

JOHNSON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES  
VERMONT STATE UNIVERSITY – JOHNSON  
THE ELLSWORTH ROOM, WILLEY LIBRARY  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5 2024

**Present:** Selectboard members: Beth Foy (via Zoom), Duncan Hastings, Eben Patch, Shayne Spence, Mark Woodward  
Others: Tom Galinat, Rosemary Audibert, Dean Locke, cannabis license applicant, two representatives from VHB, Adrienne Stevson, Doug Molde, Kyle Nuse, Sue Lovering, Ron Rodjenski (via Zoom)

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

**1. Call to Order**

Eben called the meeting to order at 6:03.

**2. Consider Additions or Adjustments and Approving Agenda**

It was agreed to add discussion of the next meeting date to the agenda. Tom said he would discuss changes to the Lendway Lane project under his report. Duncan said he wants to get into the record that we need to start thinking about the industrial park in terms of things like covenants, rules and regulations and our criteria for selling lots.

**3. Consider Approving Minutes for January 15 and 22, 2024**

**Mark moved and Shayne seconded to approve the minutes of January 15 and January 22, 2024.** Duncan suggested a change to the January 22 minutes to more accurately reflect what was agreed upon with regard to applying surplus. “It was agreed to add \$110,000 of surplus to the budget, divided equally between the tax anticipation reserve fund and the grant match reserve fund” should be replaced with “Of the total (estimated) surplus of \$803,199.17, the board voted to apply \$110K to reduce taxes. The balance of the surplus was applied as followed: Buildings and Grounds Reserve Fund (\$20K), Reappraisal Fund (\$20K), Highway Capital Equipment (\$20K), Grant Match Reserve fund (\$548,199.17), Tax Anticipation Reserve Fund (\$10K), additional industrial park expenses (\$75K).” **Mark and Shayne accepted a friendly amendment to approve the minutes with those changes. The motion was passed.**

**4. Selectboard Issues and Concerns**

Duncan said the motion was to approve the budget subject to staff review. He wants tonight's minutes to reflect what happened to the budget as a result of the staff review. The actual total surplus went from \$803,199.17 to \$812,448.17. All the surplus amounts agreed upon at the meeting were applied, but because the estimated surplus increased we ended up with \$9,249 reserved for other purposes. By reserving that we are saying we will use it for something but we haven't identified what. If we don't say we are reserving it, it automatically goes back to the taxpayers. The new amount to be raised by taxes is \$2,192,185.70.

**5. Planned Purchases for Consideration**

Tom said Jason has been trying to get quotes from overhead door companies. There are gaps at the bottom of the garage doors. Rollers are bent and sometimes stick. The town garage uses about a third of a tank of fuel a day. Jason wants to tighten up the building and close the gaps. He is trying to get three quotes. So far he has one, which is for \$2,600 to redo all the rollers and hinges and maybe replace the bottom panel. He has money in the budget to pay for it but it is over \$1,000 so it needs board approval. **Duncan moved and Shayne seconded to authorize Tom and/or Jason to spend up to \$3,000 for overhead door maintenance at the town garage.** Tom said that will not involve replacing the motors that are more than 20 years old. When they go, replacing them will

cost \$1,400 per door. The technician who looked at them said there will be an indication that the motor is going to fail before it fails. **The motion was passed.**

Tom said currently it is hard for people attending by Zoom to participate in meetings and there is proposed state legislation that would make hybrid meetings mandatory. If that happens we would need technology to allow people to participate via Zoom. The Owl video conferencing camera technology makes hybrid meetings smooth. It would cost about \$1,300. We already have a projector and screen. Shayne suggested approving a total amount of \$1,500 in case items such as cables are needed. **Mark moved and Duncan seconded to authorize Rosemary to spend up \$2,500 for purchase of an Owl camera.**

Shayne asked if Tom has talked to GMATV about whether this could be integrated into their system. Tim of GMATV said Morristown recently switched to using an Owl. As long as there is a computer there to run the Owl, GMATV can connect via Zoom and record and stream using the Owl instead of their regular camera. They can also still provide audio equipment for the town to use. Based on testing in Morrisville they have determined that their audio equipment interfaces well with the Owl.

**The motion was passed.** Mark asked if Beth was voting. Beth said she had been having audio issues.

**6. *Clerk/Treasurer Report: Warrants, Licenses and Any Action Items***

Rosemary said she put the ARPA money, a total of \$585,212, in under "other revenue." She created a new line item for it. Expenditures are 50.34% of budget.

Rosemary handed out cannabis license application information. The applicant said he is applying for a Tier 2 manufacturing license. He will be producing custom pre-rolls out of his house. He will be the owner/operator and sole employee. He is waiting for an inspection from the state Cannabis Control Board. (*Adrienne Stevson arrived at 6:52.*) **Duncan moved and Mark seconded to approve the Tier 2 manufacturing cannabis license for 802 Joint Ventures.** Shayne asked the applicant if he has thought about security. He said yes. He has two cameras. Windows are security taped and there is a padlocked door. It meets the Cannabis Control Board's requirements, although they have not yet inspected it. The fire marshal has signed off on it. Mark asked, the applicant lives there? The applicant said yes. **The motion was passed.** (*Kyle Nuse arrived at 6:54.*)

Tom said currently Rosemary handles liquor and tobacco licenses but cannabis license applications come to him. Does the board want Rosemary to handle them? The board agreed that all licenses, including cannabis licenses, should be handled by the town clerk.

**7. *Community and Economic Development Specialist Report and Any Action Items***

Tom said Randall will be giving a report at the next meeting.

**8. *Municipal Building and Library Repair Contract***

Tom said we are still waiting for the go-ahead from FEMA. Dale Tatro, Inc is working with Tom and Ron to give FEMA what they are looking for. As soon as FEMA says it is okay then the town attorney can start working on the contract. Duncan asked if there has been any response from the Division for Historic Preservation. Tom said no. Ron has been in communication with them. Tom said as soon as FEMA gives approval we can move ahead with the municipal building project while waiting for Historic Preservation to provide approval for the library.

**9. CAI Tax Map Contract**

Eben said the proposed contract from the company we currently contract with has a cost of \$2200 for the website and an additional \$20 charge per building. We have overspent this line item in the past. We budgeted \$4K last year and spent \$4300. This year we budgeted \$5200. **Duncan moved to approve the CAI tax map contract, Shayne seconded and the motion was passed.**

**10. Town Sponsored Events for 2024**

Tom said Carri Ferrari of Johnson Works has asked the town to approve the schedule of events planned for 2024 as town sponsored events. (*Doug Molde arrived at 7:01.*) The planned events are an Easter egg hunt, a summer kickoff festival, an event to be determined in the fall and the Johnson Jubilee. Tom will let PACIF know about each event before it happens.

**Duncan moved and Shayne seconded to approve the list of events submitted by Johnson Works (annual egg hunt, summer kickoff festival, to-be-announced fall event, and Johnson Jubilee) as town-sponsored events.** Beth said she recommends we not approve the fall event until we know what it is. It may need different insurance coverage depending on what it is. **Duncan and Shayne agreed to amend their motion to exclude the fall to-be-announced event.**

Kyle said last year Johnson Works did not run the Jubilee; she did. She had to personally buy insurance for the village green to make that event happen. She doesn't remember it having to go on the town's insurance. Eben said it sounds like Kyle is saying that the town can only approve events and insurance on town property and that she recommends that Johnson Works talk to the village. Kyle said the Jubilee only takes place on village property and private property. Duncan said it includes the Historical Society building, which is a town building. Beth said she thinks the town could insure the Jubilee event even if it is on village property but asking the village to add it onto their insurance would not be a bad idea. Tom noted that the town and village have the same insurance carrier. **The motion was passed.** Eben asked Tom to recommend to Carri Ferrari that she get permission and insurance from the village as well.

**11. AARP Community Challenge**

Kyle Nuse said the Rail Trail Committee has identified the AARP Community Challenge Grant as a good match for meeting some of the committee's priorities – getting rail trail user friendly amenities such as benches, bike racks, trash receptacles and picnic tables placed in the town and village. They are hoping the grant would fund those. They are looking for selectboard authorization to have Randall apply for the grant. The application is due March 2. There is no match.

Eben asked, this will mean no extra work for other town employees? Kyle said probably some financial information will be needed from Rosemary but it will probably not be extensive.

Kyle said the committee is asking the village for their blessing as well because some of these items will be placed on their property or on jointly owned property and they are asking the village for in-kind labor support with removing old items and installing new ones. They can ask for up to \$50,000 in grant funds and they will probably try to go for most of that.

Duncan asked if some of the things obtained with the grant will replace amenities that were part of the Main Street project. Kyle said yes. Part of the MOU for the Main Street project states that these things are supposed to be maintained and replaced and it has been 12 years since they were put in place.

Shayne asked if there will be additional locations other than Main Street. Kyle said a subcommittee of the Rail Trail Committee will be doing outreach with businesses and organizations to get information from them about what cyclists want. They have been to a dozen or so businesses and organizations so far asking what they have, need and want and what they think could be helpful for people coming off the rail trail. In the next week or so they will have all that information compiled and they will pinpoint the places where they want to place things. For example, they think the Woolen Mill is a good spot for a bike rack. They have talked to Sue Lovering at the arboretum. She would like a picnic table. The majority of items will replace things that are already there that need to be replaced. They are hoping to use brighter colors and make things more obvious. Shayne said he would recommend a bench and trash barrel on Railroad Street by the river.

Duncan asked if anything is proposed for the trail itself. Kyle said they are going to talk to the Rec Committee about additional needs for the trailhead. Things could potentially be placed at the trailhead, but not on the rail trail. That is more complicated because it involves working with VTrans. The whole idea is to get people off the trail and down to our village.

**Shayne moved to authorize Randall Szott to apply for the AARP Community Challenge Grant, Mark seconded and the motion was passed.**

Doug Molde said he thinks the committee will come to the selectboard again with regard to signage and other grants.

**12. *Holcomb House Maintenance***

Tom said the original selectboard motion approving expenditures for Holcomb House maintenance was for a specific dollar amount. The Historical Society had trouble finding contractors and when a contractor came, the recommendation was for different work. The scope of work and the dollar amount have changed. (*Sue Lovering arrived at 7:16.*) The board is being asked to approve a new dollar amount and a change to the scope of work. The cost is changing from \$5,500 to \$14,000. The first check to the contractor has been written. Eben asked if that check was for less than \$5,500. Rosemary said yes.

Tom said the new cost figure is \$14,000 but the Historical Society has a \$7,000 maintenance line item that they want to use. So the increase in taxpayer money to be used is really only about \$1,500. Eben asked if this fits into the spending cuts the selectboard asked for. Tom said no. Duncan asked, if the Historical Society spent the full \$7,000 budgeted in the current year for maintenance, would this still be within budget for the current year? Did we estimate they were going to spend their entire amount? Tom said when we did year-end projections we did assume they would spend the entire amount. We asked groups to cut spending by 5%, but used 100% of the originally budgeted amount to estimate year-end cash flow.

Tom said the first check did not use taxpayer money. It used Historical Society money from donations. Duncan asked if it came out of the reserve fund. Rosemary said yes. Duncan said authorization to spend reserve funds has to come from the selectboard. If the Historical Society is taking money out of the reserve fund they should ask for approval from the selectboard. Beth agreed that all reserve fund use requires selectboard approval.

Eben said our procurement policy requires sealed bids for expenses over \$10,000. Beth said they had several different types of work they were looking for from different contractors and each of the

totals was under \$10,000. Eben said he thinks the work is now being performed by one contractor as one job. Beth said she doesn't understand how it would end up as one contract.

Tom said the action that took place was not in line with the motion that was made. Now we need to resolve the issue. We could try to go through a sealed bid process. He could put out an RFP with a 7-day response time. We could tell the contractor not to do any more work than could be covered by the check that was written. When Mary Jean Smith asked Rosemary to write the check Rosemary thought the expenditure had already been approved because of the selectboard's motion, but the scope of work had changed. Mark said he thinks if we issue an RFP we will just get a bid from the same contractor. Duncan said we might not even get that contractor.

Eben asked what work changed to almost triple the price. Duncan showed him the contract he got from Mary Jean.

Duncan said he thinks the board should retroactively approve the Historical Society's use of reserve funds to apply to this contract. They have about \$6300 available in the current year budget. He said he will scan the contract and send it to everyone.

It was agreed to table this item until Beth could find the original motion that was made.

**13. *Fire Contract, Agreement for Services***

Tom said the fire department is proposing a 3.5% increase for the town. The total cost is \$101,338, an increase of \$3,426.

Duncan said the contract says that the fire department wants to be reimbursed for certain activities during emergency events. For instance in December they said they would bill the town if they went house to house. He wonders if there is some way to deal with that in this contract. The way he reads the contract he would have said that kind of response would be covered as opposed to being billable. Eben said he is not sure the contract would cover proactive work before a pending emergency. Duncan said he is okay with approving the contract amount because it is in the budget but maybe this is an item we need to revisit with the village and the fire department to see if we can come to a better agreement about what is covered under the contract. Shayne agreed. Duncan said it bothers him that the town is going to be billed for things he would consider emergency response. Eben asked Tom to add clarification of the contract as something that needs to be done before the next contract approval.

**Duncan moved to approve the draft contract with the fire department and to authorize the chair or vice chair to sign it on behalf of the selectboard, Shayne seconded and the motion was passed.**

**14. *Scribner Bridge Study and Presentation from VHB***

Two representatives from VHB presented alternatives for Scribner Bridge. They said their study is a rescoping of a previous scoping study. The purpose of the study is to identify an economic solution to preserve the bridge and improve flood resiliency. In the previous study several alternatives were provided. One is to do nothing. One is to armor the channel and make the roadway more resilient, which could mean paving. Another is to add a high flow relief culvert to the lower side. The most expensive is to turn one abutment of the bridge into a pier and add another span on the other side to turn it into a longer two-span bridge. The second span would not be a covered bridge. It would be a completely independent steel beam and wooden deck structure. One

of the biggest issues is that the current span is only about 35 ft. It is a pinch point. Ideally it would be lengthened. That would be more expensive than armoring the roadway. The additional span would be added on the Hunter Road end. These are potential alternatives that VHB can look at further and then they can recommend one. They want to find out if there are any concerns with the site or the project, anything the selectboard wants them to consider or other alternatives the selectboard wants them to look at.

Eben said removing the bridge is another potential option. Duncan said he thinks that would be highly unpopular. Eben said the bridge could potentially be put somewhere else.

Tom said one requirement of the grant is to get public feedback. Beth said this is not public feedback. If we want public feedback we should talk to people who live on the roads near the bridge. She is curious how often the bridge is used by vehicles. There would be ways to get to any location even if the bridge were not there. What if it were a pedestrian-only bridge?

Shayne asked if we could do a public hearing later on when VHB comes back. The VHB representatives said currently their draft schedule is to develop more specific alternatives with a budget tied to each and then have an alternatives meeting. Duncan said we should advertise that meeting.

Beth said she feels it would be interesting to hear whether people who live near the bridge have opinions about the design. She suggested sending them a letter asking if they have ideas about the design of Scribner Bridge. If they respond we could ask if they are interested in attending a meeting. She would suggest contacting everyone who lives on Sinclair or roads that connect to Sinclair. Shayne said he would be supportive of getting their input.

Eben asked, the scoping study is about flood mitigation specifically, not rebuilding the bridge, right? A VHB representative said that is right. Eben suggested the possibility of letting water out differently from the dam just upstream in order to reduce the inertia of water. There is often trouble in the area of the bridge during ice jams. One of the VHB representatives said she thinks the main reason for that is that the bridge is 35 ft. long and the channel wants to be close to 70 ft. wide.

Duncan said one idea was moving the road behind the barn but there would still be the question of access to the bridge.

Tom said our highway crew has the resources to do culvert installation and armoring themselves. Duncan says as he recalls the bypass culvert would be huge and extremely costly. Eben asked, what about a hybrid model with multiple smaller culverts? We probably could put them all in for less than we are paying for the scoping study. He is thinking about something that would take care of 60% to 80% of floods.

Mark said he thinks we should armor the road. We are not going to buy the house, which is what adding a span would require. It seems that the logical thing is to figure out how to armor the road. Duncan said part of the issue is that whatever washes off the road washes into the stream so Fish and Wildlife has something to say about it.

Mark said he thinks if there is going to be a public hearing we should reach out to people who live within a mile of the bridge. Eben said he thinks the town, not VHB, should contact people who live near the bridge. Mark said when a date is set the town will advertise it. One of the VHB representatives asked if that would be separate from the alternatives meeting. Eben said he would prefer to leave it up to Tom to decide. Duncan said he would advocate making it one of the already scheduled meetings.

**15. Arboretum Grant**

Sue Lovering said she wants to apply for an AARP grant for more seating at the arboretum. She would like six benches, more picnic tables and a handrail on the slope that goes into the entrance.

Rosemary asked if the town can apply for two AARP grants. Duncan asked if Sue is aware that the Rail Trail Committee has already proposed applying for an AARP grant. The two groups probably don't want to be in competition with each other for the same funds. Is this a different grant program? Sue said the one she wants to apply for is the Livable Communities grant. Shayne said the Community Challenge grant program is part of the Livable Communities initiative. Sue said the one she is applying for is for improving public places like parks. Shayne said it looks like Sue and the Rail Trail committee want to apply for basically the same thing. It seems like it would be easy to pull the two together. Eben said Kyle specifically mentioned the arboretum as a location. Shayne said he thinks having two committees apply together makes for a stronger application.

Sue said she doesn't want to use the benches Kyle wants for the rail trail. She wants lower maintenance benches similar to the benches the Tree Board got with another grant.

Tom said he will connect Sue, Kyle and Randall so they can work together on applying jointly or separately. Eben said he thinks Randall can determine whether it is better for the two groups to apply together or not.

**Beth moved to authorize Randall Szott to work with Sue Lovering and the Tree Board to determine the best option for moving forward with the AARP grant Sue is seeking and to authorize Randall to submit an AARP grant application, Shayne seconded and the motion was passed.**

Sue said she just discovered that Polywood has a program where they give away recycled plastic furniture. She wants to put in an application. The board agreed that Sue can seek free furniture from Polywood.

Sue said when the tree board did the village tree inventory in 2015 the part of town that needed trees most was Katy Win Park. Next year the federal government will have a \$600,000 grant for trees. The tree board can get a grant to pay for trees if a group of Katy Win homeowners wants to learn about planting and maintaining trees and take responsibility for them. The Tree Board will teach them how to maintain the trees and get the trees for them if they commit to taking care of them. She also would like to use grant funds to buy trees for any properties acquired in FEMA buyouts. Eben said that is where we will tie in Scott Meyer.

**16. Holcomb House Maintenance (continued)**

Beth sent the other board members the minutes from September 25. Pages 5 and 6 have motions concerning the Holcomb House work and relevant discussion. The motions made were as follows:

*Shayne moved to approve the work proposed by the Historical Society at the Holcomb House, with the exception of the floors and painting, at an estimated cost of \$5,523.57, Mark seconded and the motion was passed.*

*Beth moved to approve Holcomb House floor repair by Emery Floors for \$2,503.50, Shayne seconded and the motion was passed with Eben recusing himself.*

*Shayne moved and Mark seconded to approve spending up to \$3000 for interior painting by Lynda Hill at the Holcomb House. The motion was passed.*

Duncan said the total amount approved in all those motions was \$11,023 and we have a proposal for \$13,952.

Beth said the first motion excludes floors and painting so it covers everything else. She thinks the Historical Society needs to fit within the bounds of those motions. If the contract is set up a different way she thinks we should ask the contractor to set it up in line with those motions. Flooring is separate and painting is separate. If the Historical Society is going over budget on anything they need to decide what is most or least important.

Tom said the town is now being asked to pay \$6,700 and the Historical Society is going to raise their contribution to \$7,000, so they are only asking for \$700 more from the town. Eben asked if the Historical Society contribution is from the reserve fund or from the 501(c)(3) organization. Tom said it sounds like the Historical Society feels the reserve fund is their money and he is hearing the selectboard say that it is the town's money.

Beth said our problem for tonight is how the board wants to proceed when the Historical Society made adjustments without letting the selectboard know. Eben said we don't really even know what work changed. Beth said to her the motions indicate that work was approved and money tied to it is coming out of the town budget and separately the Historical Society agreed to use their 501(c)(3) money. Duncan said he thinks they are proposing to use reserve funds. Rosemary said that is also what she thinks. Duncan said the Historical Society voluntarily put \$25K or \$30K from donations into the reserve fund. Beth said from her perspective the reserve fund is their money and the selectboard are the caretakers of the purse strings. Duncan said they should seek selectboard approval to spend it, however. Beth said they are required to. Duncan said that requirement is in statute. Duncan said he would not tell them they could not spend money out of that reserve fund.

Duncan said in our minutes it says that the Historical Society voted to contribute \$5,000. Eben asked at the September 25 meeting if the Historical Society contribution would come out of the town budget and Historical Society members said it would not. But he suspects that when they said it would not come out of the town budget they meant they wanted to spend out of the reserve fund. Eben agree that that is likely.

**Beth moved and Shayne seconded to retroactively approve spending up to \$5,000 out of the Historical Society Reserve Fund for Holcomb House renovations.**

Beth said she thinks the discussion and motions at the September 25 meeting mean that the Historical Society can take \$5,000 out of the reserve fund for any part of funding the renovations.



Duncan said if we retroactively authorize spending \$5,000 out of the reserve fund, with the current contract the Historical Society has signed that leaves a balance. Who will pay that?

**The motion was passed with Duncan and Eben opposed.**

Eben said he is not comfortable approving the new scope of work without knowing what the changes are.

Duncan said he thinks the Historical Society trustees acted in good faith. There has been a contract signed. He is concerned about renegeing on a signed contract, whether the Historical Society technically had the authority to sign it or not.

Beth said there is money left in the reserve fund. She thinks it is worth talking about whether additional funds should be approved to cover the balance.

Mark said he is not ready to vote on this. He wants more information. Shayne said he would like to meet with the Historical Society again to discuss this. He doesn't think he is ready to make a decision.

Duncan said if we go by what was approved at the September 25 meeting they have the authority to spend up to \$11,952. That amount was based on estimates to do some work, some of which (such as sanding floors) is not included in the current project. He read from the contract the work to be included in Phase 1 and Phase 2. He thinks he read that Johnson Farm and Garden is donating all the paint. Eben said hearing that scope makes him less apt to approve it. The Historical Society is going over budget on a line item when we asked them to reduce their expenses by 5% and he is not sure the proposed work is in the best interest of the building. Beth said she is confused by the original scope compared to the new scope. Eben suggested asking the contractor to pause work until the next selectboard meeting.

Duncan said the Historical Society has done a lot of work to try to come up with proposals and find a contractor. He doesn't think it was easy to find someone. He feels like we should give them credit for coming up with a proposal. They have been dealing with this for months.

Beth said she is confused about the priorities we have talked about in the past versus what is proposed now.

Duncan said he thinks there are two items we should try to clarify with the Historical Society board. One is that authorization to spend from the reserve fund comes from the selectboard. Second is that the Historical Society building is a town building and the town ultimately has the say over what gets done. Technically this contract should not have been executed by the Historical Society. It doesn't correspond to the scope of work authorized in the minutes.

Eben said it sounds like the project needs to get put on hold. Duncan said there is still the open question of how we pay for the work. Eben said he thinks more money needs to come out of the reserve fund to keep the budget amount within what we asked. Duncan said if the Historical Society trustees want to have additional money come out of the reserve fund they should make that

request to the selectboard. They could also ask the 501(c)(3) board to contribute some of its money toward the project.

Eben said the selectboard will wait until the next meeting to make a decision on the scope of work. The selectboard would like to hear where the Historical Society wants the remainder of the funding to come from. The project should be put on hold until the next meeting.

**17. *Interlocal Agreement for Kenneling***

Tom said a few towns are coming together to create an interlocal agreement for kenneling. The selectboard could delegate someone to represent Johnson at any talks that happen about this so plans could move forward without waiting for a selectboard meeting. Shayne volunteered to be the delegate and the board agreed to that. Mark said he can be a backup. Beth said if kenneling discussions conflict with selectboard meetings it would be good for Shayne to ask that another day be found so Johnson can participate too. If the meetings conflict it might mean Shayne will have to choose the kenneling meeting over the start of the selectboard meeting.

**18. *VSU Use of Legion Field for May 11 Spring Carnival***

Tom said VSU - Johnson is requesting permission to use Legion Field on May 11 for a spring carnival. **Mark moved and Duncan seconded to give VSU – Johnson permission to use Legion Field on May 11, 2024 for a spring carnival.**

Duncan asked if they filled out a facility use application. Tom said no.

Beth suggested that the oven committee, the recreation committee or Tuesday Night Live might be interested in helping in some way. This is an opportunity for our committees to connect with the college.

Beth said they are talking about having a bonfire. There are utilities that run around and under the field. She thinks we should make sure there are no utility issues. Mark suggested maybe they can use the fire rings. Duncan said they should fill out a facility use application.

**The motion was passed.**

**19. *Schedule a Hearing for Dilapidated Building / Schedule Next Selectboard Meeting***

Tom said a dilapidated building hearing has to be warned at least 15 days ahead of time. The board agreed to schedule its next meeting for Wednesday, February 21, since the third Monday of the month is a holiday, with the dilapidated building hearing at 6:00 p.m. and the board meeting starting at 6:30 p.m.

Dean Locke asked if there is anything the selectboard wants him to tell or give the owner if he is able to get in contact with him. Beth suggested sending him our ordinance. She noted that there are ways the hearing could be canceled but the owner would have to be very active in cleaning up. We would need to see evidence of cleanup.

**20. *Appointment Policy Review and Approval***

Eben said he believes there was a comment on the proposed appointment policy from a member of the public. He has not read it. Beth said the comment was about how our current process for appointment does not match the proposed process. It talks about terms and vacated terms. She is not sure she agrees with that specific point. Shayne said what he took away from the email that might be worth adding to the policy is that volunteer groups should provide a list of all openings before town meeting day. Beth said the comment also talked about the website not being updated

with current committee information and mentioned that the policy does not reference the day after town meeting, which is when committee appointments occur. Beth said she knows every year she has been on the selectboard she has asked for clarity on whether committee members have been asked if they want to be reappointed. She thinks we need to reach out and make sure people know if their terms are up and find out if they are interested in renewing their terms. The point was also made that there should be allowance for other candidates to express interest in any position with an expiring term. We don't currently proactively state what terms are open.

There was discussion about adding that terms start at the organizational meeting following town meeting and end at the same time after a set number of years and adding a requirement to advertise seats that will be open or up for renewal. Shayne said he can suggest language on municipal volunteer groups providing a list of openings before town meeting day. Beth noted that some appointments, to the Lamoille FiberNet board for instance, do not start and end at the same time as the others. It was agreed not to include a list of municipal groups. Board members will send Tom some suggested language for the next draft.

**21. Vermont Division of Historic Preservation Grant – Old Mill House**

Tom said there is funding available for historic preservation. Does the selectboard want him to pursue it for the mill house? It looks like grants can be up to \$20,000. That building is in need of some attention. Or we could pursue it for the Holcomb House.

Duncan said he is in favor. Knowing that Tom is overburdened, should we ask Randall to do it? Tom said he would love for Randall to do it. Beth said she doesn't want Randall to work on it. There is a lot happening with EDA and other grants. Do we have a full assessment of what each of these buildings needs? Mark said we have to loop the village in. Eben said he has a hard time believing they would not be supportive as long as they don't have to pay.

Shayne asked if this would cover the assessment. Tom said it is very open-ended. He noted that dealing with the lead paint alone would cost around \$15,000. Eben said he would be fine with making the lead paint the target of the grant.

Duncan said he needs to rely on Tom to say whether he has capacity. Tom said there is no timeline for applying. The board agreed Tom can pursue this.

**22. Lendway Lane Project**

Tom said we found out that the bank along Lendway Lane is slumping and in time will threaten the road. Lendway Lane is a Class 3 road that goes to one house. FEMA could support armoring the bank to protect the roadway. The town would need to pay a 12.5% match which would probably be about \$20,000. The FEMA funding would include the engineering. Another option is a USDA grant. With that grant we would have to pay the engineer and be reimbursed. We could spend tens of thousands of dollars on a road that goes to one house. Does the selectboard want to move forward or do nothing and make a decision the next time there is a flood or consider reclassifying the road to a legal trail?

Eben said given our cash flow issues and all that went on this summer he is in support of doing nothing for now and putting this on the old business list. Mark said he is leaning more towards the FEMA path because we have FEMA funding now. If the next time the road floods it is not a FEMA event then we would be on the hook for all the repair costs. He thinks the Lendways would want to weigh in on reclassifying the road as a trail. Rosemary said they did a lot of work to bring

it up to the Class 3 standard so it could become a Class 3 road. Duncan said there are other properties along that road. Mark said the suggestion to reclassify it as a trail probably won't fly.

Tom said this just came through today and he doesn't have all the information. Maybe we can address it again in 2 weeks. Ron said there is time. He and Tom can talk more with FEMA and USDA and get more information on the pros and cons of each program for the next meeting. The board agreed to that.

Duncan said we used to be able to get VTrans to do engineering for bank slump work.

Duncan asked if there is anything else Ron can think of that the board will need to think about. Ron said no. We have a good list of next steps for the town FEMA projects. We have a really aggressive FEMA grant person now who is a strong advocate for the town.

Mark asked if something has been sent out to all the people who applied for buyouts. Tom said the Lamoille Area Response Network has case managers who are reaching out and he will advertise tomorrow that there will be a Q&A webinar for homeowners interested in buyouts on Thursday from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Zoom. Beth asked Tom to share that information with everyone on the selectboard. Tom said the 15 people who were interested in a buyout have all been contacted. Others who have reached out have also been contacted. The push is to get them to the webinar for more information.

**23. *Executive Sessions for Employment Evaluation and Attorney Client Communication***

**Duncan moved to enter executive session for purpose of employment evaluation under 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) and following that to enter executive session to discuss attorney client communications under 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(F), inviting Rosemary and Tom to remain, Mark seconded and the motion was passed at 9:37.**

The board came out of the first executive session and entered the second at 9:43. The board came out of the second executive session at 9:53.

Tom is to follow up with the town attorney regarding River Road East.

**24. *Adjourn***

The meeting was adjourned at 9:54.

*Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths*