

JOHNSON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2023

Present: Selectboard members: Beth Foy, Duncan Hastings, Eric Osgood, Eben Patch, Mark Woodward

Others: Brian Story, Rosemary Audibert, David Williams

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. Call to Order

Beth called the meeting to order at 6:30.

2. Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda

Eric said he had some documents to pass along. Brian said he had an update on the Vermont Electric Coop public-private partnership project. The board agreed to move town meeting planning up to be the first thing on the agenda.

3. Planning for Town Meeting

The board discussed which board members will be prepared to discuss which topics at town meeting if questions come up on those topics and what to say about each of the articles.

Mark mentioned that the ARPA funds we have received are in a low interest bearing account. Rosemary asked if the selectboard would like her to put the money in a CD. Duncan said we should make sure it is allowed to be in an interest bearing account. Rosemary said it can be. Beth said she feels it should be in an interest bearing account. (*Dave Williams left at 6:56.*)

4. Review Invoices and Orders

The board reviewed and discussed invoices and orders.

5. Review and Approve Minutes of Meetings Past

Duncan moved to approve the minutes of February 22, 2023 and February 27, 2023, Mark seconded and the motion was passed with Eben abstaining as he was not at the February 22 meeting.

6. Selectboard Issues/Concerns

Eric shared some old town-related documents he had in his files that he wanted to pass on. Some were given to Rosemary to file.

7. Treasurer's Report / Review and Approve Bills, Warrants, Licenses and Action Items

Rosemary said the town has received a request for an abatement hearing. It was agreed to schedule the abatement hearing for 5:30 on March 20.

8. Review Planned Purchases

There were no planned purchases to review.

9. Update on Public-Private Partnership Project

Brian said we received a signed easement back from the Vermont Electric Coop board. Today we heard back from the state about our Unique Entity ID number. It was incorrectly pointing to the wrong title and they have fixed it. Now it reads "Town of Johnson Town Clerk." They will change all references in the grant agreement from "Johnson Village and Town" to "Town of Johnson Town Clerk." Most of the contract language will just refer to the Town of Johnson but when the UEI number is referred to it has to use the title the state associates with that number. We had two options: "Town of Johnson Town Clerk" or "Johnson Village and Town." "Town of Johnson Town Clerk" was not the exact wording the board had requested. Are we okay with

that? It probably will be very time-consuming if we want to pursue a change to another name. Rosemary said there was a drop-down menu with only certain choices. The board agreed that "Town of Johnson Town Clerk" is fine.

Duncan moved to authorize a change to the documents for the public-private partnership stormwater project with Vermont Electric Coop to replace "Johnson Village and Town" with "Town of Johnson Town Clerk." Mark seconded and the motion was passed.

10. Review Proposals for Congressionally Directed Spending

Brian said he included in the packet some guidance on Fiscal Year 2024 appropriations requests put out by the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations. Sen. Sanders' and Sen. Welch's offices have both opened a window for making requests for earmarked projects. He got an email from Casey Romero with a couple of ideas. We have to submit reasonably detailed proposals within the next two weeks. We previously submitted a proposal for the light industrial park and got no traction. Another proposal we submitted was for a scoping study for a bridge connecting Old Mill Park to the skatepark. That received some interest from Sen. Sanders' office but it didn't ultimately get funded. He thinks asking for funding for both engineering and construction for the light industrial park is less competitive and that is why we failed to gain traction. The bridge study received a lot of interest last time. Sen. Sanders had done work on the rail trail and wanted to see continued expansion and developments around the rail trail.

Beth asked, what about improvements to the Lendway Lane area? We have some old mock-up designs for that area. We talk about that area often in terms of improvements and recreation access. Brian said there are changes we could make around the Old Mill Park entrance to make it safer. We have some photos with editing done to show what the changes might look like. We could infill some areas with grass or plantings to separate them from other areas. Duncan asked if there was an actual design with dollars attached. Brian said no. He thinks around \$10,000 would be a good request. With that, we could get some engineering. We were thinking maybe we could do modest improvements ourselves as part of other work on Lendway Lane but we could ask for enough money for a real design.

Eric said the problem is that we have nothing that is really shelf ready. Mostly we just have high level conceptual ideas. We already have a conceptual study done for the light industrial park and now we have gone forward with getting a finalized engineering study. Maybe they would reimburse us the \$30K for that. It is a project that is moving. Once the rail trail committee is off the ground a good job for them could be getting proposals regarding rail trail connectivity ready to submit for a future round.

Duncan said the Main Street project was an earmark. We got money for final design and construction. We had fairly detailed conceptual plans. Even though the Jewett property is in the conceptual stage, there are drawings. Is what we submitted to Northern Borders something that could be used again for this? He would think something like that would have a better chance. Mark and Eben agreed with the idea of submitting a proposal for the light industrial park. Duncan suggested calling the senators' offices to determine which category would be most inappropriate to submit this under. The different categories all have different submission deadlines. It was agreed to submit a proposal regarding the light industrial park to both offices. Beth said it would be good to confirm with each office which category the project best fits under.

Brian said he, Duncan, Rod Rodjenski from Hyde Park and Matt Bloomer from our attorney's office have met this week to make final edits to the agreement with Hyde Park for shared assessor services. There are five different documents: the interlocal agreement for shared services between Hyde Park and Johnson, an offer of employment for the shared assessor, a job description for Assessor Level 1, an offer of employment for Terri Sabens in a supervisory role and a job description for Assessor Level 2, which would be Terri's position.

Duncan said Ron Rodjenski had just called him to say that the Hyde Park selectboard signed the updated copy of the interlocal agreement. This board already authorized Beth to sign the documents pending legal review. The board agreed that no further action is needed as Beth is already authorized to sign the documents.

Duncan said he will reach out to the prospective assessor and let him know to expect an offer letter soon.

11. Executive Session to Discuss a Contract Negotiation

Eric moved to find that premature public disclosure of the contract negotiation may place the town at a substantial disadvantage so an executive session is appropriate, Eben seconded and the motion was passed.

Eben moved to enter executive session to discuss a contract negotiation as allowed by 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(1), Mark seconded and the motion was passed at 7:44. The board came out of executive session at 8:35.

12. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths