

JOHNSON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MONDAY, JULY 10, 2023

Present: Selectboard members: Beth Foy, Duncan Hastings, Eben Patch, Shayne Spence, Mark Woodward

Others present in person: Jason Whitehill, Eric Osgood, Arjay West, Gidget Dolan Dodge, Craig Carpenter, Brian Raulinaitis, Erik Bailey

Others present via Zoom: Kathy Black, Jim MacDowell, Harlan Mack, Georgina, Ann Hennard-Ruth, Emily Lev, Ken Tourangeau, Hope Sullivan, Kyley Hill

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. Call to Order

Beth called the meeting to order at 3:16.

2. Emergency Planning for Local Flooding

Jason said Lendway Lane is closed. Other roads are all passable. The brook is within a foot and a half of the bridge on Waterman Road. Beth said she heard from Arjay West that water is near the road at Willow Crossing but not on the road yet. Eben said he just talked with Roger Marcoux. Water is now blocking half of Route 15 in Wolcott.

Beth said for historical reference the greatest flood event in recent memory was in 1995. The water level then was 19.8 ft. The water level was 17.28 ft. in the 2019 Halloween storm and 16.97 in 2011. Eben said the current prediction from the National Weather Service is 18.2 ft. Beth said the peak is predicted to be around 2:00 a.m.

Shayne asked if the town has made contact with residents on Lendway Lane. Jason said yes.

Eben said at this time he doesn't see evacuation being needed based on expected flood levels. A shelter is being set up now, so emergency shelter will be available tonight.

The board discussed areas where residents could potentially be isolated by floodwaters and notification of those residents.

Arjay West said the fire department is not prepared to take on the labor cost associated with proactive distribution of information (vs. responding to an emergency.) If information is going to be shared with people, he recommends doing it before dark.

Shayne said he is leaning towards being more proactive about communications. Beth said she thinks we should write up a flyer, knock on doors and hand people the flyer. Duncan said he thinks most people who live in an area where there is potential for flooding are already aware of the risk. He suggested trying to call people for efficiency and leaving the flyer as a door hanger for those who can't be contacted. Jason said if flyers can be made up the public works crew can distribute them.

Eric Osgood said the selectboard's main role is to declare a state of emergency. Once that is done the emergency management director takes over and sets up an incident command structure.

Duncan moved to declare a state of emergency for the Town of Johnson under V.S.A. Title 20 Chapter 1 and to authorize the emergency management director to submit the Local Jurisdiction Request for Emergency Declaration, Eben seconded and the motion was passed.

Jason asked if the board is okay with some employees taking town vehicles home so all resources are not on one side of the bridge. The board agreed to that. Jason described his plan for distributing the vehicles. Beth said she is in favor of it as long as their personal trucks are high enough not to get flooded.

Eric Osgood said the town will need an information officer to get information out and the board should decide on the spending capacity for the emergency management directors. The Red Cross is available if the shelter needs to be staffed. The EMD should check in with town and village crews and keep the selectboard in the loop. There is an emergency management fund that could be used if the town needs to pay the fire department.

Mark said he thinks it is important for flood information to be obvious on the town website. Eben said Beth is the information officer. Duncan said he thinks there should be a consistent message given by one person.

Duncan moved to authorize up to \$2000 to be expended by the emergency management director for incidentals during the current state of emergency, Mark seconded and the motion was passed.

Eben asked, if we need the fire department to do proactive work, is that covered by this motion? Duncan said his motion would not cover that. It would cover things like purchasing food for the crews.

3. ***Adjourn***

The meeting was adjourned at 4:01.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths