

JOHNSON VILLAGE TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MONDAY, MAY 9, 2022

Present:

Trustees: Steve Hatfield, Lynda Hill, Diane Lehouiller, Ken Tourangeau (via Zoom)

Others: Rosemary Audibert, Dan Copp, Kelly Locke, BJ (via Zoom), Cynthia Hennard (via Zoom), Shayne Spence, Arjay West, Sophia Berard, Elise Annes (Momentum Consulting)

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. Call to Order

Steve called the meeting to order at 6:02.

2. Review of Agenda and Any Adjustments, Changes, Additions

No changes to the agenda were needed.

3. Review and Approve Minutes of Trustee Meetings

Lynda moved to approve the minutes of April 11, 2022, Diane seconded and the motion was passed.

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

Rosemary said Waterville and Belvidere have both paid their first installments for fire department services. We won't receive PILOT payments until November. Electric sales for the first 4 months of the year were 34% of budget. Power costs for the first 2 months were 25% of budget. Usually power costs more in winter than summer. (*Shayne Spence arrived at 6:06.*) Diane asked Rosemary if anything stands out to her. Rosemary said no, not at this point. Rosemary said water sales for the first 4 months were 30% of budget. Diane asked if that is pretty normal compared to other years. Rosemary said it is down from a normal year. Dan said it is up from last year. He noted that the college used to have a lot of leaks that they have fixed, reducing their usage. Their sales are up from last year, however. Rosemary said sewer assessments were 34% of budget. Ken asked, everything is looking on track? Rosemary said yes. Dan said heating costs for the wastewater plant will probably go to 60% of budget soon because he is going to fill the tanks at the wastewater plant but that will last for many months.

Rosemary asked the board to approve two lien releases for people who had paid off their past debt. **It was moved and seconded to release the lien for Daniel Cutting's property at 115 Park Street in the amount of \$187.28 and the lien for Matthew Moran's property at 136 Park Street in the amount of \$95.84 and the motion was passed.**

5. RJSE Committee – Flying the Progress Pride Flag for the Month of June

Shayne Spence said the Racial Justice and Social Equity Committee passed two motions at its last meeting. One was to fly the Progress Pride flag at the village green for the month of June and one was to fly the same flag at the municipal building flagpole. Rosemary asked which flag would be taken down in order to fly the Progress Pride flag. Shayne said on the village green the Progress Pride flag would replace the Black Lives Matter flag for a month. At the municipal building it would be up to the trustees. Lynda asked if it could go under another flag. Ken said he thinks our policy states only 2 flags can be flown on that pole.

Diane said that is for the village green. Steve said last time we took down the Black Lives Matter flag while we flew the pride flag. Ken asked if it is the same flag that was flown last year. Shayne said yes. Ken asked if it is the right size, smaller than the American flag. Shayne and Steve said yes. Shayne said currently the committee only owns one Progress Pride flag but if the trustees authorize flying the flag at both locations the committee has authorized purchasing another. They have money to do that.

Ken moved to allow the Racial Justice and Social Equity Committee to fly the Progress Pride flag in the place of the Black Lives Matter flag for the month of June at the village green and the motion was seconded and passed.

Ken suggested that if we are going to talk about flying a flag at the municipal building it should be warned so the public can be here. Diane said it is true that it was not on the agenda, so maybe the board should come back to that at a later meeting. We can see if it is possible to have 3 flags on a pole. Shayne said the RJSE committee had discussed the fact that the pole on the village green can bend a bit on windy days with just two flags. He is not sure if the one at the municipal building is more sturdy. Lynda said last year there was talk about putting the Progress Pride flag on the municipal building since using the flagpole was such an issue.

6. *Final Approval for Water and Sewer Connections – 405 Railroad St.*

Arjay West arrived at 6:17. He said he is here on behalf of 1159 Foote Brook LLC seeking final approval for water and sewer connections at the Jenna's Promise coffee roasting operation in one of the old Parker and Stearns buildings at 405 Railroad St. In December, Greg and Dawn Tatro got preliminary allocations for their coffee roasting building with the standard condition regarding receipt of state permits. They have gotten their state permits. (*Sophia Berard arrived at 6:18.*) They got their Act 250 administrative amendment and wastewater permit. (*Shayne left at 6:19.*)

Lynda asked, they are not coffee roasting now? Arjay said they are. They got their permits and their electrical inspections, etc. He is not aware of what their schedule is for roasting but they have used the roasting process.

Steve asked Dan, our well and our sewer treatment plant have capacity to approve the permits, correct? Dan said yes. Ken asked what percentage of our capacity we can still take on. Dan said for wastewater we are at less than 50% capacity. For water we are well under what we were pumping 3 years ago.

Diane moved to give final approval for the sewer and water connections for the coffee roasting operation at 405 Railroad Street, Lynda seconded and the motion was passed.

7. *Preliminary Approval for Water and Sewer Allocations for 8-Unit Buildings*

Arjay said the same owners want to construct two multi-unit residential buildings at 405 Railroad Street. He is presenting two separate applications for two identical 8-unit residential buildings. One is proposed to be built across from the Parker and Stearns building where there was a storage shed. It would have connections to municipal water and sewer, with a gravity sewer connection. Lynda asked how many bedrooms the units will have. Arjay said six will have two bedrooms and two will have one bedroom. Another building would be on

the part of the property extending to River Road East. For that one it is proposed to use a sewer lift station and a water service line off the main running down River Road East. These buildings and the coffee roasting operation are all on the same parcel.

Steve asked if some of this is not for profit and some is for profit. Arjay said he doesn't know that he has the answer to that. JP's Promising Goods and the roasting operation are different entities with their own management that operate as tenants on the land. Lynda said we don't know whether the apartments will be for people served by Jenna's Promise or whether they will be rented out. Steve said he would like to speak to Greg Tatro about that. Ken said he doesn't see why it makes a difference. This is just about approving hookups. There is no zoning in Johnson. We heard that village water and sewer are under capacity. Steve said he would just like more information for his own knowledge. Rosemary said all water and sewer permit fees for the properties have been paid.

Diane moved to give preliminary approval for water and sewer allocations for an 8-unit building on Railroad Street owned by 1159 Foote Brook LLC, Ken seconded and the motion was passed.

Diane moved to give preliminary approval for water and sewer allocations for an 8-unit building on River Road East owned by 1159 Foote Brook LLC, Ken seconded and the motion was passed.

Dan asked that plans for the pump station be forwarded to him so he can make sure it has the correct specs.

8. *Fire Department Report*

Arjay read the fire department report for March 31 to April 28th. There were 11 calls – 5 during the day and 6 at night. The average duration was 51 minutes. There was 1 CO alarm, 1 vehicle crash, 1 medical assist, 1 odor investigation, 3 automatic alarms, 1 mutual aid (structure fire) and 3 other (electrical problem, unpermitted burn, person stuck in elevator.) The average number of volunteers responding was 11. Total hours of service was 80. The boiler repairs are complete and the system is operating. There was air leak in the fire department building sprinkler system. It has been patched and the department is awaiting parts for final repairs but the system is in operation. The fire department successfully submitted a grant to the Vermont Electric Coop Community Fund for helmet replacement. The grant was awarded. Through a combination of negotiating price, the VEC Community Fund grant, the village earmarked funds and donation/fundraising money the fire department was able to place an order for helmets in the amount of \$10,365. They anticipate delivery in about a month.

Lynda asked what the automated alarm calls were. Arjay said some buildings have carbon monoxide and fire alarms that are monitored by a receiving company that dispatches a call if the alarm goes off. The fire department is getting more of those calls. Lynda asked if they are mostly commercial buildings. Arjay said many are multi-unit residential buildings. Lynda asked if they get charged for calls. Arjay said no. We currently do not have an ordinance regarding that.

Diane asked how much the grant from Vermont Electric Coop was for. Arjay said \$1,000.

Arjay said there were only two helmets that had not expired and they had less than 2 years left, so all firefighters will get identical new helmets. Then the fire department will have to prepare for a 10-year helmet replacement cycle.

Ken asked if the fire department has bought any more of the new rescue masks with communication. Arjay said no. That equipment lasts around 15 years. Personnel who met the standard for interior firefighting each got a personal mask with communication ability. (*Arjay left at 6:41.*)

9. Facility Use Agreement for June 19, 2022 for Village Green – Juneteenth Celebration

Sophia Berard said Jeff Bickford sent in a facility use application for the village green for June 19. Juneteenth is a nationally recognized holiday and the Racial Justice and Social Equity committee is planning a celebration on the village green. They are hoping to have kids' books about the history of Juneteenth, storytelling and light snacks. A lot of towns around the state are having events and the committee wanted Johnson to have one.

Ken moved to approve the facility use agreement for use of the village green by the Racial Justice and Social Equity Committee on June 19, 2022 Lynda seconded and the motion was passed. (*Sophia left at 6:44.*)

10. Water/Wastewater Report and Action Items

Dan gave his report. The E-DMR and Wr-43 were submitted to the state. The speed control knob for the belt press was replaced. Rollers, a gear drive and doc blades have been ordered for the belt press. Grease seals still need to be ordered. Delivery will take 13-16 weeks. Employees will start rehabbing the belt press as soon as all the parts are here. H2O Innovation employees cleaned up the grounds from winter debris and lawn damaged. They removed the snowblower attachment from the lawnmower and put on the mower deck. They started scraping loose paint from the walls in the influent dry well. All the fire extinguishers at the wastewater plant, water plant and pump houses were serviced and certified. Employees started servicing and replacing UV bulbs that were blown. Dan will need to place another order for bulbs in order to finish the second bank of bulbs. While Wind River was performing the monthly grit channel cleaning, we had them drain the UV channel as well. This allowed us to pressure wash the UV walls and channel and remove any solids from the channel without discharging them to the river. Tim removed rust and painted all the piping and pumps in the sludge pump room. This room had a lot of rust because it always got flooded during high water. It has been sealed now so it shouldn't flood in the future.

Coliform samples were negative. There was one alarm at the Clay Hill booster station. Steve notified Dan of a red light on the building and Luke responded. The alarm company had changed the dialing procedure without notifying us so we never got the alarm. That problem has been rectified. This is why we have red lights at most of our facilities, as a backup when there is an alarm. Dan met with Andrew Ferguson from the Vermont Drinking Water Division regarding the Katy Win pump house. The spare well pump for the water plant has been ordered. It will take 15-18 weeks for delivery. We have not received an invoice yet. The quote was \$18,400 plus shipping, a considerable savings from the \$25K quote we received in November. Water loss for April was 13%.

Ken asked if it is still looking like we are staying within the budget for the belt press. Dan said yes. He believes we will see significant savings over what was budgeted. We had set aside \$20,000 and the final cost should come in a couple of thousand dollars less than that.

11. Electric/General Report and Action Items

Steve read the report Troy had emailed. (*Elise Annes arrived at 6:50.*) On April 19 there was an outage that affected 30 customers near 21 River Road West. Service was interrupted at 2:00 am and restored at 7:00 am. The cause was a high wind event where a tree snapped the overhead lines off multiple poles. Related to the same wind event, two secondary service lines were repaired on Clay Hill. The crew energized a new 400 amp service on 100C and repaired a secondary service line on Gillen Ave. On April 26, a primary neutral conductor was repaired on Route 15. This required an outage that affected 6 customers for half an hour. On May 1, there was an outage on Gould Hill Road that affected 23 customers. The suspected cause was an over-voltage condition related to the 150 kW solar array in that area. On May 3, the crew participated in the spring ISO New England voltage reduction test. All equipment worked properly with no issues. During a routine substation check the crew found the control panel for the R2 breaker that serves NVU was in fail mode. A substation technician from Hyde Park Water & Light came and worked with the crew and it was determined there was a poor connection in the control cable. A temporary repair was made and we are planning to transfer the load from NVU onto our R1 breaker so the cable can be replaced. Multiple street lights were repaired on 100C. The crew installed the new 3-phased overhead lines that will serve the new Jolley EV charging station. The crew worked on right of way cutting and completed monthly meter reading, high/low checks, substation check and Dig Safes.

Water service was turned on at the old Subway building on Lower Main Street and at a lot at Katy Win. High water usage was reported at the food shelf, which turned out to be a toilet running through. A water meter was installed at the cemetery on Lamoille View Drive.

The crew completed spring clean up at the municipal building, village garage, cold spring and village green and worked with a contractor for the State of Vermont to complete street sweeping on Route 15 through the village. The crew has also started in-house street sweeping, which should be completed within the next few weeks. The crew installed two fence posts in the arboretum for the Tree Board. The NVU banner was hung across Pearl Street for graduation. Both of the village's dump trucks were serviced and inspected.

The entire crew completed the required annual CPR, first aid and AED training, which was put on by Vermont Local Roads They also completed a flagging course. This certification is good for 2 years.

Troy has been working with Gary Nolan related to the planned fire suppression system at 599 Lower Main West. He created an estimated water/sewer allocation for 93 Lower Main West and was in contact with the property owner to discuss it. He placed an order for electrical line materials to replace stock that has been used during the past few months. He has been working with PACIF related to an insurance claim for the repair on the digger truck boom. He has been in contact with the electrician who will be installing the EV charging station at

Jolley. The transformer for the project is expected to be delivered within the next few weeks. The crew will be installing the primary underground wires that will serve that transformer. Troy arranged with VTrans to coordinate the sweeping on Route 15 through the village. He arranged with Green Mountain Traffic Control to provide the needed flagging while the crew installed the new overhead service across Route 15 for the Jolley EV project. He had a meeting with Lion Electric related to the electric bucket truck. Currently they do not expect any increases in the truck costs above the estimate provided last year. Troy has requested this in writing. The truck is still expected to be delivered in June/July 2023. Troy has been working with Engineering Ventures related to the next steps for the village garage project. Nate and Troy met with VTrans to discuss the planned repaving of Route 15 through the village. The work is currently planned for the summer of 2023. Little, if any, village infrastructure will be affected by the paving. Troy worked with Alexander Tree Service and reviewed the quote for their danger tree removal and right of way clearing and he feels the estimate is in line with the costs that would be expected currently with any tree service company. The quote is for \$19,800 and we budgeted \$35,000 for contracted tree trimming service in 2022. Nate and Troy feel once this work is completed most of our current tree issues will be taken care of. Troy will ask Alexander Tree Service to add the village as an additional insured on their liability policy.

Troy attended the May VPPSA board meeting virtually. Topics discussed at the meeting included an update on the AMI project, rates for low income customers and power supply costs. If the village wants to participate in the on-bill financing program for weatherization costs we need to let VPPSA know soon.

- 12. *Community and Economic Development Position on Warning for Special Village Vote***
- Diane said she suggests placing an additional item on the ballot for the upcoming special meeting to elect a trustee: asking the voters to expend up to \$30,000 for the purpose of community and economic development. Ken asked, didn't we just put that on the ballot and it failed? Lynda and Diane said it tied. Ken said that is a fail. The board should not keep asking. We should explore different options. That would mean a huge tax increase. We have a lot of expenditures right now we have no budget for. Steve said that is part of the reason why we need a person in that position. There is a lot of money out there that would help us with these expenses. Ken said grants also include match money and the position would lead to a 28% tax increase. It was voted down. We should attempt to come up with the money another way before asking the voters again. There are other options. He asked why Diane didn't bring this up before the meeting so the trustees could have a chance to talk about it. Diane said this is when the board has discussion, in public. Ken said this board is missing one member and the village is missing the manager. He thinks we need to be responsible and not more put more burden on the general public. We just heard Dan talk about fuel expenses. The board is not paying attention to our job to be fiscally responsible. The voters did not approve the economic development position. Diane said she would not have asked for another vote on it if we were not already having a special meeting. But it is a way to get the people to say again how they feel on that issue. If it ties, it ties. If it passes we get to hire an economic development/grant writer person. If we weren't going to have an election she would not have brought it up, but since we are she would like it as an article. She doesn't think it hurts. Let's let the people vote for it or not. Lynda agreed that if we were not having an election anyway she would not want to have a special meeting for this but since we are

she doesn't know that it hurts anything to have it on the ballot. The previous vote was a tie, not an out-and-out no. And the potential to save thousands of dollars is there if we end up with a grant writer. When she was on the school board and they had a grant writer they got thousands of dollars that they never would have gotten otherwise. None of us have the expertise or the time to write grants. Yes, it costs money but she thinks it would be money well spent. Ken said the board is spending other people's money. The other board members are not being fiscally responsible. Someone who wanted another vote could file a petition. Why don't we do something other than ask again? Lynda asked if Ken has a suggestion. Steve asked what Ken's alternative is. Ken asked, why don't we have a work group sit down and discuss it? He thinks ARPA funds could be used for part of that. Lynda said if the board waited to receive a petition, that would mean a separate vote with money spent on it. This election is already in motion and adding a couple more sentences on the ballot won't hurt anything. If it gets turned down, it gets turned down. Sometimes you have to spend money to make money. She is in favor of grant writers because of her experience on the school board. Ken said he is too, but not at a 28% tax rate increase, with the high inflation rate we are seeing now.

Diane moved to include an article asking if the voters will authorize the Village of Johnson to raise and expend up to \$30,000 for the purpose of economic and community development as Article 2 on the special meeting warning. Lynda seconded and the motion was passed in a roll call vote with Lynda, Diane, and Steve voting in favor and Ken opposed.

13. Possible Executive Session for a Contract with Momentum Consulting for Sessions for the Electric Crew

Diane moved to go into executive session under 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(a) for discussion of a contract with Momentum Consulting for consulting with the electric crew, Lynda seconded and the motion was passed in a roll call vote with Diane, Lynda, and Steve voting in favor and Ken opposed. The board entered executive session at 7:11. The board came out of executive session at 7:43.

Ken moved to accept a preliminary contract with Momentum Consulting for an amount up to \$2,500 for mediation with the line crew, contingent on lawyer approval for Phase One, with one trustee to be in attendance at the group meeting, Diane seconded and the motion was passed.

14. Alexander Tree Quote

Ken moved and Lynda seconded to contract with Alexander Tree Service in the amount of \$19,800.

Diane asked, this is the tree company the electric department usually gets, right? Steve said no, they could not get that company. Troy believes they are contracting with much bigger municipalities. He had a hard time finding someone to give us a quote. There is about \$35,000 budgeted for removing dangerous trees. This leaves a healthy amount in case of a storm or something. The trees to be removed are complicated trees that require a lot of expertise. For instance, one he saw is a huge dead tree right over a pole and a lot of lines.

Lynda asked what happens to the firewood. Rosemary said it is left on the property for the owner. Steve said the owner has the option of giving the wood away or using it. Lynda asked, what if the property owner doesn't want it? Rosemary said it is the property owner's tree. Lynda asked if there has to be permission from the property owner to take down the tree. Steve said not if it is in the power line right of way. Ken said we need a tree service that is certified for power line clearing. Lynda asked, we didn't have to put it out to bid? Steve said the prices are reasonable and if we put it out to bid we may not be able to get it done this summer. Rosemary said she believes Troy asked other companies for quotes. Ken said he believes we do not have to go out to bid if the cost is under what was budgeted.

The motion was passed.

15. Appoint a VPPSA Representative

Diane said she talked to Ken Nolan of VPPSA today about Elise and about this. She asked him if the VPPSA rep really needs to know about electric issues. He said no. He also said a trustee could be the representative. If no one has any issues with it she would like to try out being the representative. That would save us paying for 5 hours a month at \$85 an hour. Steve said he is fine with that. Diane said Ken Nola also said that VP PSA tries to get members of the boards to become part of the VPPSA monthly group. You get a few emails during the month about what is happening statewide. If it is over her head she will come back and say that serving as representative is not for her.

Ken said he thinks Diane would be taking on more than she really wants. He thinks what Ken Nolan meant about taking part was taking part in meetings to further our knowledge. In the past based on what we have heard from Troy and Meredith there has been a lot of discussion based on knowledge.

Diane said she is thinking she would give it a try and see how it goes. She is not going to keep going to the meetings if it is over her head. Ken said he thinks it could be a conflict of interest if a trustee were a representative and talked to the VPPSA board about something like purchase of shares before bringing it to the board. We already agreed to Troy's contract in which he stated he would serve as VPPSA representative. He suggests staying with Troy because of his knowledge. He would not want to be the representative and he thinks he has more electrical knowledge than Diane. It could be problematic if Diane went to meetings and listened to the VPPSA board talk about how great it would be for us to buy shares and got persuaded before coming to the meeting where the trustees would vote on it. Steve said Diane is trying to save money for the board.

Diane asked Rosemary if it would violate Troy's contract if we did not have him serve as VPPSA representative. Rosemary said she doesn't know. She doesn't remember if that was one of the specific tasks in the contract.

Steve said if Ken Nolan is suggesting this and he says other trustees do it, it is probably not a problem. Diane said she believes their meetings are the first Wednesday of the month and she will not be here this coming month. She suggested letting Troy go for this coming month and then she will look into it and if Ken Nolan says there is a conflict of interest she will let Troy do it. Steve said that sounds good. Ken said Ken Nolan doesn't have a right to tell us what is

a conflict of interest with this board. If Diane were the representative there might be situations where she would have to recuse herself from votes. It was agreed to have Troy go to the next VPPSA meeting and let Diane continue to look into being representative after that.

16. Other Business

Steve said the board will probably have to have a special meeting to discuss hiring a headhunter to help in the manager search. He has a prospect he learned about through VLCT. It was agreed to schedule a special meeting for Friday. The company Steve learned about is from New Hampshire. Ken suggested trying to look for a company in Vermont. Lynda said she has reached out to two companies in Vermont. One never returned her call and the other said they didn't do that kind of work. Diane said she reached out to one who did not get back to her.

17. Executive Session for Contract with Jim Fontaine for Training Sessions for Electric Crew
Diane moved to go into executive session under for discussion of a contract with Jim Fontaine for three training sessions for the electric crew under 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(a), Lynda seconded and the motion was passed at 8:05. The board came out of executive session at 8:21.

18. Adjourn

It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 8:21 and the motion was passed.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths