

JOHNSON SELECTBOARD/VILLAGE TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2021

Present:

Selectboard Members: Mike Dunham, Beth Foy (via Zoom), Nat Kinney, Eric Osgood, Eben Patch

Village Trustees: Steve Hatfield (via Zoom), Diane Lehouiller, Will Jennison, BJ Putvain, Ken Tourangeau

Others: Brian Story, Rosemary Audibert, Lois Frey, Joie Lehouillier, Melanie Riddle, Kyle Nuse, Greg Tatro, Doug Molde, Casey Romero (via Zoom), John Mills, Charles Gallanter

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. *Call to Order / Review of Agenda and Any Adjustments, Changes and Additions*

Eric called the selectboard to order at 5:59. He added discussion on face masking in the municipal building to the agenda. Will called the trustees to order at 6:00.

2. *Web Hosting and Management Request for Proposals*

Eric said our previous web host passed away. Eben asked if that company was just a one employee company. Brian said yes. He reached out to see if anyone is taking over but hasn't heard back. The company was owned by Grant Harper.

Beth asked if this discussion is about hosting or more than that. Brian said he would be interested in hearing if companies offer design services but this is just about hosting. (*Diane arrived at 6:02.*) Beth asked, hosting is our immediate need but we will have further discussion in the future about a website rebuild? This is not about website rebuild? Brian said that is right. Eric asked if Grant's proposals for a website rebuild are wasted effort. Brian said if we like that design we can share it with whoever we hire in the future. (*Greg Tatro arrived at 6:05.*)

Brian had prepared a draft RFP for web hosting and management. **BJ moved to approve the RFP for hosting and management of the village/town website as presented, Diane seconded and the motion was passed.**

Eben moved to approve the RFP for hosting and management of the village/town website as presented, Mike seconded and the motion was passed.

3. *Jointly Owned Property Investments and Repairs*

Brian said there have been past discussions between the selectboard and trustees over this but nothing in writing. He suggests getting something in writing outlining responsibilities for investment and maintenance on jointly owned buildings. The village is about to make a pretty substantial investment in one building.

Will asked if on paper all the garages are jointly owned. Brian said yes. (*Steve joined the meeting at 6:07.*) Eric said the buildings are jointly owned but the town and village have each maintained and supported one building on their own. However both entities own both buildings so there is liability to both. There probably should be clearer responsibilities.

Beth asked if we have an inventory. Brian said there is not a formal list but we probably could name the buildings. The municipal building is jointly owned. The fire station is solely owned by

the village. Everything in Old Mill Park is owned by the town. Everything else in the complex at the end of Railroad Street is jointly owned: the food shelf building, the town and village garages and the lower and upper storage. He thinks jointly owned property would include the salt shed and the staging area. Nat suggested the smoke house would also be jointly owned. Rosemary asked if the fire department built that building. Will said yes, the fire department constructed it as a training building. Eric said in that case it is a village building. Brian said the town built the salt shed. But without anything in writing he thinks it would be hard to say those buildings are not jointly owned since they are on jointly owned property.

Will said common sense indicates that since the town built it, the salt shed belongs to the town. Nat suggested that likewise the smoke house should belong to the village. Eric agreed that would make sense. He said the mill house, the cold storage building and the two garages would still be jointly owned. Eben said another jointly owned building would be the partial shell.

Mike said he was a village trustee long ago and during that time the trustees talked about maintenance of the old mill house (or lack of) and 30 years later essentially nothing has been done. He thinks either the town or the village should own that building completely. Because it is a joint building, nothing ever seems to get done to it. The boards always have to wait for a joint meeting to discuss it and then usually there is just discussion and no action. He thinks if one entity owned it entirely something could get done, and something needs to get done soon. Will agreed. He said the village's only interest in that building is Troy's office, which he is using because of the conditions in the village garage. Will would not be opposed to the town taking over that building if the village could continue to use the space Troy currently has until the village garage issue is fixed. BJ, Ken and Diane agreed with that. Beth asked if the location of Troy's office will change at some point. Will said yes. Right now the village crew needs a place to meet and would like to continue to use that space until the village garage is fixed.

Nat said he thinks this is a great direction. Very close to the building there is a generator pad that is jointly owned. We will have to make provision for that. It provides power to the town and village garages in case of a power outage. Are we talking about just the building itself or some amount of land around it? Brian said we had previously talked about carving that into a separate parcel so we could go through with brownfields redevelopment. Will said he thinks either not including the generator pad in the parcel or having a right of way for the generator will work.

Doug said if you have own a building but not the footprint that goes with it, your investment is suspect long-term. Will said he would think a footprint would go with the building. Doug said if we are going to subdivide the property we will need a survey. Eric said the salt shed and smoke house will each need to have a defined footprint. Doug said times he has seen people building on someone else's property it hasn't worked well long-term. Will agreed that some land should go with the building.

Beth said she did not think this discussion was about transferring ownership. To her, transferring ownership makes it more complicated. Is a good short-term step having a memorandum of understanding with a long-term goal of transferring property? Will said he thinks it would be a good idea to agree on the end goal today. Would Beth agree that there is no reason not to do that? Beth said yes, if we can keep it simple and it is not too much work for Brian.

Will said he thinks the smoke house should be dealt with similarly. The village should own it along with a piece of land. Nat said the salt shed is almost a temporary building and could be moved anywhere. We don't need to do a subdivision for the salt shed. He asked if there is a foundation for the smoke house. Will said yes.

Will said he would say that the village should be responsible for its garage and the town for the town garage. What about the cold storage building? Eric said when we first bought the whole Tatro complex the original plan was that the village would eventually take over the cold storage building and what is now the village garage would become the cold storage building. (*John Mills arrived at 6:24.*) Would it be a cheaper course for the village if that still happened? Will said it would be cheaper to tear out what is currently in the village garage and turn that building into cold storage. If the selectboard was willing to switch use of the buildings like that he would be very interested in that option.

Rosemary said she thinks Troy has some issues with the cold storage building concerning flooding. Eric asked if it has ever flooded. Rosemary said it has come very close. Eben said he has heard from employees that there is not space to work on the town dump trucks in the town garage and that work has to be done in the cold storage building. Will said he will meet with Troy to discuss this option. Eric said he doesn't see where it really matters to the town. Nat said there is significant use of the building for recreation storage, but that is not an unsolvable issue. Doug asked if the rec storage needs heat. Brian said yes.

Doug suggested taking a hard look at the possibility of using the cold storage building as the village garage and considering whether avoiding any issues with that building are worth the village spending a million dollars. We usually have pretty good warning about floods. He would assume we would be able to accommodate the trucks elsewhere if a flood was expected. Will said we would need to get an elevation shot of the river. We know where the flood was in 1995. Diane asked, couldn't we find ways to protect the building from being flooded? Will said not with the amount of money we have. Brian said we did just get a grant for flood mitigation just up the river from the cold storage building. That work will probably change the risk of flooding at that building. (*Charles Gallanter arrived at 6:31.*)

Eric suggested that the town and village each come up with pros and cons for switching use of the village garage and the cold storage building. Will asked how full the rec committee storage area is. Nat and Brian said it is quite full. Will asked, is there more than would fit in Troy's office? Brian, Nat and Beth all said yes. Beth said there is a lot of very important equipment stored there.

Eben asked, if we are going to talk about a memorandum of understanding, shouldn't we include jointly owned equipment? That is a gray area where the town usually loses. Brian suggested he can start by drafting up an MOU that addresses the three most important buildings. It would say that building ownership remains joint, that investment in the village garage by the village doesn't obligate the town to contribute anything and investment in the town garage does not obligate the village to contribute anything and that spending will be 50-50 on the cold storage building. He doesn't know how we could compel action on joint buildings if one entity wants to make improvements. He doesn't think that is something we want to get into. The salt shed and

smoke house can be addressed in a similar way, stating that there is no obligation for one entity to pay for the other entity's building. That way it will be clearer that when the villages making an investment in the garage the assumption is that the town will not invest anything in it.

Eben said all the work for this MOU falls on Brian. Brian said he can do it but it would be great if he had assistance. Will asked if the trustees want to ask Meredith to help. Brian said that would be helpful because she is very familiar with the village's needs.

Nat brought up the shell of a building. He doesn't know who uses that. Brian said the town stores a couple of things there but it is mostly used by the village. Nat said he thinks it needs fairly immediate attention. It doesn't look very safe. Eric said it is an eyesore. Beth agreed. She feels it is dangerous. She would prefer we find other places to store things. Nat said it probably should just be demolished. Eric asked if we have a need to keep it. Nat said we need to involve our staff. He doesn't know exactly what the town uses it for. Will said he is not familiar with what is there either. Nat said at the least we need an inspection of the building to see how we can mitigate immediate liability. Will said he can go look at it. Eben said he could meet with Will to look at it.

Eben asked who owns the fuel pumps. Brian said they are jointly owned. Eben said the metering at the pumps is terrible. Brian suggested that getting a new meter for the gas pumps should be discussed as a separate issue.

Nat said the brownfield study envisioned the whole town/village parcel being turned into recreational space. Putting a lot of money into the village building there is basically saying no to that idea. Will said other options suggested would not work for the village. Nat said if the village puts a million dollars into that building and the town and village decide to sell the property with proceeds split 50/50 the village will get the short end of the stick. Will said he doesn't think the village would agree to sell.

It was agreed that Brian and Meredith will draw up a draft memorandum of understanding. Will summarized what was agreed on. The municipal building is jointly owned and the town and village will jointly make decisions about it. Responsibility for the old mill house will be turned over to the town. The smoke house will be owned by the village. The electric department garage will be the responsibility of the village and the town maintenance garage will be the responsibility of the town. The cold storage building will be a joint responsibility. The salt shed will be owned by the town. Beth said she would want it to be part of the understanding that where there is shared responsibility each entity will commit to maintenance needed by the other entity. She is on board with what has been discussed, contingent on the recreation department and the employees being okay with it. Eric said after the MOU is drawn up it will come back to the boards for review.

4. *Interest in an Economic Development Director/Grant Writer/Planner Position*

Brian said there has been discussion about the value of having an employee dedicated to economic development and grant writing again. There was a joint employee that did this in the past. We haven't had the position in quite a few years and we are feeling the absence. Groups like Johnson Works and the Planning Commission are not getting the staff attention they got in the past. The exact duties of the position are up for debate. The first step is assessing interest from both boards. Now that we have gotten rid of most joint positions he doesn't think we would

create another joint position. If this were a town employee would there be interest in the village paying for some number of hours? We could have an MOU specifying that a certain number of hours of the person's time would be for working for the village. When we had an economic development coordinator the proportion of the person's salary contributed by the town and village varied from year to year depending on the work that was anticipated. This person could be an employee of either the town or the village.

Eben said having someone in this position could be very advantageous or if they don't get enough grants to cover their salary it could mean more money coming out of taxpayers' pockets. It would be good if they had to fund a portion of their salary from grants and it led to us getting more grants but it could mean losing money for the town. BJ agreed. The village is having a hard time finding a manager. If they have to pay another employee they will have to cut back on the manager's salary and hours which could make it harder to find someone. He would be in favor of something like per diem pay but it would be hard to have a salaried or hourly employee with what the village is already dealing with.

Mike said Lea brought in about \$14 million to the community. Whether her salary was paid for with grants was immaterial. The grants more than paid for her salary. We would be hard-pressed to find someone of her caliber. One large grant would pay the employee's salary for many years. He doesn't think we should worry too much about that.

Diane said there are so many organizations that can help a grant writer and economic development person that we will succeed in getting grants. She doesn't think we will need to worry about that. We are not doing anything to make Johnson a place people want to move to or come to for work or play. We need to do something. She thinks some of the ideas she wrote about in her letter to the boards would be very beneficial to many people in this town. If we don't give it a try she thinks we will stay stuck. We need to get NVU, Laraway and the Studio Center together and work with them and get something going to revitalize this town. She has a letter from Laraway in which they say they will help with whatever we come up with. She is hearing the same thing from the NVU president and the Studio Center's executive director.

At Beth's request, Diane read the letter she had written to the boards. She wants the boards to talk about vision and branding for our village and town. The Brownfields Report stated we should try to brand ourselves "the Art Capital of Vermont." Diane listed multiple reasons we can claim that branding. She listed 5 projects she would like to see the town or village pursue grant funding for. She feels we need an economic development person for the brownfields site project so we can start to implement the suggestions in the Area Wide Plan. She listed a number of organizations that would be available to us for grants/funding. She feels we need to decide what to do with the Jewett property. Making it more attractive would sell it more easily. She suggested possible ideas for the site. If we started work on improving the lots, maybe a buyer would consider helping with development costs. She suggests we consider buying vacant buildings on Main Street to make them usable and sellable. She suggests getting the word out that both town and village have revolving loan funds that are not being used at very low interest rates. She suggests creating a marketing and branding plan in coordination with NVU. She said she would like to make motions to brand Johnson as the Art Capital of Vermont and to hire an economic development person.

Mike said he would like to see a joint meeting of the boards at least once a month. Will said he doesn't know if a monthly meeting is necessary but he agrees that the two boards should move forward with things they agree on and slowly whittle away at things they don't agree on. As to a motion regarding branding the village and/or town, he doesn't think that is germane to the warned topics on the agenda. He would love to see the town take that up at its next meeting and he will put it on the next trustee board agenda. He wishes he had had more time to read Diane's letter before the meeting. He doesn't think he had enough time to absorb the information to make movement on it tonight. He suggested maybe Brian would have a ballpark cost figure for a grant writer position.

Brian said he can do research on the going rates. He doesn't have anything prepared. Will asked if Diane has an idea of the cost. Diane said no. A grant writer she called a while back said it would depend on whether she was going to be hired to go after grants we already knew about. Another person she talked to would charge \$100 per hour if she were hired just to apply for a grant we already knew about. The person she has in mind would be a grant hunter.

Will said the village will have difficulty not being in deficit. He would like to get a cost for Diane's proposal. He is assuming the town would be amenable to a 50-50 split until grants come in and then the salary would be pro-rated.

Nat said he has a real problem with hiring joint employees. He thinks it creates problems when one employee is reporting to two different boards. The person could be hired by one entity and contracted out to the other. Will said he doesn't disagree with that.

Will said he will propose to his board that they look at the cost when working on their annual budget and see if it is something they can afford.

Eric said he is hugely supportive of an economic development position. Lea brought in about \$14 million. We can't think of this as the person getting grants to pay for their salary. It doesn't work like that. Some years there may be few grants. Typically when we get grants the person in this position administers the grant and that pays for their salary. When the town and village decided to have separate administrators the town administrator position could not be full-time without adding in economic development. The problem he has seen is that economic development gets backburnered because other matters are more urgent. Brian spends more time doing administrative work. We would benefit from having a dedicated person. He would not feel comfortable with a motion to hire someone tonight. The town will be working on its budget soon. He thinks it will be a struggle this year. There are a lot of challenges with inflation. We need to think about whether we can afford the position and how many hours a week we could afford.

Diane said she thinks if we don't do this we won't move forward. We won't be doing what we really should be doing with the town.

Eric said the last time we created a position like this it was a separate article that was approved by the voters. Maybe we would go that route again.

Nat said he thinks Diane just scratched the surface of the potential benefits of branding Johnson as the Art Capital of Vermont. There is also an opportunity for branding with outdoor recreation. Maybe it was just hyperbole, but when Diane said that we are doing nothing to move Johnson forward that hit him wrong. Looking around the room he sees people who have been putting a lot of effort into moving Johnson forward.

Mike said this will be a difficult year but there is a cost if we don't do anything. We need to strike while the iron is hot and money is available. Diane said she thinks both boards need to do it together. It would be beneficial to both village and town.

Beth said she agrees with Mike. She said when we hear about a rate of \$100 per hour that is for someone who is a contractor. If we were to hire someone she imagines their rate would be closer to \$25 or \$30 per hour. We have to invest to get something back. Having an economic development employee would support some of the higher priority items on the town's priority list that we don't talk about enough. As we go into budget season it would be good to be prepared with what the funding opportunities are to make sure we have an understanding of what funds are out there to help support paying for the position. We could in theory hire someone in a long-term temporary position that is grant funded.

Will asked Steve how he feels about the trustees taking this up as part of budget planning as opposed to voting now. Steve said he would like to take it up as soon as possible.

Doug said he is curious about whether this would assist the college. NVU president John Mills said NVU needs a vibrant community to bring in the quality faculty and staff they need. We need to approve the attractiveness of the community. NVU wants to be part of anything to try to invest in the vibrancy of the community. NVU needs to sell the whole community. He thinks there are phenomenal opportunities to advertise both arts and outdoor recreation. He had a hard time finding out things like where he could get access to the river or put in a canoe. He had difficulty finding out about art facilities. Johnson has the backbone of something but is not promoting it. He agrees with his predecessor Elaine Collins that if Johnson calls itself the arts center it has to be able to fulfill that promise. Johnson needs a strategic plan. NVU would be willing to invest resources in developing that. Right now NVU is recruiting five high-level faculty members. The applicant pool is all from out of state. Will they be able to attract them with what we can offer in our community? He is not sure. NVU won't prosper without Johnson prospering. He loves the idea of branding Johnson as an arts center but the town should not put that branding out there until they can fulfill the promise. A plan is needed to do that. If the town wants a grant writer who can provide a good return on the investment right away we will need to go with a top notch person and that will not be cheap. If the town hires someone who has less experience we will have to expect that it will take about 3 years to get a return on the investment. He suggested that there could be a QR code on signs as people enter town that leads to information on local opportunities.

Greg Tatro said he is chair of the LEDC board. If the town or village has certain types of grants they are looking for, the LEDC executive director could keep an eye out for them. That is a place to start. One thing he hasn't heard mentioned is matching funds. They can add up quickly. If the town or village gets grants some more money will have to be paid. Grants may be available to match other grants. A college intern might be able to help fill out applications for

some easier grants. Jenna's Promise found a person in Burlington to help with rant writing. She charged \$7K for one big grant application but she is also teaching at people at Jenna's Promise how to write grants. He thinks John is right about the arts branding. He thinks there should be a public vote before deciding on that branding. Branding is important. If we have something to sell, people may come. As John said, we need a plan. He thinks it may be time to think about selling the Jewett property to a developer. He doesn't think the town has the resources to develop it. He supported buying it but if we don't see much money coming down the road for development that may be an option to consider. He suggests hiring a grant writer on a contract basis rather than having a permanent employee who would get salary and benefits.

Charles Gallanter said the town and village plan is going to expire in 2 years and it will take 2 years to write a new one. The Planning Commission doesn't have time. He would like to emphasize Greg's point that grants are not free money because they require matches, staff time and board time. And they come with conditions. The work has to be done in a certain way. He is not a big fan of bringing in a lot of stimulus money.

Melanie Riddle said LCPC helps municipalities with grant writing and development ideas. If the town didn't want to hire someone but was looking at a grant application there could be a contract with LCPC. (*John Mills left at 7:42.*) Brian said if our focus is going to be on obtaining grants LCPC is a great partner. If our focus is more on economic development, research and planning, that is not really what LCPC will be able to provide. We need both. We can get assistance for grant writing right now from LCPC.

Nat said if we were ready to hire someone we would budget for it now, the budget would pass in March and the position would start in July. What is the village budget cycle? Rosemary said the village is on the calendar year. Nat said so we could start hiring in July at the earliest.

BJ said grant writing will be part of the village manager position. Nat asked if that position will be full time. BJ and Ken said it will be 30 hours, the same as what Meredith was working. But they are having a hard time finding someone for that position.

Mike said he thinks we would be better off contracting with someone now rather than waiting until July. Brian said he thinks we can do both. We need more than just grant writing. We would benefit from someone doing other parts of economic development and planning.

Beth brought up having to meet the requirements of grants. Eric said there are people who can write grant applications and administer grants for us. What we are lacking is someone looking for grants. Brian does not have the luxury of time for that. We have been working on the Jewett property for years. We need someone who is focused and dedicated to those type of projects. Brian said we also need to devote money to matching funds. For the Jewett property we said we would not spend taxpayer money but without that we are not seeing grant opportunities. There are opportunities but they need a contribution from us.

Doug said the Main Street project happened because the Planning Commission had a plan ready when an opportunity came. That grant only happened because we were ready for it. The person we hire creates that capability. If the trustees want to plan a project he suggests a sidewalk to

Jolley and the trailer park. He feels the recreational aspects of this community have to be made public.

Greg said the first action item has to be to figure out what we want in this town. Sidewalk? Extension of water and sewer lines so there can be more development? If that is narrowed down the town can talk to LEDC. The town needs to figure out pretty quickly what it wants and then LEDC and LCPC and the legislators can look out for those grants. Greg suggested calling state representatives' and senators' offices in that case.

Eric said he thinks the next step for the selectboard is to take up the economic development position during budget meetings. If the voters approve it in March that is when we can start working on hiring someone.

Will said the trustees will talk about branding and they will have a proposal for voters at their annual meeting. Eric said he thinks part of the economic development person's job could be to get organized about branding and get different groups involved.

Diane said because Meredith is working half time and because the village is paying one less lineman the village has money to hire someone on a contract basis as Greg suggested. We could pick the project we want to have done and hire someone to start now. We have the money now. She does not think we should wait. Will said that can be discussed at the next trustee board meeting.

Eric asked, are we thinking of hiring a consultant? We could hire a consultant tonight. BJ said he likes that idea. Eric said there are advantages to both a consultant and an employee. Diane said we could pick a project and hire a person just to write a grant for that project. If both boards decide to hire someone in July we can do that but we have the money to hire someone now. Will asked if she is sure. Diane said the village is paying Meredith for 15 hours not 30 so we have the rest of the money that was budgeted for her salary.

Greg suggested the possibility of Johnson's branding referring to artisans rather than art. That would include more people. BJ said we also have a lot of outdoor activities. Will said he thinks outdoor activities are easier to brand. Art won't draw repeat visits because it won't change as much as outdoor opportunities.

5. *Date for Joint Meeting to Discuss Merger Topics*

Brian said some representatives from the town and village boards have met have talked about planning for a meeting to discuss a merger. The two boards wanted to start meeting sometime in January. Beth suggested a date of January 12. She said the representatives from the two boards (her, Eben, Steve and BJ) met in early November. Their proposal for the agenda of the first meeting is to have three topics: rules of engagement, identifying work needed and maybe creating subcommittees to address those items (e.g. defining gaps in the report that was published) and listing the things we need to successfully move forward with merger talks (e.g. lists of department, groups and employees within the town and village, lists of all assets and liabilities and types of work and responsibilities.)

It was agreed to schedule a joint meeting on January 12 for merger discussion.

6. Masking in Municipal Building

Eric said the selectboard asked Brian and Rosemary to ask employees their thoughts on a mask mandate. He understands that employees are supportive of it and that trustees agreed to a mask mandate for the downstairs of the municipal building only. Will said what the trustees voted on was to have masks be highly recommended. BJ said they will be mandatory in the office. Will said employees will not have to wear masks at their desks but will be required to if they are moving around the office.

Eric said he is thinking about the meeting space upstairs, which is used by seniors, who are the most vulnerable. Did the trustees talk about extending the mandate beyond the office? Will said there was not majority support for that. Steve said he was in favor of it. Nat said he would support a building-wide mask mandate. Ken said then we would have to require masks in every municipal building in the town and village. We can't just pick one. Nat said the public comes into this building. They have business to do here but not at the other buildings. It is a small thing to ask people and it protects our employees. He would ask the trustees to reconsider.

Mike brought up the possibility that the municipal building could be owned by the town and the village could pay rent. That way one entity could make decisions on the building and the two boards wouldn't have to go back and forth about it.

Diane said she thinks the trustees should reconsider. It is important. We want to think of other people and protect them and be safe.

Will said he would be okay with putting it on each month's agenda so the board can keep current with the current status and can vote each month based on the current status.

Nat moved and Eben seconded to endorse and support the mask policy the trustees approved and to support a mask mandate throughout the municipal building if the trustees approve it.

Beth said she feels the selectboard's motion should not be contingent on the trustees' vote. The selectboard should vote whatever it wants and if the trustees change their minds they can agree with the selectboard's motion or have their own. She would like to see everyone who attends board meetings wear masks regardless of the building mandate. She thinks if the selectboard is hosting the meeting they have the prerogative to require that. Eric said he thinks she is right that the selectboard on its own can require masks for its own meetings. Beth said the old mill house is another public building because the food shelf is there and the Boy Scouts meet there.

Nat said he would like to see a mask requirement for the whole building. But we need both boards to act for that. His motion is the selectboard acting and it gives the trustees the option to act if they decide they want to. Beth said if we keep the motion as is we are restricting ourselves in terms of our requirement at selectboard meetings. Nat said Eric as chair can set rules for participation at selectboard meetings.

Eric said it was brought up at the last selectboard meeting that the legislature approved selectboards being able to set town-wide mandates for all businesses and public spaces. He

personally would not support that. The board did not take action on that. The way the law is written it exempts two of the most public areas: churches and schools.

The motion was passed in a roll call vote with Beth, Nat and Eben in favor and Mike opposed.

Beth moved and Nat seconded that the selectboard require masks at selectboard meetings.

Eben said he thinks we should discuss this at the next selectboard meeting. At the last two selectboard meetings there was only one person not wearing a mask. If it comes down to employees wanting this to feel safe he will support it. He hasn't heard a request from employees to have masks at selectboard meetings so he wouldn't support it. Brian said he would prefer it if people wore masks at our meetings. We are spending hours in a room with poor ventilation. It might be appropriate to make a motion about this tonight so that people can know before the selectboard meeting what the expectations will be. Rosemary said Brian stated it very well. Eben said because employees want it, he will support it.

The motion was passed in a roll call vote with Beth, Nat and Eben in favor and Mike opposed.

7. ***Adjourn***

The selectboard and trustees both adjourned at 8:21.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths