

JOHNSON RAIL TRAIL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2026

Present:

Committee Members: Jan Gearhart, Daniel Langevin, Doug Molde, Kim Dunkley, Mary Lou Kopas (remote)

Others: Charles Flaum

Absent: BJ Putvain, Lynda Hill, Adrian Schmidt

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

No quorum was present initially, but an informal meeting started at 6:16. Charles Flaum showed committee members the latest version of the display to replace the map on the trailhead building and committee members suggested changes.

1. Call Meeting to Order

Doug called the meeting to order at 7:01.

2. Display to Replace Outdated LVRT map on Ted Alexander Welcome Center

Doug explained to Mary Lou, who had just joined the meeting, that the committee had looked at the display prepared by Charles to replace the LVRT map and suggested changes. Jan said she thinks the display is great,

Doug moved and Kim seconded to approve the display prepared by Charles Flaum with the edits discussed and to authorize him to get it printed.

Mary Lou what it will be printed on. Charles said the material used for political signs, with grommets to attach it. It is made to be outside. The cost to print it will be around \$160.

The motion was passed. (Charles left at 7:06.)

3. Consider Approving Minutes of June 18, 2026

Jan moved to approve the minutes of June 18, 2026, Dan seconded and the motion was passed.

4. Bike Rack Agreements and Installation

Doug had previously sent out a copy of the agreement with the town for property owners who have bike racks on their properties. Erik Bailey is willing to sign one for the bike rack on village property, but do we want to ask the village to sign it? It was written for private parties. John Sutherland doesn't care whether the village signs an agreement. Doug suggests not asking the village to sign one.

Jan said Erik agreed the village bike rack can be put in place for this year without a concrete slab poured. The village employees are too busy to pour the slab. We can put it on the grass. It has to be moved and put into storage during the winter. If it gets damaged, she feels the village needs to be responsible for repairs. Doug said that would be a good reason to have them sign the agreement. Jan said she thinks they should.

Mary Lou recommended some edits to the language of the agreement to make it more appropriate for an agreement between the town and village. Doug agreed the edits should be made.

Mary Lou moved to direct Doug Molde to work with John Sutherland to edit the bike rack agreement to develop a version appropriate for the village and to direct Mary Lou to ask Erik

Bailey to sign the edited agreement on behalf of the village, Kim seconded and the motion was passed.

The committee discussed the locations where the benches will be installed. Kim and Jan agreed on which property owners they will each talk to about signing the agreement and installing the bike racks.

It was agreed to try to schedule delivery of the bike racks and benches for the afternoon of Monday, July 20.

5. *Committee's Available Funds, Commitments and Proposed Expenditures*

Mary Lou asked if Doug can confirm that we received \$20K and \$2K grants from the Vermont Community Foundation. Doug said he doesn't know where the \$2K came from, but Rosemary told him we had received it.

Doug said we have a September 30 grant deadline, but he believes we could get an extension. Mary Lou said we asked the town to roll the unspent funds over to the next year. Doug said he asked John to put that on the selectboard agenda and John checked and found that because those are grant funds they don't get converted to town funds if they remain unspent at the end of the fiscal year.

Doug said Charles said today that his costs for the display were around \$2K. Jan said that doesn't include printing but he said that would only cost \$150. Doug said \$150 or \$160. Doug suggested counting on an overall cost of \$2500 for the display.

Doug said the committee's budget doesn't include money to pay a minute taker. Donna said when she started taking minutes for the rail trail committee, the selectboard agreed that the town would cover the cost outside of the committee's budget. Doug said he does not think they are continuing to do that.

Doug said Carl Rogers just submitted the Act 250 application for the stone steps. He is sure the permit will not be here by September 30. He thinks we need to get an updated cost estimate for the stone steps. We will have to put out an RFP for a contractor.

Jan asked, what if we don't do the steps? Kim said she has felt the project was ridiculous, given the cost. People can just walk down the hill. Steps seem unnecessary. Jan said she is worried people will ride bikes down the steps, which would be dangerous. Doug said many hours of work have gone into this project so far. He thinks it should go forward. Dan said it may be that we will not be able to get an extension of the deadline to use the VCF money. Mary Lou said we have money from Eddie Gale with no strings attached. Doug said he was told VCF would likely give an extension if we need one. He will check on whether we can get a grant extension.

Mary Lou said the amount of money we have left depends on how much the stone steps cost. Jan said it also depends on how much we have to pay Charles.

Doug said he will check with the person who gave the estimate on the stone steps to find out how much the project would cost now.

6. *Schedule Completion of Installation of Kiosk and LVRT Regional Map*

Jan said she talked to Brian Currier today. He said he can finish installation of the kiosk, but he needs to get the parts from Adrian. The roof is on, but not properly. Brian offered to do it. Jan would like to ask Adrian to give Brian the parts and let Brian finish it. It would not be too much work for Brian.

Mary Lou asked if Brian will charge us more to do that. Jan said she told him we would be glad to pay, but he may pass on that. The board agreed that Jan can arrange for Brian to finish the kiosk installation and can discuss payment with him.

7. Other Business

Doug said VTrans has come up with the idea of contracting to have someone install pause places trailwide on the LVRT. We had two places we wanted pause places. If we participated, there would be a local match of about \$5K. He thinks we should decline to participate. The board agreed. Doug said that cost is just for a study of where to put the benches.

Doug said the selectboard has adopted a policy saying that a committee can't apply for a grant without permission of the selectboard. His question is who will help us apply for grants. Dan said the idea of the survey he designed is that after we have results, it can help us get grant funds.

Is there a list of grants? Doug said we asked Randall Szott, the previous Community and Economic Development Specialist, to develop that. In the past, the committee has always brought grant applications to the town. Kyle Nuse did a lot of that work. He feels we need direction from the selectboard. They voted to make the CEDS position 24 hours per week. Carl is using that time and does not have time to add anything else. Adrienne Parker has been sending out a list of available grants and he thinks it looks good, but he doesn't know who would do the applications. He asked if he can ask Adrienne to send the list of available grants to someone else. Dan said it can be sent to him. Jan said she can also send Dan the list of potential grants Kyle had come up with.

Committee members agreed to put up flyers around town telling people about the survey.

Doug said he got a letter in June about rail trail friendly businesses. Fifteen businesses are listed in Johnson. Only 2 are qualified as rail trail friendly, but that may not matter. Rail trail friendly businesses are shown with a little halo on the map. To be designated rail trail friendly, businesses have to fill out a survey. They have to have a bathroom available and have a map up. He thinks there are more than 15 businesses that could be listed and we should try to list others. The board agreed to talk about rail trail friendly businesses at the next meeting.

Kim asked if "Share the road" signs went up on Railroad Street. Others said sharrows have been painted on the road, but there are no signs. Kim asked who she should contact about getting "Share the road" signs put up. Doug said Local Motion got money from Friends of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail. They are going to provide services to Lamoille Valley towns. Jackie Cassino suggested signage where the rail trail crosses Railroad Street and signs to bring people into the community. "Share the road" signs would likely fall under that effort. *(Kim left at 8:08.)*

Committee members discussed good locations for flyers about the survey. Dan said he will do a Front Porch Forum post about the survey.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12.