

JOHNSON VILLAGE TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2023

Present:

Trustees: GiGi Beach, Steve Hatfield, Lynda Hill, BJ Putvain, Ken Tourangeau

Others: Erik Bailey, Rosemary Audibert, Dan Copp, Jeff Parsons, Melissa Manka, Kyle Nuse, Diane Lehouiller

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. Call to Order

Ken called the meeting to order at 6:00.

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

It was agreed to change the order of some agenda items. BJ asked to add discussion of future changes to event insurance.

3. Review and Approve Minutes of Trustee Meetings

Lynda moved to approve the minutes of November 6, 2023, BJ seconded and the motion was passed.

4. Water/Wastewater Report and Action Items

Dan gave his report:

Operational Status of Wastewater Plant and Callouts

- E-DMR and Wr-43 were submitted to the State
- Alliance fired up the new boiler and we have an operating heating and hot water system. They are in the process of replacing flood affected thermostats. They are still waiting on replacement Modine heaters to be delivered
- We wrapped up the River Road Pump Station permanent fix. There will be flood mitigation performed next year. All invoices have been received and Perry has finalized that project and submitted it to FEMA for reimbursement.
- Aldrich and Elliot had a structural engineer perform an assessment of the cracking in the walls that is happening at the plant. They had another engineer perform mold and asbestos testing also.
- The state inspected the boiler and air compressor at the ww plant
- The heat pumps were not operating properly. Woody checked them and had to order a part. He will install it when it comes in. It is covered under warranty.
- The State of VT performed a boiler and air compressor inspection
- GiGi came down and decorated the office trailer with a Christmas tree and decorations. It was very appreciated by the crew, Thank you!!
- Tom Allen got the alum pump controls running. We are now dosing our SBR's with alum for phosphorus removal. We were able to reuse the existing pumps. They have been documented as damaged in the FEMA site assessment.
- We received the new portable trash pump that we had ordered.
- Had a blocked pipe on the Syphon. Got Manosh to jet it with hot water and opened the line up. We jetted the bypass also which was partially blocked as well.

Operational status of Water Plant and Callouts

- Monthly reports were submitted to the state.
- Coliform samples were negative
- The results for PFOA's were non detectable
- We installed milkhouse heaters at the Nadeau Wellhouse as we still have a village 8" line that runs through the building. If that were to freeze and break it could drain the reservoir overnight. Someone needs to reach out to Percy about putting a hydrant before the wellhouse so the line in the wellhouse is not needed. We are still paying for electricity in that building.
- Tim installed a new thermostat in Clay Hill Booster station as the old one stopped working.
- Milton Cat worked on the generator at the water plant as it was not automatically starting. Diagnosed worn o rings on the fuel pump. Had to order the parts and will replace when the parts come in.
- Erik submitted the emergency power plan for the 2 Katy Win pump houses as required by our sanitary survey. This month Pratt electrical will install transfer switches at both pump stations. We will use the village's 5000 KW generator to rotate power between them to maintain adequate pressure to the park in case of an extended power outage.

Dan said FEMA won't pay for a permanent generator at the WWTF but they will pay for a rental one forever even though that is more expensive. It would cost \$110K to put in a permanent one and it costs \$120K to rent one for a year. *(Dan left at 6:11.)*

5. ***Consider Giving Village Employees Extension to Use Earned CTO***

Ken said during the flood he told employees no one could take time off so employees didn't get to use their CTO. He and Erik would like to give them an extension to use the time. Ken talked to Jeff and Chan today. They still have a significant number of hours. He will leave it up to the board whether the extension should be 180 days or a shorter period.

GiGi asked how long the period was when he told them there was no time off. Ken said he technically never rescinded it. Nate was the first to take time off 2 or 3 weeks ago.

Ken suggested telling employees they have to use this year's CTO first. The extension would start January 1. Erik said with a 180-day extension, extra time over the maximum would not be moved to their sick bank until June 30. Rosemary said extra time goes into the sick bank unless the sick bank is full. One person's is full. BJ asked, time over the maximum will next be moved at the normal time, not a year from June 30, right? Ken and Erik said that is right.

BJ moved to extend the deadline for using CTO by 180 days for all village employees. *(Steve arrived at 6:17.)* **Lynda seconded and the motion was passed.** *(Diane Lehouiller arrived at 6:20.)*

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

Rosemary and the board reviewed the budget status report. Rosemary said insulation is supposed to be put in downstairs on December 18.

BJ asked if we figured out why we were over budget for healthcare. Erik said that was a clerical error on his part. We are paying what we are supposed to pay but there was a typo in the figure he put in the budget.

Ken said when the town last hired someone for the road crew the new employee was given a village electric fuel card. We are trying to figure out the amount that was incorrectly charged to the village. Rosemary said she wants to compare to the average of the year before.

Rosemary said the auditor will be getting back to her about what she needs to provide for the audit. She is sure we will have to have a single audit for this year. The cost for the 3 past years will be about \$12K per year. It was agreed to wait until next month when Rosemary has final cost figures to approve the audit expenditure.

7. *Village Manager's Report and Action Items*

Erik read his report:

I had multiple funding meetings with various agencies. The main outcome is the Vt Bond Bank project will be open for applications tomorrow after their kick-off Teams meeting tomorrow at noon. This is the one that will refi commercial loans for 1.3%. Additionally, the ANR CWSRF project will open in early January. This has a smaller pot of money, but will be for W/WW construction costs, and is fully deferred for 2 years, then only interest until 5 years. It is designed to cover the gap between costs and FEMA reimbursement. The other main outcome is the FEMA CDL program, which can loan money for lost revenues due to the flood. There is also often up to 40% forgiveness of this loan for lower income communities. I've asked LCPC to assist with that application, which we may or may not use, but it is OK to apply and have it on the shelf until it is needed.

The News & Citizen did an article on my funding efforts. While I'm not enthused about how they used the term "agitate" for my efforts to get state & federal agencies to help us, it is otherwise a good article.

Last Friday, Michelle Monroe, Senator Welch's VT Chief of Staff called and interviewed me for the Senator so he can make a pitch for more funding for the hardest hit communities in the Senate Appropriations Bill.

I had multiple VPPSA budget sessions, and our annual invoice will be up 7.8%, even though the VPPSA portion of the budget is reduced by 2.3% from last year. This is due to higher power supply and Renewable Energy Standard costs.

I attended the Vermont Emergency Management Dept Annual Utilities Emergency Preparedness Conference. This year looks more stable than last for power supply. I also made a connection with GMP & and I am getting a tour of the Fairfax dam and a briefing of how it operates and its limits of what it can and cannot do during flooding.

The JFD ATV is approved by VLCT MAC to be auctioned to Village employees prior to a public bid. Chief West is gathering value data for it and all its accessories and we will get a sealed bid internal auction going in January.

The November Northeast CPI-U will come out in about a week, so we can discuss using that for the 2025 employee COLA increases at the January trustees meeting.

The Town Administrator just sent an email outlining the status of the repairs to the municipal office, it is attached.

Efficiency Vermont has several new flood specific rebates for renters, homeowners, landlords and businesses. The flyer is attached and has been put on our website, as well as tonight's FPF. It will also go out in the next electrical billing cycle.

The 2024 Budget development Timeline is attached.

Erik asked for trustee input on budget priorities. BJ listed some ideas he got from Rosemary about possible ways to save money: a virtual time clock for employees, reconsidering cold spring maintenance, mailing annual village reports only to those who request them rather than to all residents, and mailing out newsletters only if important information needs to go rather than quarterly. He said he has some other ideas to discuss in executive session. Lynda asked how we would notify people annual reports were not being sent out to everyone. Rosemary said with a postcard. Ken suggested that others try to come up with cost saving ideas.

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

Erik read the fire department report submitted by fire chief Arjay West:

Johnson Fire Department Report
Oct. 26-Nov. 30, 2023

JFD responded to 15 calls. 11 calls occurred during the daytime (6 am - 6 pm) and 4 calls occurred during the nighttime (6 pm - 6 am.) The average duration was: 83 minutes

Nature:

Those calls were: 2 – structure fires, 1 – smoke condition, 7 – automatic alarms, 1- vehicle crash, and 4- other (traffic control, station work detail flood related, FEMA meeting)

Staff:

The average number of firefighters that responded was: 11
Total hours of service was: 130

Other:

The UTV committee presented recommendations to the Trustee Chair and we are moving forward with placing an order for the UTV and bed-mounted rescue skid unit. Research is continuing on appropriate trailer for transportation.

The radio repeater equipment has been installed onto the Harvey Tower by Burlington Communications, and a tentative schedule for radio reprogramming has been set for early January 2024.

We have begun to move contents back into our classroom, office, and tech room, as the carpentry repair work in these areas is complete. There are a few additional issues being discovered which required further attention and are a work in progress.

9. *Electric/General Report and Action Items*

Erik read the report submitted by Nate Brigham and Anne Crockett:

Electric Dept.

Mutual Aid to Hyde Park 19.5hrs straight time plus 10hrs OT 2 men and Bucket truck
Due to the 11/27 and 12/4 winter storms

Helped Johnson works with installing Christmas lights on street light poles and
Main St Bridge

Installed snowflakes and decorated trees

Fixed outlets for Christmas lights

Installed new cls320 meter at 853 RT15W, at the old Buggy Man building.

Installed new street light at 634 Railroad St

Light pole on Village Green was hit by a truck.

Installed photo cell and Secondary pedestal on green to power tree

Completed monthly meter reading, high/low checks, substation check, and dig safes

Anne: Met with Consolidated to discuss pole replacements and relocations across from
the office.

Met with VLCT to discuss the flood and paperwork progress.

Had two zoom meetings with Vermont Dept of Labor to get trained in the new
system for tracking apprentices. Have worked on updating Chan and Jeff's
records.

Numerous zoom meetings with FEMA, Erik, and Perry to discuss finalizing the
initial response reimbursement paperwork.

Coordinated information regarding the VLCT insurance filings.

Attended the Spry Point software zoom presentation by VPPSA.

Attended the PUC Rules 3.3, 3.2, 3.4 regarding disconnection of service rules proposals.

Worked on the DOE Transformer rebates. I am not sure if the transformers we buy will meet the requirements. I need to submit the request tomorrow.

I spent two afternoons scoping out the warehouse to plan how to do the inventory.

Water/Sewer

Nate passed the Water Distribution test

Installed remote readers at the Post Office and Community Bank

Fixed 64 Sinclair Rd meter

Meeting with VTUMS on Lead and Copper Survey

General Dept

Changed oil in the S450 Bobcat

Removed American Flags

Changed out fall banners for winter banners

Safety

No Safety meeting with NEPPA in Nov.

Paul did his CPR/AED training

10. Review and Act on Kyle Nuse Request for Jubilee Insurance Premium Reimbursement

Ken said Kyle would like to be reimbursed for insurance for the Jubilee. Rosemary told him that was standard procedure in the past.

BJ moved and Lynda seconded to approve reimbursing Kyle Nuse \$150 insurance for the Jubilee.

Ken said she purchased insurance as required by our agreement for use of the village green.

GiGi said she would rather not have the taxpayers pay for it. She would rather have selectboard members and village trustees each contribute \$20 to prevent a burden on the taxpayer. Ken said he has no issue with that but we did set a budget for it. People are paying for it in their taxes anyway

so we might as well use what was budgeted. In the past Johnson Works got more expensive insurance that included child molestation coverage but that is not required for use of the village green.

The motion was passed.

Kyle said Erik was great to work with on the Jubilee.

GiGi said she would rather make things like hot chocolate free for participants. She would be willing to contribute to cover the cost. Diane Lehouiller said sale of hot chocolate is a way to raise funds. No one complained about having to pay. The town has always wanted committees to fundraise.

11. Review and Sign LCPC MTAP Statement of Work for W&L Garage and WWTF Projects

Lamoille County Planning Commission Regional Planner Melissa Manka said the Municipal Technical Assistance Program provides funds for projects for rural communities. LCPC staff have met with Erik to talk about potential projects and looked into eligibility. The water and light garage project and the wastewater treatment facility project are eligible and LCPC felt they could provide assistance with those projects. The state would reimburse LCPC for any assistance provided. Erik said we had already hired LCPC to manage the water and light garage project. Now that the state will pay for that, it frees up more money for the project.

Erik said he thinks the dollar amount shown for the water and light garage project should probably be 4 or 5 times greater. Melissa suggested reviewing the numbers and possibly increasing them. Ken suggested authorizing someone to sign the Statements of Work in case they can be updated before the next meeting.

Lynda moved authorize Ken to sign the finalized Statements of Work between the Lamoille County Regional Planning Commission and the Town of Johnson (Village of Johnson), Vermont for Municipal Technical Assistance Services for the water and light garage project and the wastewater treatment facility project, BJ seconded and the motion was passed.

(Melissa, Kyle and Diane left.)

12. Review and Possibly Adopt Draft Village Sidewalk Snow Removal Policy

Erik read the policy he drafted, which states that on weekends or holidays 4 inches or less of snow may not be removed until the next business day.

Steve moved and BJ seconded to adopt the draft Village Sidewalk Snow Removal Policy.

Jeff Parsons brought up issues that can occur when snow from the roads ends up on the sidewalk. Erik said the policy won't be applied across the board. Employees will use common sense. This gives employees leeway.

The motion was passed.

BJ asked if we know what we are doing next year with the cold spring. Ken said he thinks we need to discuss it more. Lynda said there is a car there every time she drives by. Someone she knows saw someone from Burlington filling 10 big bottles. Steve said many local people use it.

13. New Water & Light Assistant Foreman Job Description

Erik said he and BJ decided the assistant foreman job description should be modified to make it easier to grow into the position. The position is empty now but would provide backup for Nate. It has to be advertised to employees first and if none of them are interested then it can be advertised outside. Erik said the current job description says a Class B CDL and lineworker certification are required and a Class D drinking water certification is preferred. The changes proposed are to say that a CDL must be obtained within a year of accepting the position and the drinking water certification must be completed within 2 years. BJ said we would pay for the CDL and water certification.

BJ moved and Lynda seconded to approve the proposed new Water & Light Assistant Foreman Job Description, effective January 1, and to advertise the position.

There was discussion about whether to increase pay for the position as each milestone is reached or as soon as someone starts in the position. It was agreed not to add any new language about compensation.

The motion was passed.

14. Executive Session for Disciplinary Action

BJ moved to go into executive session as authorized by 1. V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) for evaluation of an employee, with the board and Erik to remain, Lynda seconded and the motion was passed at 7:36. The board came out of executive session at 8:31 with no action taken.

15. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths