

JOHNSON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2025

Present: Selectboard members: Peter Hammond, Adrienne Parker, Eben Patch, Paul Warden
Others: Tom Galinat, Carl Rogers, Lois Frey, Howard Romero, Casey Romero, Jasmine Yuris, Jesse Whitworth, several other people
Absent: Mike Dunham

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*

Eben added items related to scheduling for tandem truck builds and social media posting.

3. *Public Comment and Public Announcements*

Howard Romero asked where we stand on Legion Field. Paul said it looks like the Legion Field meeting will be December 3.

Howard said he wants to get the area for the ice rink leveled before everything freezes so Brian Raulinaitis can build a more level rink this year. Does Howard have permission to use grant money to get a landscaper and level a small piece of the field?

Adrienne said she is open to hearing the amount and approving it. Howard said he would go with the lowest bid he could get.

Paul said we have to decide where the rink will be and that will be part of the conversation at the December 3 meeting. Howard said there is really only one place the rink can go – where it has been. Paul asked why it can't be elsewhere. Howard said the oven often figures into use of the rink, it is easier to get water for the rink at the street there rather than at the other end of the field, that is the part of the field that needs the least leveling, there is no water or sewer under that area, and parking is right there on the street.

Eben asked if the level will be taken down at one end or if fill will be brought in. Howard said one contractor he has spoken to wants to take dirt from the high part and move it to the low part; another wants to bring in dirt. Both approaches are valid. To him, it is a question of money. Paul said it is probably best not to bring fill into the floodplain. Howard agreed that it would be ideal to use what is there.

Board members agreed they are open to Howard having the work done before the Legion Field meeting. Eben asked Howard to get an RFP together and get bids before the next selectboard meeting.

Howard said he volunteered to run the Tuesday Night Live Committee, but he didn't volunteer to be general manager and designer of the Legion Field project for free. He wants to bring a proposal to be paid out of grant money for his time and expenses for managing the Legion Field project going forward. Eben said the selectboard could choose to use someone other than

Howard for completion of the project. Howard said that is up to the board. Paul suggested waiting until after the meeting until there is some plan and Howard can see what is to be done.

Howard said the bandstand has been moved temporarily. It can't really be used where it is for Tuesday Night Live. If the field is all chopped up, it may not be useable for Tuesday Night Live. Adrienne said she doesn't know what the library construction will entail. Will they take big machines onto the field and ruin what has just been leveled? Howard and Eben said machines will not be going onto the field as part of the library construction. Howard said the Tuesday Night Live Committee will probably dig some trenches. They will have to be filled with grass by the first week in July and by then we need to have enough turf to support 500 people. Paul asked what the trenches are for. Howard said for bringing electricity to the bandstand. It may be possible to bring electricity from the library.

Adrienne said construction for the library will continue into summer. She asked if Howard sees that affecting Tuesday Night Live. Howard said not necessarily, but Tuesday Night Live needs power and the bandstand in place. He is concerned about that happening. Tuesday Night Live has no other place to go. There were many reasons why having it at Old Mill Park did not work from the Tuesday Night Live Committee's perspective.

Adrienne suggested that if some FEMA buyout properties are opened up, one of them could possibly provide a location. Howard said when the Sterling Market building is demolished, that will open up about 3/4 of an acre, but it is right next to the highway. Tuesday Night Live was held on Route 15 before and it did not work well.

4. *Selectboard Updates and/or Concerns*

Adrienne said there was a great turnout for the special town meeting and there was some good discussion on whether acquiring the Lowe Lecture Hall was a viable option. She was glad to hear the will of the voters. Paul agreed that there was a great turnout.

5. *Consent Agenda*

The consent agenda consisted of the minutes of October 6, 20 and 24, 2025. **Adrienne moved to approve the consent agenda, Peter seconded and the motion was passed.**

Adrienne said she thought there might be an error in the October 28 minutes regarding the voting totals. Rosemary explained that the discrepancy in numbers was due to people who checked in but did not vote.

6. *Clerk/Treasurer's Report: Warrants, Licenses and Any Action Items*

Paul moved to approve liquor and tobacco licenses for Stewart's Shop (the former Jolley), a liquor license for Sodexo Operations (the college), and a third class liquor license for Marsala Salsa, Peter seconded and the motion was passed.

Rosemary handed out the current year budget status report. Expenditures are at 30.6% of budget. We have received our large yearly payment from the state for law enforcement. Today we got our ANR PILOT payment. Eben noted that PILOT revenue came in over budget. Rosemary said we are starting to get more recording fees because we are getting more recordings.

7. *CTO Time for Short Pay Period*

Eben said we changed the pay week for our employees and employees are requesting to be able to use CTO time to round out the short week that will result. Rosemary said the pay week used

to end on Wednesday and now it will be ending on Sunday. Eben said as a result there will be one week when employees will be short 3 days in their paycheck. They are requesting to be able to use up to 24 hours of CTO time to make that week whole if they wish. Paul said as long as it is optional he is fine with that. Adrienne and Peter agreed. **Peter moved to allow employees to use CTO time not to exceed 24 hours to make up for the upcoming short pay period, Paul seconded and the motion was passed.**

8. *Wreaths on Powerhouse Bridge*

Adrienne said last year the Beautification Committee bought two wreaths for either end of the Powerhouse Bridge. She sees there is electricity there but she doesn't know the status. She is hoping Jason can plug in the wreaths. If something small like an extension cord is needed, the Beautification Committee can provide it. She is hoping the selectboard will approve using Jason's time to put the wreaths up.

Peter said in Tom's notes he had asked whether it was worth putting doors in the siding. Adrienne said he is talking about Scribner Bridge, not the Powerhouse Bridge. But that is related because if the crew gets a lift for Scribner Bridge work, they can use it to put up wreaths on the Powerhouse Bridge the same day. Eben said he doesn't know if the highway crew will have enough time in their schedule to work on Scribner Bridge this year. If they don't get a lift they can probably put up the wreaths without one. He is fine with it being a project for the crew as long as they can fit it into their schedule. The board agreed.

9. *Johnson EATS, New Committee Request*

Jasmine Yuris explained that the Food Access and Awareness Task Force wants to turn into a town committee and they want to dissolve the existing Community Oven Committee and put it under the umbrella of the new committee because there is a lot of interconnectedness and overlap between the two groups. The Food Access and Awareness Task Force wants to apply for grants and they realize that being a town committee would make that easier. Part of their request is to combine the funds of the two groups. The treasurer of the new committee would be Charlotte Roozkrans, who is treasurer of the Community Oven Committee. Jesse Whitworth said the task force thought it would be appropriate to become a committee because of monetary concerns and ability to run events. They have already identified a grant that could give them \$25,000.

Jasmine said the committee is also asking if the town could pay for them to have a minute taker at their meetings. Eben said quite a few committees take their own minutes. Adrienne said she thinks it is important for all committees to have a minute taker, especially those that are newer.

Peter moved and Adrienne seconded that the selectboard establish the Johnson EATS Committee as an advisory only town committee, absorbing the funds of the Community Oven Committee.

Adrienne offered a friendly amendment, which Peter agreed to, adding that the town will pay \$1,000 for a minute taker for the new committee. Eben said he would vote no because of the amendment. There is no line in our budget for minute taking for this committee this year so he assumes it would just be buried under selectboard expense. He would be fine with potentially adding a line for a minute taker for this committee during budget development for next year. Adrienne asked if we could add to the motion that the funds will be allocated to the committee for minute taking when the board develops the next budget. Paul said he thinks first

we need to look at other committees. We can't just pick and choose which committees we provide minute takers for based on how we feel on any given night. Jasmine asked if it is possible to just upload the meeting video in lieu of minutes. Rosemary said she doesn't think so. Adrienne and Peter agreed to withdraw the amendment about funds for the minute taker.

The motion was passed.

Eben moved to appoint Jasmine Yuris, Jesse Whitworth, Charlotte Roozkrans, Kate Riley, Diane Lehouiller, Gregor Novakowski and Pam Jaspersohn to the Johnson EATS Committee, Peter seconded and the motion was passed.

10. *Committee Restructuring*

Adrienne said she would like the board to think more about possible committee reorganization so that she can make a motion about it at the next meeting. She suggests a structure where the Conservation Commission and Planning Commission would be unchanged. There would be a recreation committee with subcommittees possibly including the economic growth task force, youth and adult team sports, and green spaces. There would be a culture and arts committee with subcommittees for events (Jubilee, Tuesday Night Live, etc.) and public art. The Historical Society would be unchanged.

Adrienne said she has seen a decline in new involvement in our regular committees. She doesn't want to see committees continue to lose volunteers. She wonders if it would help to restructure committees and make it clearer to people who are not involved how they can be involved. She noted that the Rail Trail Committee would be a subcommittee of the recreation board. She looked into whether it should be a recreation board, committee or commission. Stowe has a recreation commission and that gives them more authority. They are in charge of employees and have their own budget. She doesn't know if that would be beneficial to us. It is something to consider. Paul said he thinks a board has more authority than a commission.

Adrienne noted that she suggests the Tree Board would be a subcommittee of the Conservation Commission. Peter asked Lois Frey if the Conservation Commission has talked about that. Lois said no. They haven't talked about having a hierarchy. Peter asked if she has any idea how the members would feel about that. Lois said she would not speak for the others. The Conservation Commission would need to discuss it. The Conservation Commission has specific charges they have to follow. Adrienne said the Tree Board could also go under the green spaces subcommittee.

Eben said he agrees with Adrienne. We have a lot of committees and if each of them has a requirement to take minutes that adds to the strain. He likes the idea of what the Historical Society does. They have a board with subcommittees that report back to it. That allows people to do things more freely.

Donna Griffiths asked, for a subcommittee to meet without Open Meeting Law requirements, it has to be less than a quorum of the full committee, right? Eben said yes. Donna said she wonders if committees would be enough bigger than the subcommittees for that to work. Maybe it would lead to even fewer people volunteering because of the need to keep subcommittees from having a quorum. Lois said subcommittee meetings can include people who are not part of

the main committee. Adrienne said for example she will participate on the community oven subcommittee of Johnson EATS, but she will not be a member of Johnson EATS.

The board discussed the possibility of asking committee chairs how they feel about the proposed restructuring. It was agreed to start with just the parks and recreation related groups – the Conservation Commission, Tree Board, Reimagine Johnson Recreation Economy Task Force, Skatepark Committee and Rail Trail Committee. Representatives from these groups will be invited to the January 19 selectboard meeting.

11. TSSA Ordinance and Map Revision

Carl showed a map of the Town Sewer Service Area in the west end of the village. Alec Jones of the Lamoille County Planning Commission agrees that the map is correct and that the only addition to the Town Sewer Service Area required in that part of town is the part of the industrial park lot that is outside the village. There is one lot on the south side of Route 15 that is surrounded by other lots that are in the TSSA. Carl doesn't know if the board wants to add that to the TSSA. It is a private parcel.

Eben suggested leaving it as is. He asked if Rosemary knows why it is not part of the TSSA. Rosemary said she thinks Laraway was added because the village requested it. But this neighboring lot was not part of the request. Paul said he would be in favor of adding the lot to the TSSA. It would just give the owners the option of joining up; they would not have to. Eben asked, if we added this to the TSSA and the current owners decided to connect to the sewer line, it would come off our allocation, right? Carl said yes. Eben brought up the possibility that they could decide to put in some use like a brewery. Adrienne said she is in favor of adding it. Eben agreed it could be added.

Carl showed a map of the TSSA in the Route 100C/ Sinclair Road area. What is being done in that area is to include the entire lot for lots that had been divided by the TSSA line.

Carl said he has started pursuing the option of writing a new Town Sewer Service Area ordinance that would repeal the 2009 ordinance. It would basically keep 95% of the 2009 ordinance but there would be some changes. Article 1(B) says “the Town intends to authorize the Village to assess sewer rents and charges” but that can now be changed to the past tense. Article 1(B)(1) has a sentence that says, “No other extensions of the Village Sewer System may be allowed within the TSSA by this ordinance.” Carl and Rosemary could not figure out how that sentence is consistent with the rest. Carl sees no harm in deleting it. In Article 1(B)(2), he proposes to eliminate “or divided” from the sentence “Connections shall not be extended or divided to lands outside the mapped area.” He can't figure out why those words are there. In Article 1, the reference to 24 VSA § 3611 seems irrelevant. It has to do with the municipality taking someone's property for sewer improvements. The 2009 ordinance states that it repeals ordinances from 1977. Carl proposes adding language to the new ordinance saying that it reaffirms that the previous ordinances are repealed. The board agreed to that. Carl said he added the industrial park to the allocation priorities.

Paul questioned the statement that “The board may limit the amount to be granted in any one year to an amount equal to the total number of gallons available divided by the number of years remaining in the ‘Agreement’ or the useful life of the Sewer Plant, whichever is less.” Do we need that sentence? Eben said it gives us the ability to back out if the sewer plant is failing. Paul

said it seems that we are restricting our option to limit the number of gallons. After further discussion, it was agreed to change the sentence to say, "The board may limit the amount to be granted in any one year."

Paul asked how an individual could violate the ordinance. Eben said they could just connect without going through the process or they could go to the village and get permission to connect while bypassing the town.

The board agreed to start the formal ordinance adoption process at the next meeting. It will include a public hearing as an agenda item.

12. NBRC Signatory Delegation

Eben said when Duncan resigned from the selectboard, Tom was appointed as the NBRC signature authority. Who would the board like to appoint now, with Tom stepping back? Paul moved and Peter seconded to appoint the chair or interim CEDS as signatory for Northern Border Regional Commission documents. Carl said he thinks it needs to be one specific person. Paul withdrew the motion. **Paul moved to authorize selectboard chair Eben Patch or vice chair Adrienne Parker as signatories for Northern Border Regional Commission documents if NBRC will accept two names, and otherwise to authorize only Eben Patch. Peter seconded and the motion was passed.**

13. Town Administrator Transition Planning

Adrienne drafted a job description for an interim or permanent town administrator. She said there are no major differences from the previous job description; she just reorganized and simplified it a bit. **Paul moved to approve the town administrator job description as presented on November 3, 2025, with the addition of the approval date and town letterhead, Adrienne seconded and the motion was passed.**

Eben said Adrienne also worked on a job description for the town clerk/treasurer position but he has not read it yet. Paul said he has not yet read it either. Adrienne said we can come back to that at another meeting. Eben suggested that Rosemary read it over if she has time.

The board agreed to post for both an interim and a full-time administrator to see if there is interest in the full-time position. Peter said he is willing to post it that way to get bites for the full-time position, but he feels ill at ease with hiring a permanent town administrator before the staffing study is done. Eben said if someone does express interest we can let them know that the job description may change a little. Peter said there is still an open question as to whether it would be a good idea to combine the town administrator position with the CEDS position. That very much changes what the position would be. Eben said he agrees but he would still like to get something out there.

It was agreed to post the advertisement on the town website and Facebook page, in the newspaper, with VLCT, and on Indeed, with Rosemary authorized to sign up for a town Indeed account if the town does not already have one. It was agreed that there will be a single job posting mentioning both interim and permanent positions. Adrienne said she can post on Facebook and the town website. Rosemary agreed to post in the News and Citizen and with Indeed and VLCT.

14. Signature Delegation for GIA

The town received the FY27 Grants in Aid for highways for a project on Maple Hill off of Collins Hill. **Adrienne moved to approve the Grants in Aid for FY27 and to authorize the chair or town administrator to sign, Paul seconded and the motion was passed.**

15. Town Meeting House Hazardous Materials Testing and Next Steps

Paul moved to hire Evergreen Environmental for lead and asbestos testing at the Lowe Lecture Hall for an amount not to exceed \$2,313 per the quote dated September 30, 2025, Adrienne seconded and the motion was passed.

The board agreed that the money should be spent to have the structural assessment done as previously discussed.

Peter asked if we can have a lawyer begin working on whatever is needed for the acquisition. Eben said he will reach out to Stitzel, Page & Fletcher. He will also communicate with Hope Sullivan of the Vermont Studio Center.

Adrienne asked if we should wait until the purchase is completed to start the task force. Eben said he thinks we should.

16. Building and Grounds Maintenance Plan

Adrienne said the selectboard got a good email from Eric Osgood recommending a buildings and grounds maintenance plan. She thought a good first step before that would be to do a survey of all building and grounds conditions. She made a survey Tom could fill out before he leaves. Eben said he thinks it is a good form. Adrienne said when a new town administrator is hired, they could redo the form to get acquainted with the buildings and grounds and then the board could develop a maintenance plan. Paul asked if we should give the form to anyone besides Tom. Adrienne said she was hoping he would fill it out with a person who knows a lot about the building. For instance, a Historical Society member for the Holcomb House or Jason for the town garage.

17. Budget Organization and Planning

Eben said Tom recommended that committees be directed to keep budget increases at 2.8% or lower. Sometimes a “not to exceed” amount can be treated as a goal, whether the money is needed or not. He would like to see committees increase their revenue by 5% and try to stay under a 3% increase in expenditures. There are ways to increase revenue for every committee that raises revenue. He does not want to set a target percent increase. Until we have a complete budget, it is hard to approve committee requests.

Adrienne said she doesn't think the revenue increase suggestion fits enough committee to send an email to all of them asking that they increase their revenue by 5%. Peter asked if we would send that email to all committees or just those that have revenue lines. Eben said probably just those with revenue lines, minus the two that are already net zero.

Paul and Eben discussed asking Tom to get proposed budgets from committees for the next meeting, asking them to be conscious of budget increases, and having him explain at the next meeting his comments about issues last year due to the board not setting a “not to exceed” percentage.

Adrienne moved to ask committees what they want their budgets to be. The motion died for lack of a second. Eben suggested that we have committees send us their proposed budgets and the board will look at them once the full budget has been developed. The board agreed to that.

18. *Remotion the Reclassification of TH-21, TH-22, and TH-23*

Paul moved to reclassify Town Highways 21, 22 and 23 from Class IV highways to legal trails, Adrienne seconded and the motion was passed.

Eben explained that the motion to do this was previously made in open session, but it did not make it into any of the meeting recordings, so it was not reflected in the minutes.

19. *Scheduling for Tandem Truck Build*

Eben said Jason would like the board's permission to contact Viking to get a build spot for the next truck we will order. They are scheduling about 36 months out. Rosemary asked if there is any money involved. Eben said he doesn't know. He said he doesn't want to spend a lot of money reserving a build spot, but if it is free or only costs a small amount he would be okay with it. He is okay with getting a build spot and then working back from that to decide when to order the truck. The rest of the board agreed to that.

20. *Social Media Posting*

Adrienne asked if it is okay if she makes a Facebook page for the Johnson Jubilee that is connected to the town Facebook page. It would be helpful for it to be connected to the town Facebook page because then everyone subscribed to the town page can be invited to subscribe to the Jubilee page and it can get more followers. The same profile can create different pages so both pages could be linked to the same profile. Eben said he is not comfortable using the town subscriber list to invite people to follow a page for a non-town entity. Adrienne said the Jubilee is town sponsored. Eben suggested we could post about the Jubilee on the town Facebook page and provide a link. He would be comfortable with that. Peter and Paul said they are comfortable linking the Jubilee page to the town Facebook page.

Adrienne said SLR is doing a flood modeling map. They mentioned that it would be nice if we had a way to send them videos and photos of previous floods. Is it okay if she posts a submission form for people to upload their photos and videos? Eben said Beth Foy did this in 2023. He can ask her about it. Rosemary noted that the Historical Society has quite a few photos from the 1927 flood.

Adrienne said she made a survey to get community input about how people want green spaces in Johnson to be used after the FEMA buyout process. She would like to post it before the Legion Field meeting and the Sterling Market meeting. Eben asked if she has talked with Jesse about the survey. Adrienne said yes, she sent it to him and Paul. Paul said he thinks more information is better. The only concern is that DuBois & King has already held the first visioning meeting and they will be coming back with information from that first meeting. We can't give them a lot of new information and new direction. But getting more information from citizens is helpful. Adrienne said she would also like to print out the survey forms and have them at the entrance of the municipal building for people who prefer a paper form. The board agreed to putting out the survey.

21. *Adjourn*

The meeting was adjourned at 9:09.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths