

Johnson Historical Society Meeting

11 March 2026 at 9AM

Holcomb House

Present: Dick Simays, Linda Jones, Mike Dunham, John Sutherland, Mary Jean Smith (left at 10.08 AM), and Lois Frey. Regrets: Kelly Vandorn, Alice Whiting. Guest: Dean West

President Dick Simays called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM. There was one addition to the agenda, Tree Board request.

Secretary's Report: **It was moved, seconded and approved to accept the 11 February 2026 minutes as printed.**

Treasurer's Report: No report.

Administrative Items:

Holcomb House Hosting: Friday 3.13.2026 at 9 AM to noon Mike Dunham; Sunday 3.22.2026 at 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM Linda Jones; Friday 4.10.2026 at 9 AM to noon Mary Jean Smith, Sunday, 4.26.2026 at 1 PM to 3 PM Lois Frey; Friday 5.8.2026 at 9 AM to noon Dick Simays. The Holcomb House will be closed May 24, 2026 with a program scheduled at the Plot Cemetery that day, 5.24.2026 at 2 PM to 3:00 PM Kelly Vandorn.

Social media: Linda Jones reports to expect a new **Facebook** post later this week. The first **newsletter** of the year was printed and mailed on 17 February 2026. Subsequently Linda received a letter from Deidre Dolan saying that she would like to resign from doing the newsletter layout after the next issue. She has done a terrific job. A replacement will be hard to find but JHS will be looking to fill the position.

Dick Simays welcomed the Historical Society's newest member, John Sutherland, Town Administrator, who was appointed by the Selectboard at their 4 March 2026 meeting.

Standing Committee Reports:

*Buildings, Grounds, and Facilities:

Discussion about the roof leak, noted on Friday, March 6, 2026. When notified by Lois Frey about the leak, John Sutherland responded and removed the problem-causing ice and snow from the roof. Thank you, John!

Dick Simays asked Mary Jean Smith to check with Gilles Lehouillier to see if he could clarify what was installed under the roof when he previously worked on it.

Lois Frey reported that the Tree Board has received a grant to plant trees along Main Street. At their 3.10.2026 meeting, they asked if the Historical Society would like to add a tree near the maple tree on the front lawn. Following discussion, it was decided for all to assess the area, gather some information and a decision will be made at the 4.8.2026 JHS meeting.

Placement of the baggage cart when removed from the Holcomb House front porch continues to be an unresolved issue.

*Collections & Program Development: Mary Jean Smith reported that Barbara Flathers Collins and Phil Robertson, Curator at VSU-Johnson visited the Holcomb House to prepare for loaning some of the VSU's Ruth Mould art collection to the Historical Society. Phil is working on insurance and other details with more information being available sometime in April 2026. They selected the back wall in the East Room to hang five paintings.

Programs: Linda Jones reported that the JHS program on 22 March 2026 at 2 pm will be titled *Memories of the Pharmacy* at the Holcomb House. The panel discussion will be introduced by Dick Simays with panelists Laurie West McLean, Lillian White, and Tammy Wells.

*Revenue Development: Lois Frey reported the revenue from pie and cake sales at Town Meeting was \$238 with \$193 from food sales and \$45 from tips.

Dean West reported that the plan for 2026 Tuesday Night Live is to have six concerts on Legion Field. Start date will be 7 July 2026.

*Membership: No report

*Town Meeting follow-up: The March 3rd meeting was short (from 9 AM-11:15 AM) & attended by 72 people.

*Water heater replacement: Mike Dunham reported that the new water heater has been installed and will be made operational in a day or two when a needed part is delivered. At that time, they will remove the old water tank from the Holcomb House.

*East wall insulation project: John Sutherland reported that he has contacted Bugbee Insulation, who are scheduled to insulate the East wall and expect to do the task mid-March. John and Mike Dunham will follow up.

*Julian Scott House update: John Sutherland reported that a “walk-around” is scheduled for 12 March 2026 at 9 AM with representatives from the State Planning Office, Historic Preservation, and others. It will be an opportunity to gather information about what if anything in the building is historically significant and should be preserved.

Requests for information: Dick Simays reported that he met with a Sterling College student and provided information to help with his electrification project. The student will provide a copy of the final report to Dick for the Historical Society.

Lois Frey reported she and Dean West met with James Giesler, an attorney gathering information about the Talc Mine and Mill operation in Johnson. James viewed and took pictures of the operations contained in the resource material belonging to the Historical Society. Dean was able to provide answers to many of his questions. James noted Dean’s presentation on the video *This Place in History: Johnson Talc Mine and Mill* (2018) which he had viewed.

Dick Simays reported that he responded to EBI Communications that the Johnson Historical Society saw no impact from the proposed project on top of Dibden on the VSS-Johnson campus.

*Acquisitions: Dean West donated an Ebenezer Book Store bookmark and a Johnson State College key fob.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:30 AM.

Minutes recorded by Lois Frey, Recording Secretary.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, 8 April 2026 at 9 AM at the Holcomb House.