

JOHNSON VILLAGE TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2023

**Present:**

Trustees: Steve Hatfield, Lynda Hill, Diane Lehouiller, BJ Putvain

Others: Erik Bailey, Rosemary Audibert, Gigi Beach, Dan Copp (remote)

**Absent:** Ken Tourangeau

**Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.**

**1. *Call to Order***

Steve called the meeting to order at 6:00.

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

It was agreed to postpone discussion about a merger study until Ken can be present. Diane asked if for the merger study we would have to go with the company that provided the \$59,000 quote. Erik said probably not.

**3. *Review and Approve Minutes of Trustee Meetings***

**Lynda moved to approve the minutes of January 9 2023, Diane seconded and the motion was passed.**

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

Rosemary said last year's budget status report is pretty well complete except depreciation for water and sewer is not yet booked. The electric department turned out better than she thought it would. We estimated a deficit of \$113,000 and we had a deficit of \$98,000.

Rosemary passed out a draft warning for the village annual meeting on April 4. She said voters have until February 16 to submit any petitions for articles on the warning. So far she has not gotten any petitions. The board agreed that the annual meeting will be in person at the municipal building. Rosemary said the deadline for petitions to run for elected office is February 27. The last day to post the warning for the annual meeting is March 5 so the board should approve the warning at the next meeting.

**5. *Discuss Time Saving Advantages of Only Discussing Department Reports if Requested***

Steve said the question is whether we need to read every report out loud at a meeting as we have been doing or if we could go to a system that has been proposed where any member of the public or board member could request that a certain part of a report be read but otherwise reports would not be read during the meeting. BJ asked how board members or members of the public would know what to ask questions about. Erik said the reports will be in the packet that is put on the website.

BJ said the reports are short and he likes to hear them. He does better with hearing than reading. Diane and Lynda said they could do without having them read but they can go either way. Steve said we will leave it as it stands now.

## **6. *Village Manager's Report and Action Items***

Erik said Nate Brigham has begun training sessions in preparation for the spring Water Operator's exam. He has completed 2 of the 8 classes that end in early April and seems to be doing very well.

Our VT DEC Sanitary Survey last fall revealed that our intent to eliminate the well by the Percy pit from the system would make village growth difficult due to the current permitted GPM of the water treatment facility filtration system. Working with DEC personnel, Erik arranged for a DEC facilitated pilot study of the abilities of our filtration equipment to be effective at higher pressure (more flow) than they are currently permitted at. That study began Monday with VT DEC scientists working with Dan's staff, and initial results suggest we will be able to expand our permitted flow numbers from that well to allow for significant growth.

George Swanson of the Laraway School asked permission to tap around a dozen maple trees for a class project on the corner of our water/wastewater property adjacent to the Highland Heights property, which they also tap. Students will always be supervised when they are on the property. Erik granted permission.

Steve and Erik led Jen Severidt from Efficiency Vermont around the food shelf building to discuss possibly doing a \$7500.00 fully funded energy efficiency project for the non-profit. It looks very promising to do a refrigeration upgrade there. Jen also toured village facilities and determined that the WWTF lighting was the best place to use the \$25,000.00 project Erik set aside for the municipality.

The shared cold storage building has experienced multiple issues of late. Raccoons have taken up residence by chewing their way in and are living in the ceiling. Erik coordinated with Dean Locke to trap them. It is likely that the drafts from the raccoon entryway contributed to the water line freezing and bursting, causing significant water damage. Nate rented a large dehumidifier which helped the visible side of the wall. Erik filed a claim with PACIF and hired ServPro at their recommendation. PACIF will be sending an adjuster. The costs for repair will be shared 50/50 with the town whom Erik has kept in the loop.

That event prompted Erik to inquire about our actual need for heat and water in that unoccupied storage building. Immediate findings indicate that only a few rec department supplies need to stay above freezing, and there is no need for water. To address the rec concerns, Erik offered to Dean Locke and Brian Story to give the water and light foreman office to the town rec department. This seemed well received at their level. This accounts for substantial savings. The last 12 months of fuel bills for that building come to \$13,967.49.

The water and light office accounts for only 11.7% of the total floor space in the mill house. Hopefully between the rec department taking over the office, and consideration of our \$7,500.00 investment of village W&L Tailored Community EVT energy efficiency

upgrades for the food shelf non-profit, the town will be amenable to assuming full ownership of the mill house.

Erik has entered us into a capstone project with a VTC engineering senior class to do professional level energy audits of the W&L garage. He also looped the town in, and the class will be auditing the town garage as well. This will cost only a bit of staff time. He also included Rob Moore and Victoria Hellwig of the Lamoille County Planning Commission, who will assist, and they think this may prove very useful in our pursuit of grant funding for the W&L garage rehab.

Erik wrote a letter to Lion cancelling our order and requesting our deposit. The VP of US sales responded the following day very apologetic and wrote that she has sent the \$10,000.00 refund order to Accounts Payable, and when she gets the refund dates and details, she will let Erik know.

In 2018 the Village Water Dept entered a Forgivable Loan Agreement with VT DWSRF to develop a Water System Asset Management Plan (AMP). The loan was for \$32,600.00 and if all the deliverables were met within 5 years, it would be 100% forgiven. The work was done by an engineering firm to build the program, and it has existed since January 2020. However, the due diligence to get it cleaned up and approved by VT DEC was not accomplished by previous administration. Erik contacted VT DEC wastewater and drinking water sections before he started here to see if we had any outstanding issues and was informed of this. He emailed the state regulator and the engineer on his first day to find out what was missing and how to rectify it. It is now complete and approved as of today and we are now forgiven of the \$32,600.00 loan which was going to be payable starting this year for 5 years. Maintenance and updating the AMPs & GIS is part of Anne's job description.

BJ asked, would we want to give up the mill house without getting something in return? He doesn't feel giving up that piece of property benefits us. Erik said he is not sure it is a positive asset. Steve brought up the propane costs. BJ said he would consider selling it at a discounted price. Erik said the town is not wanting to let us out of responsibility for the mill house without us paying. Lynda said there is a lot of maintenance to be done on it. Steve said it is a big maintenance liability. Diane said as she recalls when we were working with the town on the memorandum of understanding about shared buildings the town wanted the mill house for themselves but then they decided they didn't want to own it by themselves. Steve said he thinks shared ownership is a bad deal for the village. We don't really need the office space there anymore. (*Gigi Beach arrived at 6:31.*)

#### **7. *Water/Wastewater Report and Action Items***

Erik read the water/wastewater report submitted by Dan Copp.

##### Operational Status of Wastewater Plant and Callouts

E-DMR and Wr-43 were submitted to the state

Sludge grinder for the press is failing. \$9400 plus shipping for a new one. Talked

with Eric and we ordered one as it will be 10-12 weeks for delivery

The process water booster pump is not pumping properly. Tore it apart and the impellor, wear rings and sleeve are worn. Rebuild kit is \$4300. I have found a new replacement pump, just a different manufacturer for around \$2100 plus shipping. Will update when I receive a written quote.

We repaired a leak in the alum line by the pump.

Met with Eric to go over budgets for both water and wastewater

The main breaker on the emergency generator failed. Brookfield services was able to bypass it. They are getting us a quote for a new breaker

Jen Severidt from Efficiency VT visited the plant to see if we had any projects that they could help fund. The only project that fits for their incentives is to replace the fluorescent lights with LED throughout the plant. At the same time we can put motion sensors in each room to minimize the on tome of some lights. We will contact an electrician and Needham Electric to get quotes on replacing the lights and will forward it to Efficiency VT to see what they will cover.

#### Operational status of Water Plant and Callouts

Coliform samples were negative

We rotated operation of the booster pumps at Katy Win.

Met with Heather Collins, Allison Murphy and Ray Soloman at the water plant to perform a pilot study on manganese removal. As designed, the water plant doesn't have enough capacity for any growth with treatment through one filter if we no longer have Nadeau well as a backup. Therefore, if we can prove that we can run 225 gpm through one filter and still have adequate manganese removal they will rewrite our permit to operate at that flow and they will allow us to disconnect from the Nadeau well. We will be performing this pilot testing all week. Preliminary in house testing is showing positive results.

Water loss for January was 23%.

Diane asked, did Jen say there were other energy saving projects we should look at for future planning? Erik said we can have her come in and take a look. It might be worth seeing whether the town is interested in sharing the cost of replacing some bulbs in the municipal building with LED bulbs. Steve said his understanding is that she is only advising about electricity savings. Erik said that is true for the food shelf because it is a non-profit. Because they are not paying rent, projects there cannot include building improvements. If they were paying rent, we could do things like insulation upgrades. Lynda asked, what if they paid a

rent of \$1/month? Erik said he will reach out to his contact at EVT. Lynda said the selectboard is also looking at the food shelf building.

**8. *Electric/General Report and Action Items***

Erik read the water and light report prepared by Nate and Anne.

Electric Dept.

Nate Brigham:

Hyde Park mutual aid 8 hrs this month. Had David Young work on the breaker at the sub. We believe the recloser relay is bad and looking for parts. Did electric inventory for end of year. TSI came and did oil yearly sampling at the sub. Fixed various streetlights around the village. Received most of the order, some still on back order. Completed monthly meter reading, high/low checks, substation check, and Dig Safes

Anne Crocket:

I have been working with Nate to deal with the breaker control at the substation. I have made contact with the sales representative of Schweitzer Engineering (SEL) to get a quote for a new control. We will be meeting next week to finalize the specifications of a new control. We may want to schedule replacing the remaining controls, over time. I am working on some returns to Green Mountain Electric Supply. In addition, we need to add a cross brace to two fiberglass arms to make them functional for our use.

I have reviewed a number of documents to refresh my memory on various Vermont rules and regulations. This includes the various applicable net metering tariffs and the Department's New Service Booklet. I reviewed the present Johnson Water and Light Department IRP to familiarize myself with various aspects of operations. It seems like we should be working on a new one soon? I am reviewing the latest (2023) version of the National Electric Safety Code for revisions that we may need to incorporate. Nothing has jumped out at me that needs addressing, as of now.

Generally reviewing the lines and equipment as I drive around. Only one item should be investigated further, a capacitor bank on Clay Hill. It may be old enough to contain PCBs. We should investigate this with the line crew. I did a quick review of the work necessary to relocate the Clay Hill line to the road. I also did a review of the three phase line on Route 100C to see what would be required to replace the deteriorating spacer cable. Both of these projects look feasible but would take some serious crew time to accomplish.

Water and Sewer Dept.

Did inventory for end of year. Fire at 157 100, checked hydrants after JFD was done. Repair frozen water meter and line in the cold storage building with the town crew. Repaired frozen water meter at 369 RR St. Nate started class for water distribution

General Dept.

Completed winter sidewalk maintenance as needed. Removed Christmas lights

Safety

Set up monthly safety meetings with NEPPA starting Feb 8<sup>th</sup>

Erik noted that our mutual aid with Hyde Park is being billed now, because Hyde Park has no capacity to return the favor. Anne will start working with Marla to learn about solar net metering so she can take that off Marla's plate. He thinks we need to postpone the Clay Hill line relocation until we have more money coming in.

Steve asked if the breaker control is something we have budgeted or can afford within the budget. Erik said that is to be determined. Most of the parts are no longer being stocked and are hard to find.

BJ said Erik has done a great job with employees' pay stubs. There have been no issues with any of them.

**9. Fire Department Report and Action Items**

Erik read the fire department report submitted by Arjay West.

*Dec. 30 2022 - Jan. 26, 2023*

**Calls:**

JFO responded to 3 calls. 2 calls occurred during the daytime (6 am - 6 pm) 1 call occurred during the nighttime (6 pm - 6 am.) The average duration was: 175 minutes.

**Nature:**

Those calls were: 1- automatic alarm, 1- smoke condition, and 1- structure fire

**Staff:**

The average number of firefighters that responded was 14. Total hours of service was 84.

**Other:**

The on-board battery maintainer failed on Engine 1 and has been replaced by Desorcie Emergency (E-One).

We experienced alternator failure on Engine 2 during the January 18 structure fire, and it has been replaced by Potter's Repair.

**10. Discuss Proposal to Further Study Merger with Town**

BJ said before approving the annual meeting warning he wants to be able to discuss the merger study in case we have to put anything on the warning regarding that. Rosemary said the town is not putting anything on the town meeting warning with regard to a merger study. BJ said he thinks we should have something on the village annual meeting warning to allow the residents to vote on whether they want to continue with further study of a merger. Steve said that question could be brought up at the annual meeting. Lynda said she thinks it would be premature to bring it up then.

**11. Discuss and Possibly Act On Use of Cold Spring**

Steve said at the last meeting it was requested that we table the discussion of the cold spring. Ken was the person who requested that, but he isn't here tonight. This has already been discussed. We could just vote now and see if a majority of board members want to keep the cold spring open and that would end the discussion. BJ said he doesn't think it would hurt to wait until Ken, who had requested time to do research, can be here. Steve said Ken had told him he wanted to have Nate come in to talk to us about it. But when Steve talked to Nate, Nate said he would do whatever the board wanted him to do. It was agreed to put off this discussion until the next meeting.

Steve said he discussed with Erik today making a better sign to put at the cold spring that says the water is untreated and people use it at their own risk. Lynda said people that live here know the water is untreated and they have been using it for a long time, but people driving through town will not want to use the spring if they see a sign like that. It should say somewhere on the sign that the water has been used for many years with no repercussions. BJ said there could be repercussions at any time. Rosemary said she thinks the sign currently says the water is nonpotable. Erik said if that is the case, that covers us.

**12. Presentation of Draft 2023 Water and Wastewater Budgets and Proposed Rates**

Erik reviewed the draft water budget, starting with revenues. He said we haven't had a water rate increase since 2015-16. The last increase before that was in 2008. The last increase was in the teens. He proposes that we have smaller increases more often. He proposes 9.8% increases for both water and sewer rates. Water will likely require another 3.6% increase the next year.

Last year we had quite a bit of revenue from application fees for new water services. But that is not something we can count on so he did not budget for that much revenue again. He proposes taking \$35,000 from capital reserve to fund the rehab of the Katy Win pump house. And he is proposing that the village loan \$20,000 to itself from the revolving loan fund. By doing that we can avoid a bigger rate increase. There would be no interest on the loan. He is proposing a 5-year loan but paying the first installment in this budget so it would really be 4 years. Total water department revenue in this draft is \$311,270.

Erik reviewed water expenses. He noted that we could not staff the water and sewer department with our own staff for the amount Dan's company charges us. There is an increase in administrative salaries because money that used to be in distribution labor to pay Troy is now in administrative salaries to pay Anne. Steve said he thought Anne was just doing electric department work. Erik said no, she will be doing mostly electric department work but she will be working with all utilities.

BJ asked, when we send out water and electric bills do we include a return envelope? Erik said yes, but he is planning to stop doing that. We will keep enough envelopes on hand for one more billing cycle in case there is a lot of negative feedback on that and we want to reverse the decision. Lynda asked if Rosemary knows what percentage of people mail their payments versus dropping them off. Rosemary said a lot of people mail them. Steve said the number of return envelopes could at least be cut in half. He gets two bills and two envelopes. BJ said he talked to the employees and they said it would require much more time and hassle to send only one envelope.

Erik said he feels strongly about funding the capital reserve. So do people who might lend us money. They don't like giving money to people who don't fund their reserves. We have not been funding our reserves and he feels we need to commit to doing so. He would like the amount of reserves to be built up from 5% to 10%.

Total water department expenditures in this draft budget are \$234,527. With loan costs, the total is \$312,335. The revenue figure is slightly lower than that at this point, but we can use more reserves if needed.

BJ asked if we can use any ARPA funds to help with the budget. Erik said he wouldn't. Lynda agreed, because ARPA is a one-time thing.

Erik showed how this proposed budget would affect taxes for different houses and usages. People in single-family homes would see a \$5-10 monthly increase on their total water and sewer bill. Lynda noted that there is a \$50 base charge even when people use no water. Diane asked if that will stay the same. Erik said no, that will also increase by 9.8%.

Erik said one thing he did when he worked in Hinesburg was add landlords' names to water and sewer bills even if the tenant paid the bill. The bill would be addressed to the tenant but it would have both the tenant's and the landlord's name and the landlord would be on the hook if the tenant did not pay.

Erik reviewed the draft sewer budget. He noted that he is decreasing the amount budgeted for heat a bit because natural gas prices are down and are forecast to go down more and we are already into this budget year and having a warm winter. Diane asked if money we save this year can go forward. Erik said yes, we can roll forward surplus from enterprise funds. It is different than tax-based surplus.

It was agreed to wait to approve the water and sewer budgets until the whole board is here.

Steve asked if Erik also anticipates keeping the electric department increase under 10%. Erik said he doubts he will be able to. Other utilities have been coming in with 12-15% increases. We can't increase our rates until the rate study is done so we will have to budget with the old rates. Our rate case will be picked up and filed in June. Diane asked, we have no control over how much they raise our rates, right? Erik said we will present evidence and the PUC will either agree or approve a smaller increase.



Diane said the board saw a chart one time showing that our utility's charges were in the middle compared to others. Orleans was a lot lower. Are they going up the same amount? Erik said no, they are going up a lot more.

**13. Discussion of Feedback from Trustees' Interviews of Office Staff Needs**

BJ said he wants it documented that he feels it is unlawful to discuss the issues related to Marla in open session. He read an opinion he had received stating that the executive session statute says all meetings are to be open except in certain circumstances. One reason for executive session is disciplinary or dismissal actions against a public officer or employee. The statute does not require that the employer actually undertake or be planning to undertake disciplinary actions to justify executive session. The purpose of the statute provision is to protect the employee's privacy so that the employer can discuss the employee's issue in a non-public setting to avoid potential embarrassment for the employee. BJ moved to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing a potential disciplinary action involving an employee.

Diane said we have to warn an executive session. BJ said he wanted to warn it but his request for an executive session was turned down. Erik said he agrees that it would be better to have this discussion in executive session, but from what he read in the statute he didn't see where that was possible. BJ said he read the same statute and he feels that we can do it. What he read earlier was the opinion of our attorney, Brian Monaghan. He wanted an executive session but the agenda was changed without talking to him.

Steve said what will be discussed does not relate to discipline, hiring or firing. We are just talking about changes in day-to-day office routine. He doesn't know if it is necessary to have an executive session for that. He hasn't seen the opinion from the attorney. Maybe we should get more guidance.

BJ said he emailed Brian Monaghan to get his opinion. He feels it was disrespectful that the agenda was changed without talking to him. He feels if Erik thought it was not correct to have an executive session for this item he should have gotten a call. Steve agreed that Erik should have called him. Erik agreed that he should have but it was not disrespect, it was because he was very busy. When a trustee wants an item on the agenda he feels they should email Steve and cc him because it is Steve's agenda. BJ said that is a dictatorship.

Steve said BJ is talking about a dictatorship, but in some ways he has become an independent operator. BJ said the board members are five independent operators. The chair and vice chair only have authority for meetings. Outside of a meeting no one board member has more power than another. Since he has been on the board, board members have always been able to call the village manager and ask to put something on the agenda. He feels if a board member has to get the chair's okay to put something on the agenda, that is a dictatorship.

Steve said BJ has been following his own agenda in doing investigations. BJ said the board was made aware of what he wanted to do and gave permission. In one case he thought there might be a possible conflict and he took himself out of the situation.

Steve asked, hasn't BJ emailed Anne to ask how things are going? BJ said yes. Board members can do that. Steve said he feels that is Erik's job. Erik said Anne was confused and a bit troubled that BJ had emailed her about moving her desk. Erik was not even copied on that email. BJ said one of the questions that was going to be brought up tonight was whether we should move Anne's desk to the front, but he thought we should get her opinion. She said she prefers to be in the back. That was just a trustee asking an employee how they feel about something. Board members have the right to do that. All board members come into the office and talk to employees, but people feel it is a conflict of interest for him because his wife works there.

Steve said he feels like he made a mistake in voting to have BJ do the office investigations. He believes it is a conflict of interest. We are paying the price now for a conflict of interest that others in the past said they didn't think would be a problem. There is a reason why there are laws about conflict of interest. What if BJ's wife Lydia didn't like someone else working at the office? BJ could have inside information that might hurt the other person from getting a promotion. Or BJ could get information from Lydia that might help someone Lydia liked. It is a problem when there are people that closely related working together.

BJ said he doesn't feel Steve can tell him he has a conflict of interest just because of his personal feelings. Diane said she thinks a conflict of interest is decided on by a board. She thinks it is voted on after the trustees have discussed it. She has read that there is no specific test for whether something is a conflict of interest. The board discusses it and decides whether they see it as a problem.

BJ said Steve had alluded to the situation with Meredith and Troy Dolan but in that case Meredith was Troy's direct supervisor. He read a definition of conflict of interest: A situation in which a person is in a position to derive personal benefit from actions or discussions made in their official capacity. He said he took himself out of the investigation and had Diane go instead because he thought that if anyone in the office had a conflict with Lydia they might not speak freely to him. He found out some important ways that we can save money. If it was not for him pushing to look into this we would still be in the same spot. Steve said Erik just recently started working here. He thinks this all would have been solved by Erik eventually. BJ brought up an issue that he talked to Erik about that Erik did not follow up on quickly. What is wrong with him finding things out earlier and bringing them to Erik's attention? Erik said he feels it is appropriate for a new person to go slowly in making changes.

BJ said he noticed some issues with payroll and he brought Lynda in to look at it with him so there would be two eyes instead of one. Lynda said BJ probably would not have looked into all of this if Lydia had not been in the office and told him about certain issues. BJ said he got into it because a certain town worker said something about Marla not being there. He saw discrepancies and told the board that he wanted to talk to people about it. He kept the board informed. He didn't set up a meeting by himself. He got permission from the board and now the board is telling him that he was doing things wrong. Why did the board give him permission and then say he had a conflict of interest? Steve said he has talked to BJ before about the potential conflict. That has been a concern of his for a long time.

BJ asked if it is correct that Lydia is entirely a town employee with the village reimbursing the town for some of her time and Marla is a village employee with the town reimbursing the village for some of her time. Rosemary said that is correct. Steve said technically Lydia is a town employee but money comes from us to pay her. BJ said the town pays Lydia 100% and we pay Marla 100%. There is no split with those employees. Steve said it is not that simple.

Steve asked if BJ would accept Brian Monaghan's opinion if we hire him to tell us if there is a conflict of interest. BJ said yes. He would have accepted it if the board had told him not to investigate.

Diane said she was under the impression that Lydia and Marla both did some work for the village and some for the town. With BJ being on the board, that would be a conflict. BJ said now board members know that Lydia is a town employee. We don't tell Lydia what to do. He asked if Diane still thinks that is a conflict. Diane said she would have to think about it and read about conflict of interest.

Erik said any three members of the board are his boss. If a single board member gives him direction, one board member could tell him one thing and another one could tell him the opposite. BJ said if he asks Erik to put something on the agenda a quorum of the board does not need to approve that. Lynda said she thinks there should be something written down about chain of command. Erik said the agenda is not his, it is Steve's. Steve said he does not mind others putting things on the agenda. In the past he has not cared much about that. He did not have a problem with BJ putting something on the agenda without asking him. BJ said he does not have to ask. Erik said there was a question of the legality of having an executive session. He should have looped back with BJ but it fell off his plate. Reading the statute it didn't look legal. BJ said Erik should have called him to say that it didn't look legal.

Erik if BJ could send him the opinion email he got from Brian Monaghan. BJ handed him a printed copy. He said he called Brian today and asked him the question and got that. Erik noted that Brian Monaghan's rate went up to \$225 an hour.

BJ said board members talked to Anne. One thing they were going to suggest was having her come up front, but she is comfortable staying in the back. Diane said she thinks she is happy back there but she thinks we should make her space more inviting. She has boxes as a wall.

BJ said the suggestion is to train Lydia and Sue on everything related to the town clerk and treasurer positions. When they get trained on something he suggests they write down a standard operating procedure so that Rosemary won't have to write down all the procedures. They would take their own notes while being trained and produce something to put in a binder that they can look back at. Erik asked, shouldn't the selectboard be involved in decisions related to Lydia? He asked if Lydia and Sue are the only employees interested in the assistant clerk position. Is Marla interested? Lynda said she and Diane did not specifically ask them about that. Erik said it would be prejudicial to train some people and not others without knowing where the interest is.

Diane said she and Lynda agreed that this should be discussed with the selectboard and Beth Foy should be contacted regarding the training. There didn't seem to be any problem with anything in the office. Employees talked about how they were going to deal with the window and phones in situations where someone needs to do a project and can't be interrupted. The employees work together well and like coming to work. Marla's job sounds really difficult and she seems to really love it. Erik said she is good at it. Diane said Marla did say that the solar work was time-consuming, and now that is being taken care of.

Lynda said the other conclusion she and Diane came to was that there should not be any need for overtime. BJ said if the board gives him permission he can talk to Erik about the findings related to Marla to bring him up to speed. Erik said that probably should have already happened.

Steve said he will contact Brian Monaghan and read the opinion he gave to BJ and if Brian doesn't think there is a conflict of interest he will accept that. BJ said he would like the board to trust him to pull himself out of situations where he feels there is a conflict of interest. Steve said the thing about conflict of interest is that you don't always see it. BJ asked for an example of something he has done where others feel there was a conflict of interest. Steve said voting on employees' salaries. BJ said he voted on Marla's salary, not Lydia's.

Steve said he feels BJ has helped him out a lot and he is grateful for his leadership and initiative. The situation just doesn't feel right to him.

BJ said he will go by what the lawyer says. Lynda suggested that Steve should ask the lawyer, what if Lydia were the town clerk? BJ said he feels in that situation he could be a trustee but he couldn't vote on anything that would impact Lydia. Lynda said she doesn't know if he could even be on the trustee board. BJ said if the lawyer said that then he would step down.

#### ***14. Adjourn***

**Lynda moved to adjourn, Diane seconded, the motion was passed and the meeting was adjourned at 8:39.**

*Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths*