

JOHNSON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2025

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

Others: Tom Galinat

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. *Call Meeting to Order*

Eben called the meeting to order at 6:00.

2. *Consider Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda*

Peter added discussion of road and utility work for the library project. Adrienne added an executive session for employee review.

3. *Public Comment*

No members of the public were present.

4. *Work Session for Oct. 24 Meeting – Information on Lowe Lecture Hall*

Adrienne reviewed a presentation she had prepared for the informational meeting based on an outline sent by Hope Sullivan and board members suggested changes or additions.

Tom noted that there is a huge range of potential costs that would depend on how the building is used. Adrienne said she feels that the first step is to determine whether we want to acquire the building and then the next step is for the community to decide how they want it to be used. Paul suggested giving the architects a couple of potential uses and getting cost estimates for those.

Tom explained that the \$150K figure shown for foundation replacement also includes some ground leveling, tree removal, and creation of parking space on the left side of the building. It was agreed to describe that expense as “foundation and site work” and to remove “(if pursued)” as part of the description because the fire marshal said the foundation work is required.

Mike said he feels it would be preferable to have a hazardous materials assessment of the building done before the vote on acquiring it, since dealing with hazardous materials such as asbestos could be quite expensive. The board agreed that Tom should seek quotes from home inspectors. **Mike moved and Adrienne seconded to direct Tom to get quotes from at least 2 home inspectors and to order a hazardous materials assessment of the Lowe Lecture Hall if the cost is less than \$1000.** Paul suggested assessing for lead, radon, asbestos, black mold, and PCBs. **The motion was passed.**

Tom noted that the electrical panel is in the bathroom, which does not comply with code. Putting it outside the building would be the most affordable option. That would cost about \$4K. The rest of the electrical system looks fine.

Eben asked if a plumbing inspection has been done. Tom said no. He said if the floor of the building is left the way it is now, not all at the same level, he thinks we will need to add more egresses. But if we bring the floor to one level then the existing egresses should be sufficient. If we do that, we will have to redo the whole bathroom to bring it down to the new level.

Tom asked if he should request a full building inspection. The board agreed to that.

Eben explained that he estimated yearly costs of owning the building based on costs from the Holcomb House.

Adrienne said the list of grant opportunities included in the presentation was provided by Peter. Mike questioned how long we would want to wait to do the foundation work after a “yes” vote. If we do it without having a grant, it could cost \$150K. Eben suggested maybe we could do a fundraising campaign. Mike said people might want to know about our chances of getting these grants.

The board discussed the best wording for the page on what the special town meeting and vote will determine.

Mike moved to rescind his previous motion, Peter seconded and the motion was passed.

Mike moved to direct Tom to get quotes from at least 2 home inspectors and to order a full inspection of the Lowe Lecture Hall as discussed if the cost is less than \$2000, Paul seconded and the motion was passed.

Paul asked if we should come up with a 5-year plan for the building. Eben said it would depend on how we are going to use the building. Paul said determining that would be part of the plan. In year 1 we would stabilize the building and begin to use it for special events. In year 2 we would pursue grants and go further. We haven’t talked about any commercial uses. He wonders how the board feels about that. Adrienne said she likes the idea of adding a slide with a timeline.

Eben suggested adding a slide about the building’s current conditions.

Tom asked if anyone wants to be there when the architect reviews the building, which may be tomorrow. Mike said he will attend. Peter said he is interested if it doesn’t end up being tomorrow.

5. *Library Project Road/Utility Work*

Peter said to keep the library project moving forward we need to run utilities to the site. He would like to see that done this fall. Jason has concerns and is advising against doing it now. Following Jason’s recommendation would mean waiting until June 15 next year. He doesn’t think we can do that. The foundation will be going in and hopefully we will have the building framed out over the winter.

Tom explained that Jason is worried that if the work in the town road right of way is done now, it will be too cold for the patching to adhere properly and it won’t hold throughout the winter. But Jason would be okay with signing the permit for work in the right of way if the selectboard says it is okay, understanding that the patched area might settle and the library might need to pay to redo some work in the spring. Tom talked to a company that does road work. They said it probably will be okay but might not. The additional cost to do the road patching twice would be about \$7K. But the larger problem is that if we do not finish the grant-funded work by December 31, 2026 we may have to hand the ARPA money back.

Peter moved to authorize proceeding with the work of running utilities for the library across the town highway, Paul seconded and the motion was passed.

6. ***Executive Session***

Adrienne moved to enter executive session for employee evaluation as allowed by 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3), Mike seconded and the motion was passed at 7:01. The board came out of executive session at 7:49.

7. ***Adjourn***

The meeting was adjourned at 7:49.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths