



Village News

January 2024

Village Flood Recovery & 2023 Highlights

Johnson WWTF Chief gets EPA Award

Dan Copp, our Wastewater & Water Treatment Chief Operator (H2O Innovations contract) was one of our great heroes responding to the July flood devastation. He did not go home at all for 3 days, He amassed resources, led his team, and had his completely destroyed treatment system providing partial treatment by the end of the week, and full treatment within a month. This was Herculean work, and US EPA named him the Wastewater Operator of the Year for 2023 for Vermont! Well earned, congratulations Dan!

There were SO many heroes that week. Too many to list., But a notable list includes: Eben Patch & Beth Foy for running the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) with very little sleep for weeks, setting up the emergency shelter and so much more. Ken Tourangeau for stepping away from his business for weeks, also running 18+ hour days to help the village recover. His efforts and leadership were crucial. Our Village Manager, Erik Bailey was also "all in", running home on Monday to get a bed roll and clothes to ride out the storm, not going home for days, working the EOC during the flood, and coordinating village recovery efforts once the waters receded enough to survey the damage. Linda Hill, who tirelessly ran after anything that was needed & operated the donation center. Nate Brigham & his Water & Light crew, helping with rescue efforts (Jason & Town Highway dept did too!) and managing the damaged and flooded electric grid. Chief West and the Johnson Fire Dept. Volunteers. Some of whom stepped away from their flooded homes to go save their neighbors in danger and need. Again, so many community, church, & corporate people stepped up and helped greatly. Thank you all.

Electric Dept Highlights: The Water & Light garage building was never designed for occupancy, originally a cold storage structure. As such, it is poorly constructed and insulated, resulting in condensation, mold, and large expenses to heat.

Since October 2022, we have sourced and installed an industrial HEPA air scrubber to keep that atmosphere safe for employees while we work on upgrading the facility. Applied for Congressional Grants (CDS) from both our US Senators, and *selected* by Senator Welch to receive \$824,000.00 to substantially remodel the building! We also applied for a \$500,000.00 Energy Efficiency grant from VT dept of Buildings & Gen. Services. We got that too!

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Electric Continued: Lastly, we applied for, and received \$9143.18 in direct MTAP funding from the state for project management of the garage update. What does this mean to the Village taxpayer & ratepayer? It means a much more efficient, safe, and effective facility for the crew that takes care of your power, water & wastewater lines, sidewalks and so much more Without raising taxes or rates to do so!

General Dept: We applied for, and received an 80% Sidewalk Scoping Grant to learn the challenges of extending the sidewalk to Wescom Road. This study is needed to unlock VTRANS construction grants should we decide to build it. The Water & Light crew with all the additional work caused by the flood, somehow found time to replace 4 damaged sidewalk sections on School, Main, and Railroad Streets. They look great, thanks guys! Thanks also go out to GiGi Beach, Carrie Ferrari & Johnson Works for the beautiful holiday lights in the Village and their efforts on re-lighting the Powerhouse Bridge!

Water & Sewer: I'd like to recognize our other WWTF staff, Tim Hall and Luke Dolan, who also were incredible getting their WWTF back operating so well after the flood. We received a 100% Grant funded sewer cleaning and CCTV inspection of flooded sewer lines which discovered a 3/4 blockage by the bridge, which got removed before it caused problems. On the water side, we are conducting a lead service line inventory mandated by the EPA, so please send back the completed form if you receive one. This survey costs over \$50,000.00, and we also received 100% grant funding for it! Two more 100% grant funded activities we applied for and were awarded/completed were a water main valve cleaning, exercising, inspection & GIS locating service and a professional water leak detection service. Both of these have greatly increased our efficiency and reliability.

Flood Recovery: Our Village Manager has been doggedly pursuing all avenues to get assistance funding our post-flood rebuild, He assembled the "Johnson Funders Summit" with state & federal agencies, resulting in multiple very low, to no cost short and long term funding options and avenues to bring Johnson Village back, and advance us in the future. BTW, the Fire Dept flood repairs are complete!

Last, but certainly not Least: Our Village Green has been Dedicated to our beloved Village Clerk and Treasurer who has over 40 years of service to our community. Stop by and check out the Rosemary Audibert Village Green and read the plaque in her honor right under the Flag.

Your Village Staff & Trustees are proud to serve you and look forward to great times ahead in the Village of Johnson.