JOHNSON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MONDAY, JULY 7, 2025

Present: Selectboard members: Mike Dunham, Peter Hammond, Duncan Hastings, Adrienne Parker, Eben Patch
Others: Tom Galinat, David Bergh, Beth Mauch, Art Klugo, Roger Marcoux

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. ***Call Meeting to Order***
   Eben called the meeting to order at 6:32.
2. ***Consider Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda***
   Peter added an executive session to talk about the Johnson General Store. Tom added discussion of the hydrant at the skatepark.
3. ***Review Invoices and Orders***
   Tom said Rosemary has questions about how the board wants to handle two items in the orders: an invoice from Howard Romero and an invoice from Dale Tatro.

   All that needs to be done at the municipal building is adding brick or stone around the perimeter of the building and putting in floodgates when they arrive. Is it okay to pay the invoice from Dale Tatro after the stone is added with the exception of the $28,000 for the floodgates?

   Peter moved to authorize paying Dale Tatro for work on the municipal building upon completion of the stone work, withholding $28,000 until the floodgates are done.

   Tom said the money from FEMA is already in the state's hands. The floodgates have to be in place before we can submit for reimbursement.

   Duncan asked if Dale Tatro has an idea when the floodgates and stone work will be done. Tom said the floodgates were ordered last week and he thinks it will take them 4 to 6 weeks to arrive. Tomorrow Dale Tatro will be pouring concrete and doing form work at the library. After that work is done they will come back and finish the stone at the municipal building. Duncan asked if the stone will be put on both sides of the building. Tom said it will be around the whole perimeter. Mike said he hopes they dig out all the topsoil that is there now before they add the stone.

   The motion was passed.

   Tom asked how the board would like to handle the invoice from Howard Romero. Mike asked if the bandstand had to be moved at the time it was. It was never decided for sure where the permanent location would be. He would have thought it would be moved one time to its permanent location instead of just pulled a short distance. We were billed $2,500 for moving it and $1,320 from Howard for supervision. If it is moved again there will be another charge.

   Eben said when the Tuesday Night Live Committee came to talk to the selectboard, Howard was clear that the hurry to get the bandstand moved was due to health issues of the contractor. Peter said he thinks it was a question of the contractor’s availability.

Adrienne said the board approved paying for moving the bandstand but not paying for Howard's supervision. She would like Howard to talk to the board about that.

Adrienne moved and Peter seconded to pay Michael Lanphear for moving the bandstand and to ask Howard Romero to talk to the selectboard about his invoice for supervision before making a decision on paying it.

Duncan asked if Howard's invoice can be paid with the grant money we have. He suspects it will not be paid for with Johnson tax dollars. Tom said there are some issues about whether or not it was disclosed that a volunteer was doing supervision. The building needed to be moved now only because of the health of the contractor. He thinks the amount billed for supervision seems high.

The motion was passed.

4. ***Public Comment***
   No members of the public wished to comment.
5. ***Selectboard Updates and/or Concerns***
   Select board members did not have any updates or concerns.
6. ***Consent Agenda***
   The consent agenda included minutes of June 2, June 9, June 16 and July 2, accepting the resignation of Johna Keefe from the Conservation Commission, approval of the final version of the Appointment Policy, and a planned purchase for server replacement with a range of $9066 to $9941, an expense which was planned for under the capital equipment line in the budget.

Mike moved to approve the consent agenda with the exception of the server purchase, with thanks to be sent to Johna Keefe, Adrienne seconded and the motion was passed.

Adrienne asked if the server expense is a typical cost. Tom said Rosemary asked him to do research on the server purchase. He got a quote from the Tech Group for $19,175, which he thought was high. He called another vendor, Superior Communications, and they came back with a range of $9066 to $9941, which he felt was reasonable. Rosemary wants this purchase to be made out of the FY 25 budget.

Adrienne asked, if we switch servers. will the vendor do that for us? Tom said the transfer will be done by Superior Communications and will be checked off by the Tech Group.

Adrienne asked if the new server has more space. Tom said it has the same space as the existing machine.

Duncan said he knows Beth Foy had put a reminder in the calendar to discuss our IT contract when the contract with the Tech Group is up for renewal. Tom said our contract with them is currently expired. It has been hard to arrange a meeting with Rosemary and the village. Erik Bailey is not interested in looking into other IT companies. Superior Communications will give us a quote for doing the same work the Tech Group does. They do other municipal work. If their quote is a lot less, we can show that to the village and see if they are interested in pursuing it. Otherwise we will probably continue with the Tech Group.

Duncan asked, by purchasing a server jointly with the village, are we locking ourselves into another 5 years? Would this be a reasonable time to say the village should buy their own server and pay for their own IT services and we will pay for our own? Tom said the issue with that is that the town and village share computers and employees. If there were two servers, the building might have to be rewired to allow each station to connect to both.

Mike said he would like a tightened up quote. Adrienne said she would like to discuss this at a joint meeting. Tom said FY25 ended June 30 and Rosemary is holding money out for this. Eben suggested thinking about it more.

Duncan asked if for a purchase the size it would be appropriate to circulate an RFP. Tom said he would recommend it. Duncan said it doesn't even need to be an RFP. He would just like more than two quotes. There is a big difference between the quotes we have already received. It would be nice to have more comparison.

Eben said he thinks now is the time for the town to get its own server. We should pay the whole cost and then we would own it. The village could pay a storage space fee of perhaps $100 a month. Duncan said he would like to see the town own the municipal building and rent to the village.

It was agreed that Tom will get more quotes.

7. ***Executive Session***
   Peter moved to go into executive session for negotiating or securing of real estate or purchase or lease options under 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(2), inviting David Bergh, Beth Mauch, Art Klugo, and Tom Galinat, and for security or emergency response meausures under 1 V.S.A. § 313(10)(a), inviting Roger Marcoux initially, with others to be invited later, Duncan seconded and the motion was passed at 6:57.

   The board came out of executive session at 8:20.
8. ***Executive Session – Revolving Loan Fund Request for Johnson General Store***
   Peter moved to go into executive session under 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(6) to discuss a revolving loan fund application and its related trade secrets concerning confidential business planning and prospective investment records and information protected from public disclosure under 32 V.S.A. § 3341 and 1 V.S.A. § 317(c)(9), inviting Tom and Mike Mignone, Mike seconded and the motion was passed at 8:26. The board came out of executive session at 8: 48.
9. ***Road Foreman Report and Any Action Items***
   Tom asked if the board wants to go out for an RFP for a loader. Our loader is slated for replacement in FY27. There is a 12-month build time according to Jason. Eben said if it is 12 months it seems like we are a year ahead of schedule. The board agreed to hold off on putting out an RFP for a loader.
10. ***Library Relocation***
    Tom said we are waiting for a surveyor to do elevations. Once that is done, the plans will be finalized and we can apply for fire and safety permits and put the project out to bid for a general contractor. Concrete infills are being poured tomorrow and the grout line will hopefully be done before the end of the week.

Duncan asked if the architects are preparing a written set of bid specifications. Tom said there are multiple bid sets. Duncan asked if they are in written format or just on the sheets. Tom said he thinks they are just on sheets. Duncan asked if someone is putting together a bid form for each project. How are we going to evaluate bids? Tom said he will meet with the architect and decide who will be leading the bid process. Probably the architect will. If not, civil engineering will. Duncan said the normal practice would be to get bids on the entire package. The general contractor would submit a bid that includes electric, mechanical, etc. Tom said that is what we will get.

Eben asked where we are funding wise. Tom said we are on track with the budgeted amount. Duncan said if there is a big difference between submitted estimates and the anticipated cost, he wants to know who will pay the difference.

11. Industrial Park

Tom said on Thursday there is a meeting related to the Act 250 process. Everything is going well.

Duncan asked, we are not talking about putting housing on the industrial park property at this point, right? Tom said no one wants housing at the industrial park.

12. MERP RFP Next Steps

Tom had recommended in his written report that the town put out its own RFP for insulation for the town garage, since the RFP put out by the Lamoille County Planning Commission only produced one response that he doesn't think will work for the town garage. Our project is too small. The board agreed to put out an RFP for insulation of the town garage.

13. Parking for Old Mill Concerts

Eben said Howard Romero told him the Tuesday Night Live Committee wants to be able to use the salt shed/sand pile area for TNL parking if overflow parking is needed. It would not be a primary parking location. Tom said he feels kids would climb on the sand and salt piles and it would be a major liability. Duncan asked, there is not enough room on the field for parking? Tom suggested people could park on the lower field. Duncan named other places people could park. He said he thinks we should close the gates to the municipal complex. He suggested there could be parking by the lower building. Eben said he thinks there may be complaints from the village about that because they are using that building for their main storage right now. The board agreed that no parking should be allowed by the salt shed and that the gates to the municipal complex should be locked. Eben asked if Tom could have the Tuesday Night Live Committee get in touch with Erik Bailey to see if special signage needs to be put up so the village crew can get in and out for utility emergencies.

14. Road Reclassification of TH47, TH12, TH21, TH22 and TH23 Hearing Date and Process

Tom said three of the roads proposed for reclassification are Mine Road and spurs off it.

Duncan said it wasn't clear to him who should get notice of the proposed reclassification – everyone on the road or just affected property owners. Tom said he thinks as a precaution we should notify everyone with property adjoining any of the roads. He feels it is better to over notice than under notice. Duncan agreed.

The board agreed to schedule a site visit to the roads on September 2 starting at 4:30, prior to the selectboard meeting, which will be held that night instead of September 1 because September 1 is Labor Day.

15. Joint Meeting with Trustees

Possible topics for a joint meeting with the trustees were discussed. Tom said he would love it if the town and village could have an agreement that one board would be in charge of all decisions on each property for actions up to a certain dollar amount. Eben said he would like to discuss the town and village each buying their own servers. Adrienne said she would like to discuss technology in general. Adrienne said we talked about hiring a consultant to do a study on employees. She feels it is important to look at town and village employees together. She thinks they interact and overlap more than we realize. Eben said he would like a final answer on the backhoe.

Duncan said it is pretty clear to him that a town/village merger will not happen soon. If it is not going to happen, he thinks we need to look at sharing employees or equipment or buildings as little as possible. He thinks a merger will happen someday but it could be 50 years from now. He believes we should plan for it so it is seamless. Adrienne said she feels it is a problem to spend more taxpayer money to separate the town and village. Eben said he looks at it as streamlining decisions. There are inefficiencies now. For instance, the town alone owns the wide format printer. That is simpler for maintenance. It does add money to keep things separate but it also adds better service to the taxpayers.

Eben suggested that board members email lists of suggested joint meeting topics to him or Adrienne.

16. DuBois & King Updated Service Agreement

Tom said the board already authorized signing the agreement with Dubois & King for the Johnson visioning project, but LCPC sent one with additional language from what the board had seen and he didn't feel comfortable signing it without the board seeing it. The work is 100% grant funded.

Adrienne moved to authorize Tom to sign the contract with DuBois & King for the Johnson visioning project, Peter seconded and the motion was passed with Mike opposed.

17. TA and CEDS Priorities

Eben said only one board member has sent a list of suggested priorities so far. Board members agreed to send him their priorities.

18. Clerk & Treasurer's Report: Warrants, Licenses and Any Action Items

Tom said Rosemary is asking for authorization to sign a liquor license for a party at the Vermont Studio Center. Board members said that they have previously authorized Rosemary to sign liquor licenses and she should sign this one.

19. Other Business

Duncan brought up the meeting with Downstreet Housing Tom had mentioned in his written report. He wants to be careful that we don't get ahead of ourselves. To his knowledge, the full board has not decided that housing is a high priority. While he is in favor of not closing any doors, he wants to make sure we do not make representations to anyone that this is a town policy or position. Eben agreed.

20. Skatepark Hydrant

Tom said there is a leak at the skatepark. No one knows where it is. The village shut the water off. Jason does not have time to address it. Tom told Casey Romero the Skatepark Committee has to work within its budget to repair it. He asked if she could get quotes. She wants to have a meeting with Howard and Tom and Eben. The Skatepark Committee wants to dig up the hydrant. It costs a lot of money to find a leak.

Mike asked if they have listening devices for finding the leak. Eben asked, doesn't the village have those? Tom said the leak is not in the village owned part of the line. We either need to make a formal request to the village to help locate the leak (and they will probably bill us) or we could move the hydrant. Tom suggests moving it to a spot between the community garden and the skatepark where both could use it.

Eben said he would like Tom to ask the village to work with the town on this.

Tom said there is a summer camp at the skatepark starting August 1 and the committee would like the issue resolved by then. The water line runs under the new half pipe. The community garden does not have water. Putting the hydrant between the skatepark and community garden would allow both to benefit from it.

Eben said the Skatepark Committee budgeted $5,000 for maintenance and repair so they should be able to pay for it. Tom said the town can hire someone to do the work but the money would come out of the skatepark budget.

Adrienne said she would like the town highway department to be told to deal with it. Tom said the highway department is starting grant work that needs to be completed by a deadline. Duncan said he doesn't think this should be a high priority for the highway department. He thinks the Skatepark Committee could hire someone or use volunteers. If they find where the leak is, he would volunteer to dig it up with his backhoe.

Eben said Tom should ask the village if they will help with leak detection and if not, come up with a plan. Tom said he is sure they will do it but they may charge us. Eben said he doesn't see why they can't do it for free. But if that is an issue for them we will figure something out. Tom said he will email Nate with the request. Eben and Adrienne asked him to email Erik Bailey as well.

21. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths