

JOHNSON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2025

Present: Selectboard members: Mike Dunham, Peter Hammond, Adrienne Parker, Eben Patch, Paul Warden

Others: Tom Galinat, Carrie Johnson, Carl Rogers, Mark Nielsen, Dane VanNosdeln, Kyle Nuse, Carri Ferrari, Lois Frey, Josh Clark

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 to the Agenda*

It was agreed to add approval of a letter of support for a grant, paving discussion, discussion of a facilitator for the Legion Field hearing, a potential Municipal Planning Grant application, and a liquor license approval.

3. *Public Comment*

No members of the public wished to comment.

4. *Selectboard Updates and/or Concerns*

Paul said he continues to get questions about the ditching the town is doing. Does the state provide specific guidance about how wide and how deep ditches should be? Are there specific guidelines we are trying to meet? Eben said the Municipal Roads General Permit covers what should be done on hydrologically connected road segments. He thinks all the standards are in the Orange Book. Paul said it seems like some of the ditching is being done in places that don't appear to be hydrologically connected.

Tom said one factor is culvert size. Jason only puts in culverts that are at least 18 inches, which is bigger than the minimum required size. There has to be a certain amount of road depth to accommodate the culvert and that affects the depth of the bank ditch. Larger culverts and ditches carry a greater volume of water, and that prevents washouts and saves the town money. Another factor is mud season. Sometimes ditching is done along flat sections to lower the water table, making conditions less severe during mud season.

Eben said Paul will hear complaints about ditching every year he is on the board. Ditches look more severe when they are first done. Larger ditches slow traffic down. There are places where the road has sprawled out over the years and public works is narrowing it back to the 3-rod standard. Tom said grant work is reviewed by the state and the Lamoille County Planning Commission to make sure it is within specifications.

Adrienne asked if there is any update on the Foote Brook Road project. Tom said they poured concrete today. Hopefully they will be done by next week. Adrienne said she heard that people have noticed very cloudy water at Journey's End. Is that from this project? Tom said he can't say. Water levels are at record lows. That could have an effect.

5. *Planned Purchases*

No planned purchases needed to be approved.

6. *Johnson Elementary School*

The new Johnson Elementary School principal, Dane VanNosdeln, introduced himself. Mark Nielsen, who represents Johnson on the Lamoille North school board and is also its chair, introduced himself. Adrienne said she wanted to introduce selectboard members to school representatives with the goal of having open communication. She would be happy to hear any ideas for collaboration.

Dane said one of his goals for the school is about increasing family and community engagement. He is open to collaboration on community events. There could also be collaboration on crisis planning. The current emergency evacuation site for the school is Vermont Studio Center. The proximity of VSC to the river and the bridge makes him nervous. He is thinking about trying to partner with the college instead. He doesn't know what crisis plans the town has in place. The school has its own space and access to some college property and the arboretum. If there are other outdoor space opportunities he doesn't know about, he would be interested in learning about them.

Dane said he doesn't know what the town's connection to the library is. Eben said the town owns the building but does not control what happens inside. Dane said he has talked to people at the library about the need for preteens and teens to have a place to go after school. The school's after-school programs are heavily waitlisted. The library is willing to look into creating an after-school space for preteens and teens.

Dane said the school really needs a new driveway. The driveway is in poor condition. There is also a pinch point by the chip pit that causes drop-off and pickup problems. Eben said a town highway goes through the school property but none of the parking spaces belong to the town. Dane said he thinks getting the driveway improved is a school district issue. They may need help from the town when it comes time for that project.

Kyle Nuse handed out copies of an advisory resolution the Lamoille North school board sent to the task force that is dealing with school redistricting. The resolution says that the three districts that are under one supervisory union are willing to become one district and get rid of the supervisory union. They feel that would have low impact on students but would perhaps tighten things up administratively. Kyle also handed out copies of the school board's goals. One that might be most relevant to the selectboard is about collaborative engagement.

Kyle said she thinks it would be a good idea if there could be a civics curriculum for kids leading up to town meeting. Maybe a selectboard member would want to go into school to talk about their experience. Dane said he is a little cautious about introducing new curriculum because there are 4 new district-wide components of the curriculum. He agreed that civics is important. The school is launching a podcast. It would be great for kids involved in that to talk to the selectboard about town governance.

Dane said the school would love to get more volunteers. He is pressing the most for one-to-one mentors but volunteers can also help supervise lunch or recess, read books, etc.

Peter asked how the selectboard can stay abreast of events at the school. Dane said the Jag Journal comes out once a week. It includes important dates and events, community fliers, etc. A

celebration of learning that is open to the community will be on September 19. Peter asked if the Jag Journal is available online. Dane said it is sent to families and staff. It could be posted on the website. Mark Nielsen suggested the selectboard could be added to the mailing list.

Adrienne named some of the town committees. She said she could see areas of collaboration between town committees and the school. Maybe the Historical Society could come to the school for history lessons or the Conservation Commission could collaborate on sustainability or the Tree Board could help celebrate Arbor Day. Dane suggested perhaps someone from the Conservation Commission could help with the food scrap composting they hope to start. Adrienne said there is also a food task force. They are looking for other areas for a community garden.

Eben said we will update the town emergency plan to name the current principal.

Adrienne asked if school representatives are open to coming to a selectboard meeting maybe once a year. Mark said there was a time when he was coming to every meeting, but he was told there was no need for that. He would have no problem doing that again.

7. CEDS Update

Carl said the town received a finding of no significant impact for the environmental report that was submitted in June for the industrial park project. At the last meeting the board authorized submission of the form stating how the local match will be provided. We had to resubmit it because they said we couldn't show an amount greater than the grant. After it was resubmitted they said it was okay and they would start the process of issuing a full notice to proceed.

There was a visioning project meeting on September 4. There will be another in the future. Selectboard members may be contacted individually by someone from the Planning Commission to get input on any projects that have been mentioned.

The Rail Trail Committee approved a dollar amount for Welcome Center repairs and improvements but they asked for a better explanation of what work would be done and it stalled there. He was asked to get involved. He spoke to the contractor, explained what information the town is requesting and offered to make it easy for him to provide the information by phone, email or in person. The contractor now understands better what the town is asking for and the ball is in his court.

We are still waiting for feedback on the historical and archeological report submitted for the Welcome Center granite step project. Carl has been working on the Act 250 application for that project.

Carl said he, Isabelle Sullivan and Tom will be working on the Vermont Community Foundation grant for playground improvements. Staff's suggestion is that the money be used to upgrade the playground at Legion Field but no action should be taken until bigger decisions are made about all the uses at Legion Field. Adrienne asked who this grant was awarded to – the town? Tom said yes.

8. Industrial Park Next Steps

Carl said the current industrial park drawings show front lot lines coming to the edge of the utility right of way on Road A, the main road off Route 15. That means the town would retain

ownership of the road. Along Road B, lot lines are shown going to the center of the road. Mumley Engineering and Carl recommend that all lot lines be as currently shown for Road A, making it clear that the town owns the road, the road right of way and additional right of way for utilities. The board agreed to that.

Carl said because of bat habitat restrictions, tree removal is not allowed after April 1. There won't be time to get through the Act 250 process, award a general construction contract and then have trees removed. He recommends that the town arrange for tree removal separately before April 1. It is possible there could be no expense for the town or even some income, depending on the value of the trees. The board agreed that Carl should begin the process of retaining a qualified forester to assist the town with a timbering contract.

Carl said some of the industrial park land encroaches on the 300 ft. buffer area for a deer wintering area. It is believed by some people that the town purchased the Prindle lot to serve as off-site mitigation for the area impacted by the industrial park. Mike and Eben said the Prindle lot was purchased long before the industrial park lot. Lois Frey said the Conservation Commission has discussed with the selectboard that the Prindle lot would be reserved for deer wintering mitigation. The board agreed that Carl can ask the town's attorney to begin drafting the conservation easement needed to document that the Prindle lot is the offset for deer wintering.

Eben said he has not heard from board members about suggested covenants for the industrial park. Peter said he contacted the Vermont League of Cities and Towns and they did not have any templates or any ideas of where to get a template. They said if we were to do anything with covenants we should have our attorney draft them. Peter agrees with Carl that if we are going to do something with covenants we should keep it simple. He saw a couple of things in the examples Carl provided from Barre that might be worth considering, such as requirements around waste disposal, building setbacks from the lot line or lot coverage requirements.

Eben said state laws cover many things we would be concerned about. We have a solid waste ordinance. A future board could pass other ordinances if there were a problem. His main thoughts were about environmental impacts, sound and light pollution. Carl said the Act 250 permit can be written with restrictions on lighting.

Adrienne said she is confused about what our vision is for the industrial park. Do we want restaurants? Warehouses? Who is deciding that? Eben said we could decide in the covenants. Carl said the selectboard previously addressed the matter of mixed use and decided to ask NBRC for an amendment to the plan so there could be residential use. NBRC approved that. There was thought that residential use could potentially be on the smaller lots. Mike said he always thought it was supposed to be businesses generating jobs for the community. The amendment for housing was put in at the last minute with the thought that we would leave the possibility open in case we could not fill the park with industrial tenants. Housing was never a primary intent; it was to be a job-generating property. Carl asked if the selectboard talked about reserving everything for commercial use until a certain time period has passed. Mike said we didn't discuss a time period. We just said that if we couldn't fill the park a future board would have the option of putting housing there.

Paul said he recalls that housing was discussed at the public hearing and the conversation was that it would be only as a last resort. Mike said he believes the possibility of housing wasn't discussed at the information hearing for the bond vote. It was originally given to the voters that we weren't going to do housing. Tom said there was a strong split on the board. Two people wanted housing and two didn't. Mike broke the tie with the idea that we would not close the door on the possibility.

Adrienne said she has talked to people who think we are thinking of businesses like micro-breweries or restaurants. She would like clear direction on our vision so we can decide on covenants. Do we need sidewalks or street lights? Eben said he thinks in the past we have been open to any commercial sale and have not wanted to tie the hands of a future board. Adrienne said she thinks we are making it harder on a future board by not having a clear path.

Carl suggested he could work with Peter on an outline of different points that could potentially be covered in covenants. Tom said restrictions could be made later through other means. Not doing covenants now does not mean a free for all. Adrienne said she likes the idea of covenants for things like waste management and environmental impacts. It was agreed that Carl can work with Peter and Paul on potential covenants for the board to consider no later than October 6.

Carl said he can look at the RFP for a facilitator for the Legion Field meeting. The response deadline is currently September 19, which is this Friday. That may be too short. He suggests changing to a date further in the future.

9. *International Truck Purchase*

Josh Clark, regional sales director with Allegiance Trucks, said the town ordered a truck in November 2024. The purchase price included a chassis and a body package to come from a third party – Viking in Williston. There used to be other body vendors in Vermont, but now Viking is the only vendor within the state and many municipalities feel they need to use a Vermont vendor. That has funneled a lot of purchases to the one company, causing an extreme backlog. There have also been supply chain issues. In November, the expected delivery time was fall 2025. The truck was built in April and arrived at the Allegiance facility in May. It has been in their yard since then. Viking is not giving a clear answer about when they can provide the body but they are saying they don't expect to work on it until at least the second quarter of 2026. Allegiance has a floor plan line of credit and is paying a monthly interest rate until they can pay the invoice from the manufacturer. They are paying about \$1000-1200 per month on that unit. Since they received the truck they have already paid out \$4,235. That comes out of their bottom line. If they have the truck until June 1 that will be an additional \$9K in interest. They can't keep floating this expense and losing money due to the third party vendor's increased timeline. They are trying to work with municipalities that are their customers to figure out the situation with trucks that have already been ordered and also how to plan for future trucks so we don't have this situation again.

Eben said this is an expensive purchase for the town. After the trade-in we will need to pay about \$198K. When we got bids for this truck, one advantage of the International was the guarantee of when the body would be done. Western Star was saying they couldn't guarantee when the body would be done. Josh said Allegiance included the chassis and body in one price, but all the dealers are reliant on the same vendor for truck bodies. Eben said Western Star was more up front about not knowing when the body would be done.

Tom said there are two separate issues. We need to discuss options for the truck that has already been ordered. Then at the next meeting he is going to ask the board about authorizing Jason to get on Viking's list for the next truck. Given the timeline for getting a chassis, we don't necessarily need to order that now.

Josh noted that the timeline for getting a chassis may change because emissions standards will change in January 2027. Manufacturers have been laying people off because the economy is down and they have been doing less business than usual, but there may be a big pre-buy before the emissions standards change and an increase in orders after staff cuts may lead to a longer turnaround time for a chassis.

Paul asked if Eben thought International offered a guaranteed delivery time. Eben said that was what he thought.

Tom had included some options to consider in the packet. Eben said he doesn't know if we can legally finance the truck for one year and then for another 5 years after that. We are only legally allowed to take out loans for highway equipment for up to 60 months without approval from the voters. Josh said leasing gets away from that restriction. Tom said VLCT told us we can do a lease through the treasurer without going to the voters.

Mike said once the body is ready the truck will be a year old. Will there be a warranty extension? Josh said Allegiance can do a one-year lease with the first and only payment due one year from signature. The warranty does start when the truck is delivered, whether the truck is being used or not. If the body is built in Quarter 2, the warranty can be updated at that point. Warranties can be updated as long as it is within a year of delivery to the customer. What he is hearing from Viking is that the body will be done within that timeline. If the truck were delivered September 16, we would have until September 16, 2026 to update the warranty.

Mike asked what will happen to the interest Allegiance is paying on the truck. Josh said if the town finds a way to pay for the truck, Allegiance will pay the manufacturer and have the vehicle delivered.

Eben said we will be paying interest for the whole year we are leasing.

Josh said it was not Allegiance's doing that caused this delay and they don't feel they have responsibility to cover the additional cost. Some towns have said they will take on the monthly floor expense until the truck is delivered.

Mike asked, what if we cancel the contract? Josh said he doesn't see that being a big benefit to the town. If the town places a new order today the body will be 2-3 years out. Tom asked, if we canceled the order and ordered a new truck, would Allegiance honor the previous trade-in and price and hold the build date at Viking? Josh said if the town cancels the order, Allegiance can't sell it to another customer without a body package. The body build date would be for that truck, not for the town.

Josh said the full purchase price was about \$310K. If the town did a lease, it would be for that full amount. But Allegiance will not get the amount for the body. The bank will hold it in escrow and pay it right to the body company. The town will keep its trade-in until the new truck is ready to use and then Allegiance will write a check for the trade-in.

Paul asked, the trade-in value will not change even though the truck will be a year older? Josh said Allegiance will honor the original trade-in offer.

Eben said inspection for the old truck is another expense the town will have if we wait a year for the new truck. Even if Allegiance honors the trade-in value, if we take out a one-year lease we will need to pay around \$20K next year in order to do this trade. He asked what the interest rate would be on the lease. Josh said 5.04%. The total interest would be \$15K.

Paul asked why the invoice is for the whole package and not just what is sitting on the Allegiance lot. Josh said if the town wants to separate it out, there are ways of doing that.

Eben said we have enough money that we could write a check for the truck. Mike suggested then Allegiance could let us deal directly with Viking. Josh said he would support that. Eben said he doesn't know if he wants to be on the hook for the inspection for the old truck. Mike asked what kind of deal we would get it if we worked directly with Viking. Eben said none. They quoted us directly when we looked at getting a Peterbilt. Mike asked if Allegiance has an upcharge on the Viking body. Josh said no.

Tom said Allegiance owns the body shop that does our inspections and maintenance. Could there be some assistance with the service cost? Josh said he doesn't know if that is possible. The town is getting the use of the trade-in truck. Some other Allegiance branches are telling customers they need their trade-ins now. He is not trying to do that because he knows we need the truck. He is offering to honor the trade-in value for an additional year.

Eben said all he is hearing is that the town could pick up the floor plan cost and pay the interest in one lump sum. It sounds like we are taking all the cost and only getting a guaranteed trade-in price. What is Allegiance offering beyond that? Josh said Allegiance has already spent \$4K. Eben said they were expecting that cost because we were expecting to take the truck around now. Josh said they were not planning to take on almost \$10K in additional cost. They will now be losing money if they hold onto the unit.

Mike asked, if the trade-in value was \$100K, after another year it would be down to about \$80K, right? Josh said it depends on hours of use. They still need to review the truck to see if it is still in the same condition, but they are trying not to reduce the trade-in payment.

Josh said what dealers are doing now is only quoting chassis prices and asking for payment when the truck chassis arrives. He has been asking towns to also contact the body company to see if they can get better information on the timeline than he is getting.

Mike asked, so in the future customers will just buy a chassis from Allegiance and make their own arrangements for the body? Josh said the majority of the orders in the last half year have been chassis sales only. Richford did what Johnson is talking about. They ordered a body 2

years ago and are just working on ordering the truck now. Customers have been asking him if there are other vendors they can go to out of state. Tom said the trucks are made in Mexico. Why can't the truck go straight to a body company in California before coming to Vermont? Josh said it doesn't matter to Allegiance what body company is used. They can work with any body company. Mike asked, our truck is not made in Mexico, is it? Josh said it is.

Eben said we have to talk to our treasurer before deciding what we want to do. Peter asked if Eben is suggesting we ask Rosemary if we can cut a check for the cost of the truck. Eben said he not sure if he is suggesting that. Tom said if we take money out of the highway fund now to pay for the truck, we will need to reimburse the fund.

Eben suggested canceling the order. Mike said he doesn't think we can legally cancel it. Josh said there is a signed contract. Eben said the contract includes dates when the truck and body will be delivered. Josh said he doesn't believe it includes delivery timelines. Eben said there is nothing in it that forces us to pay the floor plan fee. Josh said Allegiance is trying to be a partner with the town and figure out how we can work together given that we are both stuck in this situation. There are cancellation fees. He doesn't want the town to cancel the order. That would have a negative impact on Allegiance and its relationship with the town. They don't feel overly responsible for the situation. They don't have control over the body company's schedule. Mike asked, if there was an agreement that the truck would be delivered complete, Allegiance would have to stick to that, correct? Josh said he would have to look at the agreement.

Peter said if we can pay for the truck, then Allegiance can stop paying interest on it. Our loss comes with the trade-in, right? Eben said our financial loss would come from the inspection we would have to put that truck through. And we were planning on paying for the truck over a 5-year period. If we pay for it all now, our reserve fund will dip low 5 years from now. Mike suggested seeing if Rosemary can write a check so we can buy the truck.

Eben told Josh that he will hear from the town about what we want to do.

10. *Signing of the Staffing Study Contract*

Eben asked about one of the items under Services Provided. Do we really want an investigation of Community and Economic Development Specialist / Town Planner staffing needs? Tom said he originally had Community and Economic Development Specialist / Town Administrator and the board had authorized Paul and Mike to work on some modifications. This is what was agreed on. Eben asked are we talking about needing a town planner? Paul said they talked about coordination between the CEDS and town planning. It is not that there is a need for a town planner but there is a question about how we meet the needs for town planning. Eben said referring to "town planner" makes it seem like we are creating another position. Adrienne said she thinks this came from her comment that we have a lot of buyout properties and we need a staff member to help with planning for them.

Adrienne moved to approve and sign the contract for Maple Hollow Consulting for the staffing study for an amount not to exceed \$4,000, Paul seconded and the motion was passed.

11. *Financial Policy Review and Discuss*

Tom said our financial management policies are antiquated. It would be good to have good policies and procedures in place before hiring a new clerk/treasurer. Rosemary thought it was

important to put policies in place soon so she can see if anything needs to be tweaked before we have a new hire. Tom provided a list of suggested policies for him and Rosemary to draft for the next meeting. The board agreed to that list.

12. *Selectboard Informational Meeting Scheduling*

Eben said the warning for the special town meeting was not signed in time. Only two board members signed it. So the meeting needs to be rescheduled. It was agreed to schedule it for October 28. Eben read the warning for a special town meeting on October 28 at 6:00 p.m. in the multi-purpose room of Johnson Elementary School to vote on whether to authorize the selectboard to purchase the Lowe Lecture Hall. **Mike moved and Peter seconded to approve the special meeting warning as read and the motion was passed.**

It was agreed to have an informational meeting on October 24 at 6:00 p.m. and a meeting on September 29 at 6:00 p.m. to plan for the informational meeting.

13. *Personnel Policy – Work Week Change*

Tom said currently employees turn in their timesheets on Wednesday and they have to be entered by the next day for direct deposits. There have been some close calls with the internet being out with that short timeline. Rosemary would like to change the work week to Monday through Sunday instead of Thursday through Wednesday. Then timesheets would be turned in on Monday and paid out on Friday, allowing more time for the deposit.

Mike moved to change the work week from Thursday through Wednesday to Monday through Sunday, with time cards being due on Monday and paid out on the following Friday, Paul seconded and the motion was passed.

14. *Personnel Policy – Matching Town and Village Holidays / Combined vs. Separate Policies*

Tom said the village and town have different holidays for their employees. It is challenging when one entity is off and one is working. Staff have asked him to bring it up.

Adrienne moved and Peter seconded to match town holidays to village holidays for office employees.

Eben asked if this includes reducing CTO for floating holidays. If we are going to add two holidays he thinks we need to eliminate two floating holidays. Tom said he feels floating holidays are a liability. He prefers specified holidays. Adrienne said she talked to employees who said they don't want floating holidays. They just want holidays.

Eben said the town and village have a joint personnel policy. The village union contract had certain holidays and other village employees felt it was not fair that union employees had more holidays, so the village gave more holidays to their other employees, but the joint personnel policy, which the town is following, was never amended. Just making changes through motions like this makes it very difficult for future board members. Why not amend the policy and make it clear to future boards?

Tom said he thinks a combined personnel policy made sense when we had a combined village manager and town administrator. He thinks separate town and village policies would be cleaner. He also thinks the personnel policy is not up to current standards. He suggests that the board authorize him and maybe one board member to draft a new one before the next meeting.

It was agreed that the intent of the motion is to remove Town Meeting Day as a holiday for town employees and to remove the two floating holidays and to add the holidays currently recognized by the village that had not been holidays for town employees.

The motion was passed.

The board agreed that Tom can draft an updated personnel policy for the board to review. A majority of board members agreed that town and village personnel policies should be separate.

15. Road Reclassification

Tom had suggested considering reclassification of TH-12 and TH-47. Eben said he would rather wait until next summer to reclassify more roads. Other board members agreed.

16. Dead End Road Maintenance

Tom said he had drafted a letter to residents on dead end roads, but it turns out that the town cannot refuse to do road maintenance. There are other options. We could reclassify roads. That could be expensive because there could be legal challenges. Tom could send a polite letter reminding residents to keep the right of way clear followed by a letter saying that we will tow vehicles in the right of way. For some roads, the road foreman may want to create a turnaround in the right of way. We could propose reclassification of some roads to the town at town meeting. We have to prove that reclassification is in the public good. What if the whole town agrees it is in the public good to reclassify some roads down to Class 4? The risk is that we might have to pay attorney fees if there are appeals to our decision. But it would be harder for people to argue the decision if it went before the voters. Eben suggested we could budget for some attorney fees next year.

17. Municipal Building Security

Adrienne said she thinks we need a camera system for security reasons. She would like Seacoast to give us a quote. If it is very expensive she can research what it would cost for us to install our own cameras and have a drive system to back up to. Tom said our current security system is from 1999. We can no longer get parts for it. Local Electric is the only company that will do maintenance on it. At some point we need to budget for a new security and fire alarm system. Mike said he thinks we should armor our building with tempered glass and a stronger door. Paul asked if Adrienne is thinking of external or internal cameras. Adrienne said she thinks both. Paul said cameras inside may be a borderline invasion of privacy. Adrienne said she can get a quote for just outside cameras as well as one for both inside and outside cameras. Eben said he thinks Tom should talk to Erik Bailey, who can talk to the trustees about these potential improvements. We should get cost figures and budget for next year. As of 4 years ago, videos were considered public records and had to be held indefinitely. If we had video security cameras we would need a large amount of storage. Eben suggested we should get more than one quote. The board agreed Adrienne can get quotes. Eben asked Tom to talk to Erik about security improvements.

18. Old Business

Tom said part of the industrial park is not in the village. We need to extend the town sewer service area or create a new one. He suggests having Carl work on that. Eben said he thought Duncan Hastings and Alec Jones had started work on it. He suggested that Paul talk to Alec about it. Paul agreed.

19. Paving Discussion

Eben said the board talked about not spending money on paving. Jason's initial request was for a paving capital project and also a paving maintenance project on Railroad Street. The section of

Railroad Street he proposed for maintenance is pretty rough. He doesn't know if the board wants to spend on a maintenance project even though we said no to a capital project. Mike said Railroad Street needs to be really taken care of, not just have another coat put on top. Eben said Jason is just talking about the leads on the Railroad Street bridge. Does the board want to forget about paving altogether or ask Jason to get quotes for the leads on the bridge? Adrienne asked, isn't it too late in the year to do paving? Eben said it is definitely too late for a capital project. Mike said it is not too late for a small project. The board agreed Jason can get quotes.

20. Letter of Support for VTSU Community Development Block Grant

Tom said this is the last selectboard meeting before Vermont State University's application for a Community Development Block Grant is due. **Peter moved to authorize the town administrator to draft a letter of support for Vermont State University's application for a Community Development Block Grant and to sign it after it has been reviewed by the selectboard chair and vice chair, Paul seconded and the motion was passed.**

21. Liquor License Approval

Peter moved to approve a second class liquor license and a tobacco license for NU Beverage LLC for 4495 VT Rte 100C, Paul seconded and the motion was passed.

22. Facilitator for Legion Field Hearing

Paul said the Vermont Council on Rural Development was going to facilitate the meeting but they can't do it directly. They can fund a facilitator. We have been talking to DuBois & King about providing that service. The town would need to pay them and then get reimbursed by VCRD. Since the town will be paying money, he thought we should put out an RFP. The cost will probably be about \$5K. Mike said he thinks that is a waste of money. Paul said there will probably be at least a couple of meetings.

Adrienne moved to authorize Paul to post an RFP for facilitation for the Legion Field hearing, with the date on the draft RFP changed as suggested by Carl.

Tom said we are already approved for a zero match grant for up to \$5K. We don't have to go out to bid. The board could just authorize hiring DuBois & King to facilitate. Paul said that is where he started, but he talked to Eben and they decided it would be a good idea to put it out to bid. He is good either way. Eben said he is too.

Peter seconded.

Mike asked if this is a way of taking the selectboard off the hook for making hard decisions that people might not be happy with. Paul and Eben said the decision will be ultimately be made by the selectboard.

The motion was passed with Mike opposed.

23. Potential Municipal Planning Grant Application

Paul said having a village center designation will grandfather us into the new downtown designation and provide Step 2 benefits, which are limited. If we want to get to Step 3, which has more benefits, such as priority with the state for grant funding and eligibility for more grants, we need some zoning. Form based code meets part of the requirement. Tom had suggested that the board go after a Municipal Planning Grant to develop a capital plan. Last year the Planning Commission met with LCPC and LCPC suggested a Municipal Planning Grant to update our flood hazard bylaws and form based code so they are not in conflict with each other.

Last week Jesse Whitworth and Paul met with Seth Jensen of LCPC, who suggested applying for a Municipal Planning Grant to update flood hazard bylaws, revise form based code to match the flood hazard bylaws, and do an inventory of town capital assets, which is a first step toward a capital plan. Having those three things in place would help us get to Step 3 for greater benefits.

Eben asked, we would not be extending the area affected by form based code, just making amendments that would apply inside the current area? Paul said he believes that is correct.

Eben asked how we are going to enforce form based code. Tom said there should be a third party to enforce it, separate from the selectboard or the town administrator. Adrienne asked what other towns do. Other board members said they have zoning administrators. Eben said their zoning administrators are town employees. They just read the code and enforce it.

Adrienne moved to authorize Paul to work with the Lamoille County Planning Commission to apply for a \$30,000 Municipal Planning Grant to work on the first stages of a capital plan, update flood hazard bylaws and modify form based code, Peter seconded and the motion was passed.

24. Executive Session

Peter moved to enter executive session for pending or probable civil litigation or a prosecution, to which the public body is or may be a party under 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(E), Adrienne seconded and the motion was passed at 10:05. The board came out of executive session at 10:32.

Paul moved that if there is disagreement on responsibility of sewers and drains by October 1, 2025 the board will seek a declaratory ruling, Peter seconded and the motion was passed with Mike abstaining.

25. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:33.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths