott said he thinks we would want to make sure that the contractor is using good fall protection in line with OSHA regs. He thinks that should be part of the responsibility of the person overseeing construction. He asked if there will be an ice and water membrane. Duncan said yes, he thinks the recommendation was for the membrane to go back about 6 feet and all the way in the valleys. He thinks that will fix any ice problem.

**Walter moved to put the roof replacement out to bid, David seconded, and the motion was passed.**

The Tree Board is willing to mulch and compost all the Main St. trees but they will need about 4 yards of mulch and some compost. **Walter moved to approve a sum not to exceed \$200 for mulch and compost for the Tree Board's use and to direct the village crew to truck the mulch and compost for the Tree Board, David seconded, and the motion was passed.**

Some manholes and valve boxes will need to be adjusted for a paving job on 100C. VTrans will include it as part of the paving contract but expects the bidder would charge about \$1000 per manhole. We have the option of adjusting them ourselves. Duncan suggests we do that. **David moved to adjust the manholes and valve boxes on 100C with our own forces, Bob seconded, and the motion was passed.**

We received notification from the Public Service Department of Estimated Allocation of Costs in the amount of \$96,000 for services related to tracking and reporting on NEPOOL and ISO-NE. The portion we pay will be a tiny fraction based on our load ratio share statewide.

A tenant on Railroad St. with a sewer line problem spoke to Susan and said he was not going to pay his water and sewer bill because he hasn't had sewer service for a couple of months. He is collecting sewage in portable tanks and having it hauled away. The sewer line froze. Susan recommended that he pay the bill to avoid disconnect, notify his landlord, and deduct the cost from his rent. He paid the bill but attached a note saying he was paying under protest. Scott asked, whoever owns the property pays the bills, right? Duncan said the owner is liable for the bill, but there are situations where the tenant pays it. Scott asked if we could have the town health officer go look at the situation with sewage put in tanks. Duncan said he can have Sharon Duffy check it.

Duncan read the language the board had previously discussed for a policy regarding lawn signs at the municipal building:

*It shall be the policy of the Town of Johnson Selectboard and the Village of Johnson Trustees that no signs be allowed for outside display on the town/village owned property located at 293 Lower Main St. West, except for municipal purposes, including municipally sponsored entities, organizations and events.*

**Walter moved to approve the Town and Village Policy for Placement of Signs on Municipal Building Property, David seconded, and the motion was passed.**

The board has been asked to authorize placement of signs at the Village Green notifying people of the new location of the Johnson Farmer's Market. The board agreed signs can be placed there for 14 consecutive days from the start of the Farmer's Market.

Kyle Nuse and Laraway are offering to provide some picnic tables for the Village Green. Walter said that would be okay as long as they are stable so we don't have any liability. David asked if we are opening ourselves up to liability if the public uses them, or if our insurance covers it. Duncan said we would probably be liable, but that is what we have

insurance for. Board members agreed to accept the picnic tables and asked that they be made strong. Walter said they should have no protruding screws or bolts.

Duncan said he has received no response to his letter about the sanitary survey and the issue of whether we need a backup generator connection. Bob asked what the sanitary survey is. Duncan said the state Water Supply Division does regular surveys of the water system, looking for any issues or violations of our water operating permit.

The board agreed Duncan should draft a letter notifying Morrisville Water and Light that we are not going to sign the contract they prepared and that Gordy should look at the letter and sign it if he is okay with it.

Duncan said he talked with Dave Mullett at VPPSA about a shared safety officer. It will be put on the VPPSA agenda. Morrisville is interested in it.

Troy and Duncan met with Jim Fontaine this morning. He is willing to work for us on a limited basis. Scott asked if he has his own worker's comp. Duncan said he will sign a document stating he is not our employee and is not eligible for our worker's comp. Gordy asked if the board can have a list of what Jim is doing.

Duncan said there is a meeting tomorrow with Ken Harvey, who wants to put in 8 more trailer units. Jim will come to that meeting.

Duncan distributed a cost comparison sheet for wage adjustments. In the budget that was approved, 65% of 3 employees' salaries was assigned to the electric department. That includes our best estimate of overtime – 250 hours. The total for those 3 people for all budgets (electric, general, wastewater, and water) is \$499,986. The possible adjustments to salaries discussed in executive session at the last meeting would increase the electric budget by \$6,383, the general department by \$5,100, the wastewater department by \$989, and the water department by 989. The total increase to all budgets would be \$13,500 or 0.4%. The municipal salary survey for 2015 shows the average foreman's wage is \$37.91 and the average first class lineworker's wage is \$31.90. That gives us an idea what pay would look like if we were competitive with the average of municipal utilities. Scott asked if the first class linemen in the survey are all 1 FTE. Duncan said the only municipalities he knows of where linemen have shared responsibilities are Hyde Park and Orleans. All the rest, as far as he knows, are 1 FTE.

The next 2 comparisons are based on 2 FTE's, if we went with a contract situation. There are 2 different scenarios. In the first one there are 2 FTE's and .6 FTE for \$25 added and in the other .5 FTE for \$20K is added. In the first scenario he assigned 30% to electric, 45% to general, and 12.5% each to water and sewer. In the next one, he was thinking about a transition period. He assigned 40% to electric, 40% to general, and 10% each to water and sewer. That is the only scenario where the general department would have lower costs. That gives us some idea what the impacts on other departments will be of decisions made. If we don't contract with MW&L, the approved budget goes down by \$120K.

Walter said we are talking about an 8 or 9% tax increase even though the dollar amount is small.

Gordy asked what it would take to have a rate decrease for electric. David said he doesn't see any decreases. If we take out the \$120K we still have to use that money to hire someone. Gordy said we would only have to use part of it. David said when we figure in the benefits, hiring someone to replace Duncan would cost about that amount. Duncan said his salary is already in here. The only salaries he adjusted were the 3 existing employees.

Duncan said if we keep the 3 employees we have now, it will be a work in progress. We still have to find out whether Troy can handle the paperwork. David said we haven't decided if we are going to hire a replacement for Steve. Scott asked what savings from not hiring another Steve Towne does to the cost. David said most of the \$120K would go to the Steve Towne position. Scott asked if it would be a wash. Duncan said he thinks it would be close to a wash. Scott said he is not sure if the current employees can absorb sharing responsibility for what Steve did. Troy said no one has ever shared with him the difference between what Steve did and what Troy does. He would like to see that. Scott said he would too. Duncan said Steve was 85% electric and Troy is 65%. Gordy asked if Troy's percentage could increase. Duncan said he thinks it could go to 85%. Gordy said he thinks the selectboard will want to know if we are interested in a shared public works superintendent.

Gordy said we will know by the end of the year if we need to replace Steve Towne. It will depend on what kind of person replaces Duncan. He would like to see Troy's wages about 85% electric. That would help water, sewer, and general a bit. We need an informational meeting and maybe to put something into water and electric bills. Scott said he thinks that would be helpful. There is a lot of misinformation out there.

Geico Insurance has denied the claim for Jeremy Farr. Duncan has prepared a bill but hasn't yet found an address to send it to.

Gordy said Eric had called him to ask about action related to Travis Hill's issue. Duncan said Travis will attend the selectboard meeting next week. He thinks Eric was thinking that if the village accepts the line to the Audet's house then Travis Hill will ask about his. Travis's bill didn't increase significantly either month he was running water and he hasn't asked for adjustments to his bills.

Duncan is still working on GMP back-up service. He has been too busy to write up the changes discussed on the policy on cost responsibility for sewer connections. The electric system voltage conversion and T&D study is in limbo at this point.

#### **14. Adjourn**

**Walter moved to adjourn at 10:02, David seconded, and the motion was passed.**