

JOHNSON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
THURSDAY, JULY 13, 2023

Present: Selectboard members: Beth Foy, Eben Patch, Shayne Spence (by phone), Mark Woodward
Others: Rosemary Audibert, Jason Whitehill, Ken Tourangeau, GiGi Beach, BJ Putvain, Rich Westman, Dan Noyes, Roger Marcoux, Lynda Hill, Nat Kinney, Jessica Bickford, one other community member

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. Call to Order

Beth called the meeting to order at 12:03.

2. State of Emergency Summary

Beth said we had a historic flood, worse than the flood of 1995. The river level was 20.1 ft, the second highest on record. There was no loss of life. Emergency personnel went door to door in the highest risk residential areas and confirmed there was no human loss of life.

Currently village water is drinkable. There is a shelter set up at the SHAPE facility at Vermont State University. The American Red Cross took over management of the shelter as of 5:00 p.m. yesterday. All the Lamoille County human service agencies are providing support to people at the shelter. Their services are available to anyone, not just those signed in and staying overnight. We need to direct people to call 2-1-1. It is backed up but people should keep trying. There are also resources listed on the Lamoille United Way site.

Electricity is turned on but there are still customers who do not have service. Those who had any electric infrastructure that went underwater need to have a certified electrician provide a statement that it is okay to turn the electricity on.

The sewer plant is not functioning. Ken Tourangeau and others have been working on mitigation plans. The state is there now. There is approval to bypass the sewer plant for now. Anyone who *needs* (not just wants) more details can reach out to Ken.

All roads are open. A couple need work. Lendway Lane is the most affected. River Road East also needs work. Eben said he doesn't know if work has started yet on River Road East. There is erosion and it is marked to keep vehicles away from the edge for safety. Beth said there are parts of the rail trail that are totally washed out and have cliffs at the end of them. People have to stay off them.

Beth said the town office was flooded and is closed. It will remain closed for the remainder of the week. Everyone should spread the word that town staff cannot be concerned now with requests about things like fishing licenses or paying utility bills. Ken Tourangeau said the village has waived all payment deadlines for a month. People who have electrical or sewer issues can call 802-730-2993, the temporary office number for village water and light.

Eben said communication should be through the town Facebook page and town website, managed by the EOC. Anyone with information they want to get out to the public should communicate it to Beth or Eben and they will work on a response. We should be pointing residents to those sources of

information. Beth said we will have summary information on Front Porch Forum. We should direct everyone to the town website, www.townofjohnson.com, which is the best information source. The old town office number will not be answered this week. There are numbers on the town website for people to call based on what they are looking for. People need to find the appropriate number there.

Beth said there were a lot of rescues. North Carolina Urban Search and Rescue was here helping. They went to the highest risk areas to look for significant structural damage and loss of life. There was one building that was considered condemnable. All others were considered salvageable. Two teams of state fire marshals are here. They have a priority order in which they are doing inspections and Duncan is their point of contact. They will be looking at key public buildings and then potentially in the future residential buildings. We also have Team Rubicon. Eben said they are a team of volunteers who go around and do damage assessment. They put the information in a database that is helpful to FEMA and the state. Depending on the need they can deploy resources to assist private individuals and public entities.

People reaching out to help should use the contact information on the website. Beth said the emergency team needs to be the center of all engagement. The team talks to Vermont Emergency Management multiple times a day.

Eben said the EOC is in touch with local representatives. They are asking what resources we need. Resource needs should be communicated to the EOC so we can communicate through one channel instead of having many calls to representatives.

Beth said we are getting many offers to volunteer services and supplies. The shelter does not need supplies. There is a national agency that will be setting up in the Sterling Market parking lot to provide food supplies at 4:00. For clothing items, reach out to Capstone. We will use human service agencies already established in Lamoille County for that type of thing. All those groups are already working with the Red Cross.

3. *Authorize Spending for Emergency*

Beth said we have some items we already know we will need to spend on. One is SERVPRO. Eben said SERVPRO estimates the library project will take 5-6 days for a crew of 10-12, plus additional drying days with less labor. The municipal building will take 3-4 days of work for 8-10 people plus final drying days with minimal labor. There might be some record preservation that takes longer. They freeze the documents and send them elsewhere for preservation. The fire department will take 3-5 days plus final drying days. The SERVPRO rate sheet is complicated. It is 13 pages long. We do not have final cost numbers for SERVPRO.

Ken asked if the town needs to get 3 bids. The village got approval from the state and FEMA to contract for emergency work without getting 3 bids. Duncan said it may depend on whether the work is emergency vs. recovery. Eben questioned whether we can get 3 quotes. Beth said she doesn't think we will be able to. Duncan said in the past FEMA has said that trying to get additional bids is good enough. Beth said we contacted multiple companies and went with the one that was able to get here quickly. Duncan said he thinks that is probably a good enough reason.

Jason asked if the lower storage building is going to be involved in the cleanup by SERVPRO. Duncan asked if water got in. Jason said yes. Eben said the municipal building is a very high priority. The board agreed to include the lower storage building on the list with a lower priority.

Duncan said he suspects insurance and/or FEMA will cover the cost eventually.

Duncan moved to contract with SERVPRO for flood remediation contingent on first attempting to find out whether seeking multiple vendors is required, Mark seconded and the motion was passed.

Eben asked if the trustees will agree to pay for half of the cleanup at the municipal building and lower storage building. Ken said yes. Eben said we will make sure SERVPRO breaks out the charges so village and town expenses can be separated.

Beth said we already have a dumpster at the municipal building and are working on getting one at the library. Ken said there are several at the water/wastewater plant that the library can use.

Beth said she understands that in the flood of 1995 the town provided dumpsters for flood victims. She is in favor of doing that. Ken suggested the town public works department could use a dump truck to collect material. That would save cost. Eben said he doesn't see that being a good idea. He would recommend authorizing dumpsters instead. Duncan said he would be reluctant to commit the road crew when there is a possibility of more storms.

Duncan moved to authorize renting up to 4 full size dumpsters. He said we should post information on them about what is allowable to put in them. Mark said Rosemary told him yesterday that there weren't any dumpsters available. **The motion was seconded and passed.**

Eben said members of the public have asked about portalets. Some people who live on the first floor and don't have bathrooms might appreciate that. He is envisioning putting them somewhere on a sidewalk. **Beth moved and Eben seconded to provide up to two portalets based on need.** Ken said the village has no issues with sewer coming into the plant. They are just requesting minimal flushing. **The motion was passed.**

Beth said the EOC will be working on a communication to committees about emergency management and how it affects them. The EOC has to triage how they spend their time – basic human life needs first, safety second and then other things. There will be communication with committees about protocol. If a committee has a critical need they should reach out.

There was a question about whether the library can get authorization to have a contractor remove the wet carpet if SERVPRO is not going to be able to start for a day or two. **Eben moved to authorize the library to get a licensed contractor to remove the carpet if they do not hear from SERVPRO by noon on Friday, Beth seconded and the motion was passed.**

Rosemary said at least two computers and a printer/copier are needed. **Eben moved to authorize lease of a printer/copier from SvmQuest and purchase of two new laptop computers at a maximum cost of \$2800 per computer. The motion was seconded and passed.**

Beth said the selectboard previously authorized the emergency management director to spend up to \$2000. She doesn't know what we have spent, but we might want to increase that amount. Eben said he does not think it is necessary.

4. Update on Rain Event for the Next Few Days

Beth said we have a storm event coming in. There is concern about electrical outages with that event. That message has been put out through the town website, Facebook and Front Porch Forum. She and Eben have discussed potential flood impact with the Vermont Emergency Management team. They have been told, “We don’t have a concern for your area,” but they are waiting to hear back from a river engineer expert to confirm that there are not likely to be issues.

Ken said the village is sending its crew home at noon for a short break because they are expecting outages.

5. Other Business

Rich Westman gave some information about assistance available for renters. Beth said she will share the information with United Way and the shelter. Dan Noyes informed the selectboard about an upcoming meeting.

6. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:48.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths

UNAPPROVED