

JOHNSON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MONDAY, MARCH 18, 2024

Present: Selectboard members: Mike Dunham, Duncan Hastings, Eben Patch, Shayne Spence, Mark Woodward

Others: Tom Galinat, Rosemary Audibert, Randall Szott (remote), Diana Osborn, Kelly Vandorn, Jeanne Engel, Diane Lehouiller, Howard Romero, Casey Romero, Scott Meyer, Jessica Savage (remote)

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. Call to Order

Eben called the meeting to order at 6:30.

2. Consider Additions or Adjustments and Approving Agenda

It was agreed to add discussion of going back to one meeting a month, discussion of a possible request to the Planning Commission regarding form based code, a noise ordinance waiver request for Tuesday Night Live, and an appointment to the Historical Society trustees.

3. Consider Approving Minutes for February 21, March 4 and March 6, 2024

Shayne moved and Mark seconded to approve the minutes of the public hearing on February 21, the selectboard meeting on February 21, the selectboard meeting on March 4 and the selectboard meeting on March 6. Eben said in the February 21 selectboard minutes it should be shown that Beth, not Eben, called the meeting to order. Shayne and Mark agreed to amend the motion to make that correction. The motion was passed with Mike abstaining as he was not here for all of the meetings.

4. Selectboard Issues and Concerns

Shayne said he has seen a lot of talk on social media from people thinking the selectboard should do this or that or thinking the selectboard is not doing certain things that we are doing. People are questioning certain things about the flood response. He thinks it would behoove the board to have more communication with the public on a regular basis. He is thinking we could empower Tom to draft something monthly with communication about actions the town is taking. Mark said he thinks this is a good idea, particularly if it is a narrative summation, not necessarily a direct response to specific things people are saying.

Tom said social media is changing. He does not think it is appropriate to interact with the public on social media but it is becoming a main form of communication. He was thinking there could be a summary of motions and future plans posted after each meeting. Mark said he does not think a communication is needed after every meeting. Duncan said he is concerned about overloading Tom with work. He is okay with this idea conceptually but right now he does not want to add to the list of things Tom needs to do. Mike agreed.

Eben suggested that for now perhaps we could return to putting meeting agendas on Front Porch Forum. That used to be done but he hasn't seen it lately. Shayne said he doesn't think that really fills the need, but he is okay with waiting and revisiting this conversation in the future. He saw a suggestion that the town had nothing to do with the dumpsters after the flood but he knows how hard the town worked to get those dumpsters. That was frustrating. There are things we could be communicating to the public. If one selectboard member were empowered to communicate to the public, that would be an improvement in his mind. Duncan asked if Shayne is volunteering to do

that. Shayne said he would, but he would want help. Eben suggested that the board can discuss this again in August.

Mark said he would like to find out if the electric car charger in the municipal building parking lot is working or not and get it working. It was underwater so he is guessing it probably is not working. Duncan said at one point in time that was a FEMA item. He doesn't know if Ron Rodjenski got it onto his list. Mike said he would like to know how much it has been used over the years. Hopefully it is insured. If it is not insured, it will cost money to get it up and running. Eben said unless it is FEMA reimbursable. Mike said it is a slow charger that takes about 3 hours. Duncan said he thinks the electrical service may be the limiting issue. Eben asked if Tom can follow up on this and find out if the charger is working and if it is on Ron's FEMA list.

Duncan said he got a couple of questions about posting election results on the town web page. We can't tell Rosemary to do it but we could ask her. Rosemary said she can do it. She noted that there were no contested races. Duncan said he thinks some people were wondering about presidential and school board results. Rosemary said we don't have those results.

Duncan said he wanted to find out from Tom the status of the written decision coming out of the dilapidated building hearing. Tom said we have found a representative for the property owner so communication will get more efficient. He thinks we will see progress now.

Duncan said the selectboard would like Tom to check the statute to see if Development Review Board members need to have specific terms. His recollection is that they need a term.

Mark said he would like to change the cutoff for board approval of planned purchases from \$1,000 to \$5,000. Eben said that would mean changing the procurement policy.

Mike asked if the selectboard ever got the Class 4 road policy update done. Board members said no. (*Jeanne Engel arrived at 6:53.*)

5. *Planned Purchases for Consideration*

Duncan moved to approve spending \$1,208 for a bed chain, Shayne seconded and the motion was passed.

6. *Community and Economic Development Specialist Report and Action Items*

Randall said the EDA wanted us to be aware of the possibility of pursuing a design-only grant for a new wastewater facility. Nothing has been settled on the matter of constructing a new wastewater facility and that is under village purview.

Regarding the industrial park, we are waiting on an environmental review proposal from Mumley. In the first one some items were omitted or it was not clearly delineated who would be handling them. LCPC also thought a "not to exceed" proposal would be better. Tomorrow Randall and people from the Agency of Commerce and Community Development will walk the Jewett property to discuss whether there might be historical or archaeological resources on the site.

Randall recently applied for a VOREC grant and it was approved in the full amount (\$27,700.) That was for a scoping study on connecting the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail to the village center. We are waiting for the grant agreement to come through. At some point the board will need to decide whether to accept it. It is a reimbursement grant with no match.

Recently several community groups wanted to apply for the same grant. Randall found another source for the arboretum and he applied for it and it was approved. This is a National Association of Realtors Placemaking Grant passed down through the Lamoille Area Board of Realtors. It is a reimbursement grant of about \$7,300. There is no match. The local realtors want to be involved as volunteers. The grant will fund park benches, picnic tables and installation of a handrail at the arboretum.

There are four signs for the Green Mountain Byway in the office that still need to be installed. Randall would be happy to manage having them installed. Who does the selectboard want to make a decision about where they should go? He will need to apply for a 1111 permit from VTrans to put them up. (*Kelly Vandorn arrived at 7:02.*) Duncan said if they are going to go on Route 15 it is a VTrans decision where they go. We can make a recommendation. He suggested delegating Tom and Randall to figure out who they need to talk to about putting them up. Randall said he is willing to take charge of it. It was agreed that Randall will look into getting them put up.

Randall said there are two upcoming conferences he could go to if the selectboard thinks it is worth the time and money. One is a Vermont Tourism Summit in May. Part of his job description deals with tourism and marketing and that is not something he has in his background so he thought it might make sense for him to attend this. In June there is a Historic Preservation and Downtown Conference. He has attended this in the past and he believes it would have significant value. The next day is the Vermont Creative Network's Creative Sector Convening. If the selectboard only wants him to go to one or the other he can say for sure that the June one would be of value.

Mark asked the cost for the Tourism Summit. Randall said there will be mileage of 246. The conference costs \$400 for 2 days. The hotel is \$179 a night plus tax but there is an option to go for just one day for \$225. Mark asked if he has a preference of one or two days. Randall said he doesn't know at this point whether there will be good breakout sessions on both days. (*Diane Lehouiller arrived at 7:08.*) One good thing about conferences is networking. The more time he is there the more people he can talk to. Mike said he thinks if he is going to go he should go for both days. Shayne agreed. (*Howard and Casey Romero arrived at 7:09.*) Randall said he thinks the one in June is less expensive. If the board decides it would be good for him to go to the Tourism Summit he thinks he should probably go to both.

Mark moved and Shayne seconded to ask Randall to attend the Vermont Tourism Summit and the Historic Preservation and Downtown Conference and Creative Sector Convening and to reimburse him for his appropriate expenses. Mike suggested waiting until the board has information on the cost of the June conference to approve attending that one. **Mark and Shayne agreed to amend the motion to add that expenses are not to exceed \$1,500 for both conferences.** (*Scott Meyer arrived at 7:13.*) **The motion was passed with Mike opposed.**

Randall said the Vermont Community Foundation is ready to deposit \$20,000 with the town on behalf of the rail trail committee with the understanding that the money can function in two different ways. If the rail trail committee doesn't get the AARP grant the money can cover what was asked for in that grant application and if the committee does get the grant the money can be used to enhance the grant and cover anything that was left out of it. They will also send \$10,000 for use by the library. The use of that money is flexible as far as he understands. And they are going to contribute \$3300 for the skatepark to cover an insurance shortfall for tools lost in the flood. They are also giving money to the Vermont Studio Center in support of their pollinator garden and

floodplain restoration. And there have been conversations about supporting other groups in Johnson. They also still have a fairly substantial sum that they want to contribute but they are waiting to identify a larger project. If the board decided to support developing a long-term flood recovery plan a good use of VCF money could be addressing things identified in the plan. One possibility for initiating that planning process is using the Vermont Council on Rural Development program grant. It would be a great first step.

Jessica Savage from the Vermont Council on Rural Development said she represents the Resilient Communities Program. VCRD provides neutral facilitation to communities around the state. They can initiate the flood recovery discussion around initiatives and goals and what resilience might look like. This year they have additional support for communities like Johnson and could potentially take the process a little further, either with their own time or with consultant time. It doesn't cost the town anything but the process would be directed by the town and the village. They would put together a steering committee to design the process.

Duncan asked how far along the path to a flood recovery plan that would get us. Randall said Waterbury's planning process took place over at least 5 months. He thinks when VCRD worked with Barre they had a more limited scope, like two meetings. This would be the first piece of the process. Sam Young from FEMA told Randall that FEMA could contribute technical resources to the planning process. Sam thought they would be able to write the plan based on all the material gathered and that he would be present at all the meetings if possible. The Vermont Community Foundation may also be able to provide resources for a consultant to take over what VCRD did and continue it. They said they could potentially provide funding to extend VCRD's involvement but VCRD may not have staff capacity. The initial work with VCRD would just lay the groundwork and then we would need more work from others to carry it forward. Jessica said VCRD always works with the community but they bring with them a resource team of local and statewide experts. She noted that when they worked with Barre they only had two public convenings but they met with them many times in addition to that. Randall said even if the board decides not to continue with a larger plan everything is in place to do the starting piece. Maybe the board will decide that is enough. There is no financial commitment.

Duncan moved to direct Tom to put a letter requesting support from the Vermont Council on Rural Development through the Resilient Communities Program on town letterhead and sign it and the motion was seconded and passed.

Duncan said Randall was working closely with Beth on the EDA grant and NBRC Grant for the light industrial park. She had talked about Duncan being a contact with Randall but he feels the board should talk about that and be comfortable with it. The board agreed that Duncan should be the liaison to Randall on light industrial park grant issues.

Shayne moved and Mike seconded to authorize Duncan to sign any paperwork for the Northern Border Regional Commission Grant and the EDA grant.

Duncan said he doesn't think the EDA grant is going to happen. He would not want to do anything regarding design planning for the wastewater treatment facility in the industrial park. That is a village responsibility and nothing the town should be involved in. If that process is going to happen it should be up to the village. Mark said Randall is working for the town, not the village, so they would need to pursue that on their own.

The motion was passed.

Duncan said Randall has set up a meeting with the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development. They were the original grantor of funds for the Sterling Market project in 2011, which resulted in the town having a revolving loan fund. Since he suspects the EDA grant will not be approved and the NBRC grant has been approved, that leaves a funding gap. He would like Randall to at least investigate options for bonding through the Vermont Bond Bank and also discuss with ACCD the possibility of the town borrowing money from its revolving loan fund, perhaps at 0% interest. He would also like to authorize Randall to look into any other funding sources. He thinks we have a \$330,000 shortfall after applying ARPA funds. A prior board made a commitment to ask voters for a bond if we were not approved for the grant.

Mike asked, wasn't it promised that no taxpayer dollars would be spent on the light industrial park? Duncan said he thinks it was never a promise. Mike said maybe it was not an overt promise but there was the idea that there would be no extra cost to taxpayers. Shayne said his understanding was that if we were unable to find other revenue sources a bond would be the last resort. Duncan said Randall is looking into the possibility of congressional directed spending.

The board agreed that Randall is empowered to look for more money for the light industrial park project and that he should check with the Vermont Bond Bank about what it would look like to bond and investigate options to borrow from the town's revolving loan fund.

Mike said he thinks we need to continue to work to make the industrial park no cost to taxpayers. Eben asked, what if the town took out a loan for \$330,000 and then sold the lots for that much? Would that be okay with Mike? Mike said yes. Shayne said Randall had mentioned that the Vermont Community Foundation is looking for a bigger project to fund. Maybe they could help with this.

Randall said seeking other funding sources is challenging if the selectboard wants no match. Many will have a match requirement. And the timeline of the funding streams may not necessarily align with the NBRC timeline we are committed to. So the board should be realistic in its expectations.

7. *Library Grant Update*

Tom said the library grant application was submitted on Tuesday. The main option described in the grant application is locating the library on Legion Field with a total estimated cost of \$1.585 million. New construction would cost an estimated \$1.42 million, which makes saving the historic structure seem like a great option. We will find out in May or early summer if we get this grant. This is the first of two options but if we don't get it he is not sure we can wait for the second option in the fall. He thinks we would have to move forward with FEMA to put the library back together. If we choose to move forward with relocating the building there is FEMA funding to assist with that move. But the catch is that we can't do anything to the building until we move it. Moving the building out of the floodplain is a good idea but if we get the full amount we are requesting from the Department of Libraries we will be short \$85K. We need to find out if we can combine FEMA funding with the Department of Libraries grant. If we can, we can't do any work on the inside of the building until after it is moved so we would need to move the building as soon as possible in the summer. We are hoping to reopen the library in January 2025.

Duncan said he understands that there will be a round of FEMA mitigation grants coming up. Tom said this is all brand new and he thinks we need to better understand it. We need to understand whether we can put the building back together using the original FEMA option and then use a second FEMA grant to help with the cost of moving it.

Howard asked, we are talking about having the library next to Legion Field, not on it, correct? Tom said six different options were sent to the Department of Libraries. Of the six, only one is definitely out of the 500-year floodplain. If we are going to put in an 8-ft. basement we need that 500-year floodplain guarantee. Howard asked if the library is going to be put on the site of the old yellow house. Tom said we don't own that spot and a portion of it is in the 500-year floodplain. That is one option that is on the grant application to be considered. We have the support of the supervisory union to use that area. Nothing is off the table, even elevating the library in place. Once the grant is awarded, if we get the amount we asked for, we will need certified elevations to further the discussion. The site of the former alumni house is more out of the way of the activities of the town but there is an elevation issue. The other possibility is on the other side of Legion Field as close to the property line as possible. Mike said he doesn't want to lose any of Legion Field. Howard said he thinks we will get pushback about putting the library on Legion Field. Shayne said it is also possible that we won't be able to move the structure over the bridge. Kelly Vandorn said engineers have already checked that out and said it would work.

8. Review and Approve Buyout Applications

Tom said there are no new buyout applications.

9. Art and Community Spaces Flood Resilience Grant

Casey Romero said there is an Art and Community Spaces grant available through the Vermont Community Fund where they are looking for collaboration. This idea came out of a meeting that she had with Tom, Ron and Dean where they discussed looking at the whole parcel that the skatepark is located on. The concept is for the skatepark committee to work with the Conservation Commission and community garden. The application is due in the middle of April and award announcements will be made sometime in June. So money will be available to spend starting in July. The community garden has some needs and the Conservation Commission needs new bat houses and they want to do more work with the Bee the Change pollinator project. There are also satellite community partners such as Laraway, Healthy Lamoille Valley and possibly the library. By July the new halfpipe at the skatepark will be built and there will be an opportunity for a party. That fits with what this grant is looking for.

Shayne asked if there is a specific flood resilience piece. Casey said no. This grant is partly to help celebrate the work that has been done related to the flood.

Eben been asked, no material will be added that will affect flood levels? Casey said no.

Shayne moved to allow the skatepark committee to apply for an Art and Community Spaces grant, Mike seconded and the motion was passed.

10. Mowing RFP

Tom asked if the board wants to see the mowing RFP or just have Tom prepare it and send it out. Duncan said in the past the RFP has been for town and village properties combined. That requires the consent of two boards to put it out and accept a vendor. Do we just want to have it be for town properties and perhaps the municipal building? Tom suggested preparing an RFP for town and joint properties and having a memorandum of understanding with the village saying that they will pay 50% of the cost of mowing for shared properties.

Mike moved and Duncan seconded to authorize Tom to prepare an RFP for mowing on town and jointly owned properties as well as a memorandum of understanding stating that the village will pay 50% of the cost of mowing for joint properties.

Shayne asked if we can use this opportunity to clarify that Robert and Sons is not mowing the strips along the sidewalk. Duncan said that is a village issue. Shayne said there was a lack of clarity last year over whether Robert and Sons was doing it or if it was the responsibility of private landowners. Tom said he and Erik had a good conversation about it last year. Probably we can come to an agreement verbally and put it in the MOU.

Dean said last year there were struggles getting consistent mowing at Old Mill Park. There may be a need for the athletic fields to get extra attention, especially during soccer season. If the grass is too tall it makes play harder. He suggested maybe seeing if anything could be adjusted in the RFP to add extra attention to those fields.

The motion was passed.

11. *Waiver of Noise Ordinance Requests*

Mike moved to approve the noise ordinance waiver request for Field Days on July 19-21, 2024 from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m., Duncan seconded and the motion was passed.

Mike moved to approve the noise ordinance waiver request for Tuesday Night Live on Tuesdays starting July 9 and ending August 27, 2024, Shayne seconded and the motion was passed.

12. *Storage Shed at Legion Field*

Howard Romero said there is a request for the town to level a 50x100 ft. portion of Legion Field for the ice rink. One option is just to level it and another option is to make the 50x100 foot rectangle 3 inches lower than the surrounding field. If it were lower all Brian Raulinaitis would have to do would be put a liner in it. He would not have to set up boards around it. He would prefer that. Currently the most level area on the field is about 6 inches out of level from corner to corner. Howard said the ice rink could be anywhere on the field that can be leveled. There is also a question about a storage building for use by several committees. He did a sketch showing ways that problems at Legion Field could be addressed. More electricity and water sources could be added. There could be indoor bathrooms or a water facility near the bread oven and lighting on the field.

Eben said he was only prepared to discuss a storage shed tonight. The selectboard had not seen the sketch of the whole field or heard about the other proposals.

Howard said the storage shed he is proposing is 10x40 ft. with a series of individual spaces inside and a porch roof over it. It would be positioned by the backstop against the property line. That is the best place on the field for it. He needs at least general approval from the selectboard of doing something on the field. If board members do not want a shed on the field they should let him know. The first thing he has to locate is the shed. He can do a presentation another time of the entire proposed field upgrade. He is hoping it will cost the town nothing.

Duncan said years ago Nat Kinney was a strong proponent of a master plan for Legion Field. We are talking about the possibility of the library there as well as a 10x40 ft building and an ice rink. Maybe it is time we did a master plan. Howard said that is what he has.

Duncan asked, did someone at one point talk about putting a storage shed behind the bandstand? Howard said the Tuesday Night Live Committee will get a storage trailer this year and put it between the bandstand and the bank. They will rent one this year. It will cost about \$350 for 2 months. The Tuesday Night Live Committee will pay for it. They will keep their audio and lighting gear there. If it works well they will buy one before next year.

The selectboard agreed that they are conceptually okay with the idea of a shed on Legion Field. Duncan said it makes a big difference where it is.

Diane Lehouiller said some community members are going to apply for a Better Places Grant. It requires 33% community funding. The funding would not come from the selectboard. It would be raised through the community. The Vermont Community Foundation said they would help with whatever the Better Places Grant does not cover. *(Diane, Jean and Kelly left at 8:18.)*

13. Clerk/Treasurer's Report: Warrants, Licenses and Action Items

Rosemary said expenses are at 55% of budget so far this year. She hasn't seen any bills for mud season gravel yet. *(Casey and Howard left at 8:21.)* Current year taxes are 76.74% collected. That is similar to what has been collected in the past two years. She has one request for a board of abatement hearing and another may be coming. Eben suggested that Rosemary email the board a proposed date in the May time frame for the BOA to meet.

14. Selectboard Planning and Project Priority

Eben said the board needs to set a date for a planning and priorities meeting. It would be great if Tom could email committee chairs and encourage committee participation at that meeting. He asked for board members' thoughts about how the meeting should be structured.

Mike asked, why don't we just focus on the items that have been hanging around for a few years and have not been completed? Mark said because things have happened in the last year that will change priorities. For instance the town will have to deal with buyout properties.

It was agreed to schedule the planning meeting for 5:00 on May 20.

Eben asked for ideas about how to handle the meeting. Tom suggested sending out the previous year's priorities ahead of time. Some that no longer seem like priorities could be crossed out and board members could each put out five or so suggestions of new priorities to add ahead of time. Eben said he is fine with board members mailing out ideas ahead of time but in the past it has been a community conversation. Duncan said there were just four or five people from the community present last year. He doesn't think that provides a good flavor of what the community wants. Shayne suggested advertising it to the community. Duncan said he thinks some of the things that ended up being voted for as high priorities last year weren't necessarily things selectboard members would have prioritized. Mike said the board knows what the priorities are. The ones that have been kicked around for years should be taken care of.

Scott said he has been through these meetings a lot with the state. A good rule for priorities selected is that they have to be attainable and measurable. He suggested inviting all of the committees for a better sense of the spectrum of what the community is looking for.

Mark said he would like to hear from people in town what their vision is for Johnson in 10 years. Eben asked if he is suggesting that maybe a half hour item during the meeting could be people

saying what their vision is. Duncan said he thinks the Planning Commission should be doing long-term visioning. That is not our function. Tom said he thinks getting the board to hear the vision is helpful. Shayne said when he was on the Planning Commission there was a lot of confusion over what their role was in future planning. They had something of a sense that they were there to do what the selectboard empowered them to do and that they should not do long-term planning they weren't asked to do. If we want them to do that type of work we need to be clear about it and we need to provide funding if we want them to do things that cost money.

Shayne said we had six priority last items last year: finding a town administrator, finding a community and economic development specialist, the light industrial park, a recreation facility, ARPA funds and trails at the talc mill property. He thinks we made progress on five of the six items. He thinks this is a valuable exercise for us.

It was agreed that Eben will come up with an idea about how to run the meeting and email it to the board.

15. *Holcomb House Update*

Tom said he met today with Mary Jean Smith and contractor Seth Manchester, who is working on the Holcomb House. It is amazing the extent of the damage that needed to be addressed. Now he understands why the scope of work had to change. The work is about halfway done. Next year or the year afterwards when the Historical Society has more funding they have plans to do more work on flooring and the upstairs bathroom. He thinks they made a great choice about the work to be done. Plaster was falling off the walls.

Mike asked what they are going to do with the ceiling. Are they going to leave the tiles there? Tom said they are for now.

16. *Historical Society Appointment*

Eben said at the March 6 meeting the board asked him to reach out to the chair of the Historical Society board about whether that is supposed to be a 9-member committee. They are interested in having 9 members, including a selectboard liaison. **Shayne moved to appoint Mike Dunham to the Historical Society board, Mark seconded and the motion was passed.**

17. *Soccer Field Use for Spring Soccer*

Dean said every spring he gets several groups from outside the town interested in using the soccer fields. Right now he has two groups interested. We don't currently run a spring soccer program. Maintaining soccer fields to game levels during spring is not where Dean's resources normally go. People who want to use the fields usually ask that they be lined and prepped for games. According to the facility use form we reserve the right to charge a fee. Because we don't use the fields in spring, preparing them for other groups to use is something extra he takes on beyond what he would normally do. He is wondering about charging a fee to offset the cost of paint and his time. He suggests \$30 a day. Letting outside groups use the fields does bring people into our town. He doesn't want a fee to stop people from coming here, but it would allow us to recover some of the additional cost we take on.

There are two different programs interested in using the fields. One wants to use two fields for multiple practices and games and the other wants to use the largest field for five or six games. Mark asked if these are non-profit groups. Dean said he can't say for sure. They are sports programs that are organized in other areas. Mark said our income from charging the suggested fee would be less than \$500. Is it worth trying to collect that much? If they are bringing people into our town it may not be worth it. Dean said historically we have not charged. He has heard from people

who used to be in his position that they have taken that stance because sometimes these programs let Johnson kids participate.

Mike asked what other towns charge. Dean said he has not found that out. Shayne said he was going to ask that and also whether Dean has asked people running these programs if charging a fee would be a deal breaker. Dean said he hasn't talked to them about that. Shayne suggested that Dean come up with a rough estimate of how much time he dedicated to preparing fields for outside groups last year. Dean said during the regular season when he is maintaining fields for town use he tries to line them twice a week. Each time it takes about 2 hours. He also does maintenance around the goal areas and nets if needed.

Shayne said he thinks we should charge. Mike said he thinks the other groups could line the fields themselves. Dean said we have an incredible resource at Old Mill Park. People are asking to use it for a reason. He has a sense of pride about the fields. If people are coming from other areas to use our spaces he wants to make them look the best they can. The expectation that the fields will be lined and maintained is probably based on what has been done historically. Scott suggested trying a sliding fee or optional donation for a year. That gives each group the ability to say they can't afford it but if they have money they can donate.

Tom said when he was a coach he thinks the recreation director set the lines once and then the coaches would line the fields after practice. Shayne said he has a similar memory from when he played soccer but he now knows that those coaches were paid to do that work. Relying on volunteers is great when we have the volunteers to do it. It may not be appropriate to put that expectation on a coach who may be traveling from another town for a game day here. He agrees with Dean that we have a gem at Old Mill Park and anything we can do to make it better is worth it. This dovetails with the previous request about mowing. He would love it if the fee could include that as well.

Duncan suggested setting a fee but allowing the fee to be waived if the group does its own lining. Mark said he will vote against collecting money if we are only getting \$500 or \$1,000 for several hundred people coming to our town who will stop at businesses here. Scott asked if Mark would say no to donations. Mark said he probably would.

Dean said he can look into what there other places are charging. Even if the board decided to charge, conversations about use of the fields have already started this year and he would hate to suddenly say now that there is a charge. Probably any charge would be applied starting next spring.

Duncan moved to accept Dean's recommendation to charge a fee of \$30 per day for use of the recreation fields by out of town groups with the fee to be waived for a group that does its own lining and maintenance. Mark said he thinks if there is one person from our community participating on one of these teams we should wave the fee. Shayne says he thinks the fee should start at the beginning of next calendar year and Duncan agreed. **The motion failed with Shayne and Duncan in favor and Mike, Mark and Eben opposed.**

Selectboard members said they would like to know if other towns are charging and what they are charging. Dean said he will get that information.

18. *Special Meeting for Employee Evaluation*

It was agreed to tentatively plan to have a special meeting on April 4 at 6:00 for evaluation of three employees.

19. *Discussion on Returning to One Meeting per Month*

Mike said there was a time when it was not unusual for selectboard meetings to last until 11:00 or later. He suggested meeting twice a month so the meetings would not have to be so long but that didn't really work out. He thinks the meetings could be streamlined. If we had more information ahead of time board members could study it on their own before the meeting. Tonight, for instance, Randall spoke for half an hour or 45 minutes. Could that information have been given to the board ahead of time? Dean spent about 15 minutes talking about lining the rec fields. If board members were given more information ahead of time on these subjects they could look into them more. He would like to try meeting once a month. Mark said he has never been in an organization this small that meets twice a month. He can't believe we couldn't handle everything in one meeting a month.

Duncan said for years he advocated for the board to meet twice a month so meetings would not last as long. His thought was that one meeting a month could be for business items and the second could be more for planning. When the board went to two meetings a month it seems like that didn't happen. He thinks conceptually it would be great to have business items at one meeting each month and have the other meeting each month be a work session meeting to talk about things like the Class 4 road policy. He agrees that the board could make better decisions if they had more information ahead of time. If Tom gets more caught up he thinks we will get that kind of information. Tom suggested we could direct Randall and Jason to submit written reports before meetings.

Eben said the idea of having business meetings and work session meetings is great in concept but there are requests every day to get on the agenda. People often ask to get on the agenda as soon as possible because they have a grant deadline coming up. Tom suggested that in addition to day-to-day business the board could address one major topic a month. One thing he and Eben have talked about is having a deadline for agenda items of the Monday before the meeting. That way the board has a whole week to ask questions before the meeting.

Shayne said he would love to have one meeting a month. He doesn't know that it's possible without the meetings lasting until late at night. He would like to try Duncan's suggestion.

Donna Griffiths said she takes minutes for three other selectboards. Their meetings do tend to be shorter than Johnson's on average, but not dramatically shorter. And they all meet twice a month.

Eben suggested trying Duncan's suggestion of focusing on business for the first meeting of the month and planning at the second meeting. The board agreed

Duncan said he thinks a cut-off date for agenda items to be submitted is a good idea. Tom said he thinks if we want to do that we need a big information campaign, especially with committees. He thinks grant deadlines are the biggest issue. We could encourage committees to submit agenda requests at least a week before the meeting. Shayne said we can always add something to the agenda if we absolutely need to. Eben asked Tom to put together an email for board chairs.

20. *Possible Request to Planning Commission*

Duncan said at town meeting Paul Warden asked for an advisory vote on having the selectboard initiate the process for changing form based code to allow for flood related improvements. He

thinks that should start with the Planning Commission. **Duncan moved and Mark seconded to formally request that the Planning Commission prepare a proposed amendment to form based code.**

Shayne said with this motion we are reinforcing the idea that the Planning Commission needs to ask us for permission to work on something. If we want them to be more proactive we may need to send another message at some point. He thinks that if the Planning Commission understood it was okay to bring suggestions to us they would have. Instead they felt they needed something from the voters to ask the selectboard to get it started. There is confusion about whether they need to be told by the selectboard to work on things. Duncan said the selectboard can't really instruct them to do anything. They have statutory authority to do certain things. Mark said he thinks we need to have the Planning Commission in the room on one of our second Monday meetings. And all our other committees as well.

Scott said his wife was on the Planning Commission and he thinks there was frustration that their work didn't feel valued. Mark said he would like to fix that. Duncan said the Planning Commission has statutory roles and responsibilities that are well defined. It doesn't absolutely follow that their work will always be accepted and approved by the selectboard. There may be a disconnect between what they want and what the selectboard wants.

The motion was passed.

21. Executive Session for Attorney Client Communications

Duncan moved to enter executive session motion based on V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(F) to discuss attorney client communications, inviting Tom to remain, Shayne seconded and the motion was passed at 9:37. The board came out of executive session at 10:18.

22. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:18.