

JOHNSON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES  
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2025

**Present:** Selectboard members: Mike Dunham, Peter Hammond, Duncan Hastings, Eben Patch, Mark Woodward

Others: Tom Galinat, Rosemary Audibert, Randall Szott, Erik Bailey, Ken Tourangeau, Charles Flaum, Mike Pieciak

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

**1. Call Meeting to Order**

Eben called the meeting to order at 6:30.

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

Tom added items related to ice dams on the Holcomb House roof, a letter to Vermont Emergency Management regarding demolition of buyout properties, and snow removal at the Hill property off College Hill Road. Duncan added an executive session to discuss pending or potential litigation and another to discuss questions related to municipal properties that may or may not involve real estate negotiations.

**3. Public Comment**

Charles Flaum asked about the status of the town website. Rosemary said the check to the web developer has been cashed. Tom said there will be a preliminary meeting on Thursday to discuss organizational next steps.

**4. Selectboard Issues and Concerns**

Duncan said he would like to propose two specific findings related to the loan from the revolving loan fund that was approved. He forgot to bring them up at the meeting when the loan was approved.

**Duncan moved to make the following findings:**

The loan application meets the definition of a microbusiness as it has 5 or fewer employees. A microbusiness automatically meets the threshold for benefit to low and moderate income persons.

The application meets multiple specific purposes as set forth in the revolving loan fund guidance document pertaining to business, economic development and disaster recovery loans.

**The motion was seconded and passed.**

Eben said we talked at the last meeting about concerns about highway department overtime and we asked Tom to come back with 3 possible solutions and a recommended one. Tom said he met with Jason and can summarize what they talked about. The only person at risk of going over the overtime cap is Jason because he checks roads on weekends. The crew tried having Ryan check roads on weekends and call the crew in if necessary, with Jason not working weekends. That shifted overtime from Jason, who is close to the cap, to Ryan, who is not. That is probably the most realistic option. They also talked about possibly waiting until the next regular work day for smaller storms. They felt maybe that idea should go to the voters to see if they would rather have great roads or save money. It looks like the best solution is probably shifting overtime to Ryan so Jason won't go over the cap. On March 3 Tom and Jason will recommend a solution.

**5. Planned Purchases**

There were no planned purchases.

**6. *Update from Village on Sewage Treatment Facility***

Village manager Erik Bailey said the wastewater plant was destroyed in the July 2023 flood. FEMA will sometimes allow moving a facility somewhere to get out of the threat. They will give us up to the amount of money it would take to rebuild it where it sits now, bringing it up to codes and standards and doing mitigation. The estimated cost for that is \$14-15 million. That would bring the SRBs slightly above the July 2023 flood level. That is short sighted and he is not comfortable with it. If we rebuild on the current site the entire control building will be replaced by a new building sitting about where the job trailer was sitting for a long time. The SBRs would be higher. The influent pump station would hopefully move to where the medical clinic is. That is the best spot. If it doesn't go there it would go in the side yard of the fire station. It is a very small building. Whatever is done with that building will be the same whether or not the wastewater facility is relocated. The better option is to move the wastewater facility uphill. With the available land and the costs of piping the only place that really makes sense is the municipal building lot. That would mean an extra \$12-14 million cost. It would include bulldozing and benching the area where the wastewater facility is currently located and returning it to floodplain, providing extra storage in the Gihon.

Eben asked, in that scenario all the buildings would move up here? Erik said the whole plant would move. It would basically take over the whole yard and part of the footprint of the municipal building.

Mark noted that moving about doubles the cost. Ken said there are other funds to help pay for moving to a new location. Erik said there are block grant funds dedicated to Lamoille and Washington Counties. They are looking at the best projects for that money. It would be an outright grant. The idea is to apply for funding for the wastewater facility relocation as well as relocation of the town and village offices, perhaps by rehabbing McClelland Hall.

Ken asked if the town would like to see the village put the sewage treatment plant back where it has been flooded four times.

Eben said Erik had mentioned possibly putting the influent pump station where the health center building is now. We have approved a buyout for that property. Would they be stepping out of the buyout process? Erik said the Lamoille County Planning Commission is looking at whether it is possible to subdivide a small section without hindering the buyout. Eben said it would be useful to know whether that is possible because the town has also approved a buyout for the Pomerleau property and there was a question about parking for the bank.

Peter asked, if the wastewater plant were located on the municipal building site, which did flood, the critical infrastructure would be well out of danger? Erik said yes, absolutely. There would be a high wall around the tanks and the control building would be on a high enough foundation.

Mark asked if Erik knows any of the parameters of the grant, such as required completion date. Erik said it is too early for that. Mark asked if the state has possession of the grant money. A lot of money is being pulled back now. Erik said that is a good question. Eben asked, this would be CDBG money, not HMGP money? Tom said they are calling it CDBG recovery funds.

Eben asked if the wastewater plant would keep the same capacity it has currently. Erik said capacity would increase by about 9-10%. That amount of increase can happen without Act 250 review. The facility already has a great deal of capacity.

Duncan asked if he understood correctly that part of the grant would be not only demolishing the old building but flood benching the site. Erik said that would be part of the project but he is not sure if it would be part of the grant. Duncan asked, FEMA wouldn't cover it but there might be another funding source? Erik said yes. Tom said he thinks it would fall under a separate flood benching grant.

Ken said the village wants to know if the town would be willing to sell the municipal building to the village. Eben asked if board members are open to the concept if the funding stack allows the municipal building to move at no cost to property taxpayers. Peter and Mark said yes. Mike said he will listen as long as the town has no cost and there is a building for us to move into. Duncan said he is open to hearing concepts. He would like more information.

Charles Flaum said McClelland Hall is not ADA compliant and has asbestos. Duncan said it is a 75 year old building that is full of asbestos. Mike said considering that is a waste of time as far as he is concerned. Randall said Sen. Sanders' office gave Lamoille Housing Partnership half a million dollars for that building to be converted to housing. Whether there could be housing and municipal offices in the same location is another thing to consider. Eben said he doesn't know if the selectboard is married to the idea of McClelland Hall specifically. The board wants more information on concepts. Mark said maybe we can add onto the library even more.

Mark brought up the seniors who use the building. Ken said they would be able to build a building at the front of the lot if they wanted to.

#### **7. State Treasurer Presentation**

State treasurer Mike Pieciak said he wanted to talk about housing related to economic development and take questions from the board. He likes to frame the housing conversation from his personal experience. He has moved back to Vermont twice, from New York City and from Miami, and both times he was surprised by the cost of housing – both the absolute cost and the percentage of income. He moved from a newer building in a desirable neighborhood in Miami and ended up paying the same amount for the place he rented in Winooski. When he moved here from New York City, the amount he had to pay for housing was a higher percentage of his income. It is recommended that people not spend more than 25-30% of their income on housing and in Vermont people commonly spend over 30, 40 or 50%.

Before the pandemic he was worried about the future direction of the state, which had an aging population with a workforce that was not growing. The pandemic really changed that for a lot of communities. We saw an increase in housing demand. The state has been collecting more tax revenue. Income tax revenue went up dramatically during the pandemic. Our population numbers have increased but the cost of housing has skyrocketed. Now with the demand to live in Vermont there is an opportunity for us. We have to decide the direction we will be heading in the next couple of years and consider the impact that will have over the next couple of decades. About 41,000 new homes need to be built by 2030 just to keep pace with where we are now. A shortage of homes increases housing costs and homelessness. In his opinion it is holding back the economy, Businesses can't find workers because workers can't find housing. He thinks this is our biggest economic and social challenge. During the pandemic, a lot of people with remote jobs moved to Vermont and took a house off the market. Housing stock went down for those in the physical workforce. We have an older workforce with many people expected to retire over the next 7-8 years. Their houses won't necessarily become available because many plan to hold onto their houses. To meet its share of the statewide goal Johnson would need to add about 84 homes over the next 6 or 7 years. We are on pace to build about 68 homes

over that time, which is not that far from hitting the goal. Statewide we need to build 7000 homes per year. We have only been building about 2300 a year lately so there is a significant gap.

In many areas statewide there are plenty of homes for those with high income levels and a lot of affordable housing, but there is a lack of middle class and working class housing. That means many of the workers we need are priced out of communities and have a hard time living and working in Vermont. It means towns' grand lists are not as robust as they should be and there are fewer taxpayers sharing the costs. Towns also lack vibrancy.

Availability of buildable land often holds back construction. Communities can think about buildable land that is municipally owned and assess its ability to be developed for housing. They can work with large employers who may have a desire to invest in employer-sponsored housing. And they can provide infrastructure and make sure their zoning laws are up to date. The treasurer's office has committed \$100 million to low interest loans to support new housing. Montpelier is trying to find ways to support infrastructure for communities. Mike is more optimistic than before the pandemic. He thinks the demand is there to live in Vermont. He believes communities will be wealthier and more successful if they invest in housing.

Mark said one thing we have in this town is a college that has a lot of property. His sense is that there is property there that could become housing. Perhaps existing dorms could become senior housing. We are an old state. Twenty years from now many people who are alive now will have died and their homes will become available. Is housing availability a cyclic thing? He noted that Johnson is becoming a bedroom community.

Mike Pieciak said he thinks housing for older Vermonters is critical. The Department of Labor estimates that 80,000+ people will retire from the Vermont workforce over the next 7 years. How will we replace them if we don't have housing? One strategy needs to be thinking about housing to let people downsize within their community. He would rather see communities with mixed ages so there are no dramatic booms and busts in housing. In a community with a lot of older people all passing away or moving to assisted living at the same time a lot of housing will become available but the demand isn't there and the amenities in the community aren't there. It is better to have a lot of different age groups. Other states are experiencing what Vermont is experiencing. We are on the leading tip of the spear. Part of our strategy is getting people to move here. Over the last few years people moving to Vermont have tended to be younger. That may be more true in Chittenden County than Lamoille County. He thinks it is true that this is becoming a bedroom community. He thinks talking to the college about opportunities there could be a very productive conversation.

Peter said when we talk about funding sources to help develop housing, his experience has been that there is a fair amount available for senior housing and housing that requires some degree of subsidy but not much for middle income housing. He asked if Mike sees any prospect of that resource growing. Mike said there is a lack of middle income housing because it is harder to build and it is not subsidized. In the treasurer's office program he mentioned, a lot of the loan money did support affordable housing but a lot also supported workforce and market rate housing. In some ways we need to focus more on middle income and workforce housing. By putting in supporting infrastructure the government can reduce the costs a developer would face without supporting a particular project.

Duncan said he is on the Lamoille County Planning Commission board. They just heard about housing targets. Regional planning commissions are going to incorporate housing targets into their

regional plans and there will also be municipal level housing targets. One thing that could be useful for the state to think about is developing a model that can be affordable but owner occupied, creating incentives for people to own their units. He thinks that could help meet workforce development needs. Johnson has 3 mobile home parks, a lot of apartment buildings and a low income housing complex. A lot of people in the community feel we have met our obligation for affordable housing. A model to increase owner occupied housing could include owner occupied townhomes. It would give someone the opportunity to get started.

Eben said he feels housing projects need to be built differently. He would say he works on the majority of low income housing projects in northern Vermont. If they were built a little differently, which might cost a little more money, and there could be a way for people to transfer into ownership of a condo unit instead of a tiny apartment it would get younger people over the hurdle of the first purchase. Once they have equity they can later buy a larger house. Low income housing nonprofits, while they may serve a need, are soaking up state money. The executives and board members are paid very well. He feels affordable housing needs to have enough parking for people to have two vehicles, and slightly larger units. There could be an option to purchase for people who pay their rent on time for two years if they come up with a down payment. He is very interested in workforce housing. Over 20% of the acreage in Johnson is owned by the state. Does the Long Trail need two miles of barrier? For people his age, getting over the hurdle of the first home purchase is huge. Removing barriers for entry to the market seems like an obvious solution to him.

Mike Pieciak agreed. That keeps young people here. They are more attached to their community if they own property. Pathways to home ownership are critical. In Middlebury, development of about 200 units is underway. Middlebury College provided a few hundred acres to a developer at a reduced rate and the developer is building some of those shared equity units Eben is talking about to provide a bridge between rental and ownership. He is a big proponent of the shared equity model. It is a footstep toward market rate ownership.

Eben said one thing preventing people from selling buildable lots for single family homes is taxes. People are portioning off lots over a 10 year period so they don't get hit with capital gains tax. There is a hurdle the state could work with. Another hurdle is getting out of the current use program. That costs \$10K an acre for the first 2 acres. There could be exemptions if the land was going to be used for housing. Mike Dunham said he thinks the property transfer tax is outrageous. Eben said if you were to buy a 30 acre lot and provide spec lots you would pay immense capital gains tax if you sold all the lots in a short period of time.

Mike Pieciak thanked all the board members for their service on the selectboard.

#### **8. *Community and Economic Development Specialist Update***

Randall said when he talked to the Deputy Commissioner of Housing it was mentioned that there was about \$60 million that would be allocated specifically for Lamoille County and they would love to see a project in Johnson. But that is the same money the village is talking about for the wastewater plant. That money could also be used for housing. It was prioritized for flood impacted communities. He still thinks there is value in having the Deputy Commissioner or Commissioner talk to the selectboard. They can also talk about the governor's proposed legislation for infrastructure funding. They have a new proposal for something like a mini TIF district. Is the board interested in that? Board members agreed they would like to meet with the Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner of Housing.

Randall said Charles Flaum's effort to form a 501(c)(3) has been great. They have talked to people from Newport. They will be talking to Gary Holloway from the state about Designated Downtown status, which we may be eligible for. Charles is forming a downtown development group focused on tourism and marketing. He wants to develop an image-rich marketing website focused on recreation. He and Charles have talked about funding sources and ideas. There is the question of how it interacts with municipal government to keep messaging coordinated. The conversation with Newport was helpful. They probably will also talk to St. Johnsbury about how they coordinate.

Duncan said Randall mentioned in his report that Charles' initiative might enable us to obtain Designated Downtown status. How so? Randall said he believes one qualification for that status is having the sort of nonprofit Charles is forming. This is different from the designated village center. Duncan said in the past the village has been reluctant to pursue the Downtown designation. If the majority of the economic activity is in the village and they have a designated village center should Randall talk to them about expanding it? Randall said Gary Holloway can give us more information about Designated Downtown status. We may make the village aware of the possibility and they might not pursue it. Duncan said if that is the case he would suggest bringing it back to the town. He thinks the town may be able to pursue Designated Downtown status.

Randall said it seems that April may be when the FEMA team may be moving on. There is a lot of uncertainty. Mark Leese of FEMA distributed a GCRD that is not so much a draft plan as is structure for the plan, with a lot of information still to be filled in. Duncan asked how we see the VCRD Reimagine Johnson report and that report meshing. Randall said right now they seem almost too congruent. The GCRD is very populated with material from VCRD but he feels there should be more from outside of that process. Duncan said he was hoping we would see more of a specific plan for action. Randall said he believes there will be that. Once projects are identified, they have a person whose job is to identify sources of funding.

Peter said he would be happy to talk to Randall about bringing some life into the housing group, which has faded.

#### **9. *Industrial Park Next Steps***

Eben said Randall had mentioned in his report that the state is shifting their guidance on Prime Ag mitigation. Randall said Mumley had conversations with the state and believed they could say with confidence that Prime Ag mitigation would not be necessary. They now say the state is shifting. One thing we could potentially do would be to build the cost of any mitigation required into the cost of lots.

Duncan said he suggests we push back hard on the Agency of Agriculture and say we were relying on the information they provided and now they are changing their guidance. Randall said a similar thing happened with Historic Preservation. They indicated it would be fine and then they emailed and said some kinds of review would be needed. Mumley pushed back and cited the previous conversations and it was successful.

Eben asked when we should fill out the bond application. Tom said he thinks we should borrow from ourselves and use a line of credit as long as we can before we go to bond on order to minimize interest. He suggests going to bond 60 days before we are going to run out of money.

Tom said we will be reimbursed for 50% of the cost. Do we pay the first \$800K and then get the rest? Randall said we will pay the full amount of any invoice, then submit it and get 50% reimbursement.

Tom said this summer we will have the library, Lendway Lane and VEC stormwater projects this summer. It is unclear whether the Holmes Meadow project will be this year or not. We may want to plan to start the industrial park project in May of next year so we don't have to worry about overlap with the other projects and we can have better cash flow. We may want to do the same with the Holmes Meadow project. Duncan said at this point we don't have Act 250 approval on the industrial park so it's almost a moot point.

Tom said we thought we would be able to start the Lendway Lane project in March but ANR now wants studies on mussels.

Eben said he is not against a line of credit. He would rely heavily on Rosemary saying we need a line of credit and telling us how much we need. Rosemary said to get a line of credit we have to show the bank our estimated income and estimated expenses to show deficit spending.

Randall said there will be a meeting tomorrow with the Clark Group, the consultants NBRC uses to double check the work Mumley is doing. That will be a good check on the progress Mumley has made and what level of preparation they have compared to what the Clark Group wants.

#### **10. Library**

Tom said he met with the library trustees and the architect today to go over the third set of plans. The basic consensus is to have the historic part of the library be a community space that can be closed off from the rest of the building and used after hours for lectures, movies, etc. The building is scheduled to be moved the weekend of April 19 or the following week. Architectural drawings are required before we can go out to bid for a general contractor but we are running up against a deadline. The building will be rolled into a hole and we will pour concrete up against it. We probably will have to put the concrete work out to bid ourselves. We have 45 days to pour the foundation after the move. He thinks we can put the concrete out to bid ourselves and then pass it over to the general contractor.

New England Structural Engineering is designing the concrete. They want to do geotechnical engineering. If we wait for that we will have to pay for the geotechnical engineering and also pay fines for not getting the foundation poured soon enough. He is going to suggest just building a bigger foundation. There will be a conversation about that tomorrow. He will try to get donations from companies for the foundation.

Mark asked if we own the land yet. Tom said it is scheduled to be transferred April 1. The school district has agreed to sign off on any permitting required before then. The survey was completed and both attorneys have it.

#### **11. RFP Clerk of the Works**

Peter said he has received no proposals. He still thinks it is worth having a clerk of the works. Maybe we should reopen the RFP. Duncan suggested advertising for a clerk of the works rather than putting out an RFP. **Duncan moved to advertise a clerk of the works position for the library project and to seek an hourly rate. The motion was seconded.** Tom said he will advertise with VLCT and the Vermont bid registry. The board agreed we should also advertise in the News & Citizen. **The motion was passed.**

#### **12. LCPC Liaison Post Town Meeting and Village Liaison**

Currently Mark is the LCPC liaison but he will not be on the board after town meeting. Tom said we had a lot of projects and LCPC wanted a connection to the board. Mark said they never reached out to him. Eben suggested that Mark communicate with LCPC about the need for a liaison. Mark agreed.

Tom said LCPC also asked for a liaison to the village. Eben said he thinks they want a liaison between the village and LCPC, not a liaison between the selectboard and the trustees. It was agreed that the selectboard chair should communicate with the trustee board chair when there is a need to liaison with the village.

**13. Village Water Bill for Ice Rink**

**Mike moved and Peter seconded to pay the village \$553.22: \$453.22 for the callout and \$100 for the water per the agreement between town and village on a \$100 annual flat fee for ice rink water.**

Duncan asked Mike to explain for the record the basis for the \$453.22 figure. Mike said there was a callout for village employees. Two employees checked out the alarm at the reservoir. There were 3 overtime hours and one regular hour. The village's itemized bill shows that the total cost for the callout was \$453.22.

**The motion was passed.**

**14. Town Meeting Prep**

Eben said he had sent out a list of potential topics and board members suggested to speak about them. We need to make sure the moderator asks for a motion or unanimous consent to allow Tom to speak even though he is not a town resident. Duncan asked to have an 11x17 in. copy of the budget to refer to when answering questions. Other board members said they would like that as well. Tom said we will be setting up our wifi at the school. Rosemary asked if GMATV will record the meeting. Tom said he will ask them. The Boy Scouts will be there. Duncan said we should tell the moderator to invite committee representatives to speak briefly about their committees during the report from town officers.

Tom suggested doing something to lighten the mood and bring people together. He and the board discussed possibly wearing matching flannel shirts. They discussed the possibility of getting shirts donated by a local business. But we need to keep in mind the restrictions on accepting gifts. Eben suggested that board members email Tom with ideas.

**15. Trash Management**

Peter asked what is being found in the trash that is concerning to the public works crew. Mike said needles. Mark said the large amount of dog waste bags accumulating is a biohazard. Tom said his understanding is that the public works crew used to do trash pickup. Jason is pretty uncomfortable about it because he is worried about needles. The village crew collects trash from Main Street but not from Legion Field or Old Mill Park. We could ask them for a price for collecting trash throughout the town. The skate park hires someone to do it and they have a dumpster. We could eliminate some cost if they did not have to hire someone from outside.

Mike said he thinks the public works crew should do it with good gloves and masks. Duncan suggested maybe we should purchase a sharps container and put up sign asking people to put needles there. Mark said public works crews in every municipality are dealing with this and picking up needles. Eben said the village wants to work with the town. It would be nice if they picked up trash. We have pushed back snow for them and not billed them. He is not against checking the cost of a trash company. We should have budgeted for that a month ago, but if it is cost effective he is not opposed. Peter said he would be interested in asking the public works crew what we could do to make them feel comfortable and safe picking up trash. Eben suggested we could reduce costs by having a smaller container at the town garage instead of the current dumpster. That could offset the cost of



hiring a trash company. Duncan said the employees currently use the dumpster for their personal trash. Eben said if they didn't do that the dumpster would not be so full. If they want to negotiate that for a future contract they can, but right now it is not in the contract, so why are the town taxpayers picking up that tab? The board agreed that Tom should talk to Jason to see if the public works crew would be comfortable purchasing a sharps container and PPE and then picking up trash, get a price from a trash company, talk to the village about a potential trade of labor, and consider removing the dumpster at the town garage and using the savings to offset the cost of an outside company picking up trash.

**16. *Holmes Meadow Signature Authority for Permitting***

**Duncan moved to authorize the selectboard chair or town administrator to sign all required permits for the Holmes Meadow flood plain restoration project, Mike seconded and the motion was passed.**

Mike asked if we could remove some of the earth from Holmes Meadow and pile it up near the talc mill to make lots and offer them for sale so people could build a house out of the 500 year flood plain. Tom said the 3 ½ acre lot at Holmes Meadow is not buildable. An estimated 24,000 cubic yards of soil have to be removed. We have 180 acres behind the town garage that is shared with the village and that could potentially be developed into housing. The material from Holmes Meadow could be used as fill. It could be used to elevate the new library site. He thinks it is valid that the materials should be used to elevate areas outside the floodplain to be more protected or level.

Duncan said we want to be careful about talking about putting fill on the 185 acre jointly owned parcel. A pretty good portion of that is designated wetland and what isn't is probably within the floodplain. We shouldn't fill those areas. Mark said the other part of it is steep hillside.

Tom said the fill removed from Holmes Meadow is an asset that can be used. He described the work planned for Holmes Meadow. He said the archeological survey did find some 4000 year old hearths – areas where food was cooked. We have to work with that, either by screening soil or by leaving some undisturbed elevated areas.

**17. *Review and Approve MTAP Extension, Delegate Signature Authority***

**Mike moved to authorize Duncan Hastings or the town administrator to sign the Municipal Technical Assistance Program extension, Peter seconded and the motion was passed.**

**18. *Future Committee Reports for 3/17***

It was agreed to ask the Beautification Committee for a report on March 17.

**19. *Old Business***

Mike asked if Scribner Bridge has been tidied up at all. Tom said not yet.

**20. *Ice Damming at Historical Society Building***

Tom said there is some leaking due to ice dams. Should he, the Historical Society or the selectboard take responsibility for finding someone to fix the problem? The board agreed Tom should arrange to have the ice dams dealt with.

**21. *Letter to VEM Regarding Buyouts***

Tom said he has asked about the possibility of salvaging recyclable materials from the buyout properties being demolished. There is some concern about all the material from demolished buildings going to the Coventry landfill. Vermont Emergency Management suggested that if the town sent an official request that we would like as much as possible of the buildings in Johnson to be recycled then they could pass on the request to FEMA and direct the reconstruction contractor to salvage materials. Anything salvaged from the demolition has value and reduces the payout to the resident.

Duncan said he just read an article about communities that have gone through the process of deconstructing buildings and salvaging and recycling materials vs. pounding everything to pieces and putting it all in a dumpster, and it is 4 or 5 times more expensive to salvage vs. just destroying. Would saying we want as much salvage as possible lead to it costing 4 to 5 times more to demolish the buildings? Tom said he will ask VEM about that and also draft a letter to VEM for the board to see. Duncan said he wouldn't want to pass the cost onto the people getting the buyouts.

**22. Snow Removal Request for Hill Property**

Eben said a private landowner made a request for snow removal. Tom said his understanding is that the snow is on the property owned by Travis Hill that houses the daycare. It sounds like maybe the school also uses those parking spaces but he can't confirm that. The request came from a relative of the owner of the property in a phone call to Lydia that was relayed to Jason and then Eben and eventually Tom. Eben said he feels it doesn't matter where the snow came from. The highway department plows snow out of the road and some ends up in people's driveways. Those people are responsible for dealing with it. The board agreed that the town should not grant the snow removal request.

**23. Other Business**

Rosemary said the oven committee wants to apply for a couple of small grants, less than \$1000 each. Do they need to come before the selectboard or can they just go ahead and apply? Eben asked, there is no town match? Rosemary said there is none. Duncan said if the committee is awarded the grants the selectboard would need to approve accepting them. The board agreed that the committee can apply for the grants.

Rosemary said we received applications for liquor and tobacco license renewals for Maplefields. The board agreed she should approve the applications.

**24. Executive Sessions**

**Duncan moved to go into executive session for employment evaluation under 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3), to go into executive session to discuss a pending or potential litigation matter under 1 V.S.A. § 313(1)(e), because discussion of the matter in open session would put the town at a substantial disadvantage, and to discuss a possible negotiation over real estate or lease under 1 V.S.A. § 313(2) or 1 V.S.A. § 313(6), Mike seconded and the motion was passed at 9:09.**

The board came out of executive session at 10:39 with no action taken.

**25. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:39.

*Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths*