JOHNSON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MONDAY, AUGUST 3, 2026

Present: Selectboard members: Mike Dunham, Peter Hammond, Adrienne Parker, Eben Patch, Paul Warden
Others: John Sutherland, Lydia Putvain, Carl Rogers, Tasha Wallis, Lois Frey, Diana Osborn, Mollie Flanigan, Howard Romero, Casey Romero, Noel Dodge, Justin Mason (remote), Martha Macchia, Cathy Fuller, Susan Tinker

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. ***Call to Order***
   Paul called the meeting to order at 6:30.
2. ***Consider Additions or Adjustments to Agenda***
   Adrienne suggested tabling the events committee item because the board had not invited anyone to participate. The board agreed to that. Mike added discussion of meeting once a month rather than twice.
3. ***Public Comment and Public Announcements***
   No members of the public wished to comment.
4. ***Selectboard Updates and/or Concerns***
   Paul thanked Charles and Morna Flaum for conceiving and pulling off the Blueberry Festival and thanked all the volunteers who were involved. It took a lot of work.

   Paul reminded the board that there would be a meeting on August 5 at 6:00 for interviews.

   Peter agreed with Paul's comments about the Blueberry Festival. Other board members agreed as well.

   Eben asked where we stand with paving this summer. John said Ryan is working on Sinclair Road right now. We are still waiting to hear from VTrans on our $200K paving grant for Wilson Road. We can't get started until we are notified. Eben asked, we might not pave this summer? John said he will try to get an update from VTrans about when we will be notified.

   Eben said in John's report from Friday there was a comment about a meeting with a structural engineer on August 4 to sign off on changes made for which the town will incur additional cost. Eben is curious about what the changes are. In the report the contractor sent, there was a question about whether we are going with concrete or granite steps. The board previously said we would need to know what granite steps would cost.

   Paul said he asked John to follow up with the library board about how much funding they will have available. We need to know that to make decisions.

   Paul said as he understands it, the steps would not be solid granite; they would be granite pads on concrete. He asked if that is what other board members are envisioning. Mike said he feels the face has to be all granite. The base could be concrete.

Paul said we need to know the cost and how much money is available before making a decision. Eben said we need to know what the structural changes are that were mentioned in the report and what they will cost.

Peter said the original engineer had designed the floor a certain way. We parted ways with that engineer. Now we need a different engineer to sign off on the floor as it currently exists. He believes the cost is for the engineer's inspection of the floor. Eben asked to get more clarity on that cost.

5. ***Consent Agenda***
The consent agenda consisted of the minutes of July 20, 2026. **Mike moved to approve the consent agenda, Eben seconded and the motion was passed.**

6. ***Clerk and Treasurer's Report: Warrants, Licenses and Any Action Items***
Lydia said the primary election will be August 11. She and Susan are preparing for it. The office will be closed that day. They did tabulator testing July 24. Three justices of the peace participated.

She provided current year and previous year budget status reports. Rosemary indicated that a few more entries need to be made for the previous year. Lydia will work with her on those this week. Taxes are flowing in nicely. So far, more often than not people are paying for the full year.

There is a $5K donation coming in for the library. They are close to being in the black. We got an $18K reimbursement for Holmes Meadow. It looks like there may be one more reimbursement.

Lydia said at the last meeting we talked about buyout properties and the education tax for those that were closed on after April 1. The town is responsible for that tax. We will receive reimbursement from the state for municipal tax only, which is about 25% of the tax bill. Eben asked, the total cost will be about $4-6K? Lydia said yes.

Lydia said we got more opioid settlement money – about $1,500. Last time we split the money between Jenna's Promise and North Central Vermont Recovery Center. The board can decide where to send this money. It doesn't have to be decided tonight.

Paul said he thought he had heard quite a bit more money would be coming in. He wonders if we should wait until we get more. He suggested trying to figure out who to ask about how much we can expect overall. He had previously suggested we could contact the schools and see if some of the money could be used there for prevention.

Lydia said Jim Barlow, the tax attorney, sent out 17 demand letters to people with delinquent taxes. She has gotten four agreements so far. Jim gave them a deadline of next week.

Lydia said RHR Smith & Company gave us audit pricing. We can save about $670 if we hire them for 2 years rather than one. It doesn't seem that there are many other companies doing audits. They have been fine to work with. If we went with 2 years the cost would be $23,700 for FY26 and $26,200 for FY27. If we hire them for just one year the cost would be $24,370. There is $11,000 in the audit reserve fund.

Paul said he thinks we should go out to bid. We should tell them that we are bound by our procurement policy. Eben said he thinks we should try to do what we did last time. We asked for bids for 3 years of single-year installments. We can't sign a contract to bind a future selectboard, but we can sign a contract that automatically renews unless we notify the firm.

Eben asked why the report shows a negative number for taxes. Lydia said we will get a bill from the school in November and then it will look more accurate.

Eben asked when we can expect the previous fiscal year to be closed out. Lydia said Rosemary is coming on Thursday. She said some of the reserve funds have been funded, but some have not. She and Rosemary will work on that.

7. ***Tasha Wallis Updates Selectboard on LCPC Services***

Tasha Wallis, executive director of the Lamoille County Planning Commission, said every couple of years she tries to visit with all the selectboards and trustees to talk about LCPC services, make sure they are helping in all the ways they can, and see whether there are any projects or ideas that haven't been discussed with LCPC. She also wants to talk about a big grant LCPC has for the next 4 years to assist communities.

Tasha reviewed things LCPC is currently working on. They are providing assistance with buyouts as requested. Modeling has demonstrated that a number of the buyout properties could be useful for flood mitigation and management. She would encourage the town to look to that use first for those properties. The town might want to use the Sterling Market property for a park or field. LCPC would be happy to work with the town on projects for buyout properties. Some properties will go through a brownfields assessment process to determine what is and isn't there. LCPC and another regional planning commission that got funding for brownfields work will be working with the town on that.

Tasha said working with the Agency of Natural Resources on getting the gravel pit designated as a facility is very important to the future success of a lot of projects because the town will need a place to move material, especially for flood mitigation projects. Paul said the selectboard hasn't decided whether to pursue that. Tasha said she would like the board to give that option serious consideration. The town would not be required to take soil from other communities.

Tasha said LCPC got a million dollar planning grant through CDBG Disaster Recovery to work with communities on flood restoration and mitigation planning. There are several components to that. One is mitigation planning and project development. That will involve working with the town to identify solutions the town wants. Another component is critical facilities and service planning and project development. Another is community adaptation planning and project development. That is pretty broad and could possibly include things like form-based code related to flood resilience or building away from the river. She would like to see the selectboard and village trustees have a joint meeting with LCPC so LCPC can be clear that the projects and processes they proceed with are what all want.

Tasha said Tori Hellwig and Seth Jensen of LCPC will participate in the RERC meetings on August 27 and 28.

Tasha asked if there are things LCPC could do better. Paul said LCPC staff have been extraordinarily helpful. He is very impressed and grateful for their services.

Mike asked for more information on the brownfield assessments. He hears talk around town about the town cleaning up properties for people to receive a check. Is some government grant going to clean up hazardous waste sites before a check is given to property owners?

Tasha said the brownfield work is to look at what is there and how it can be cleaned up so the community can proceed with its priorities. There is brownfields funding for the assessments. Possibly we can get funding for cleanup.

Mike asked, the property owner is not responsible for the mess? Tasha said this is a federal program. The idea is to assist communities by doing assessments and cleanup. After they clean up, the former owner is no longer liable. It is a helpful tool for communities. There may be properties that previously had an industrial use that can be reused after cleanup, like an MSI building in Morrisville that was an old industrial property. There was an assessment and cleanup and the building was able to be reused.

Mike said people buy properties knowing there is hazardous material, and now someone else is going to clean up the mess they are responsible for and they will receive a check? Is the cost of cleanup deducted from their check? Are the landowners going to pay for any of the messes they made?

Tasha said first we will find out what mess is there. Many properties have been used in multiple ways. Some waste might be from the current owner and some might be from a previous owner who did not pay anything for cleanup. This program is designed by the federal government to help communities deal with this. It will help the community do the buyout, do the required analysis, and then be able to move forward with flood mitigation work. The community benefits from that.

Mike said people who have the money to pay to clean up their own messes are going to get off scot-free.

Paul asked, there is money for investigation, but not necessarily for cleanup? Tasha said yes. The current funding is for investigation.

Peter asked, if when properties are assessed we discover there are hazardous materials, is the town as new owner of the property responsible for cleanup? Tasha said LCPC tries to find money for cleanup. Even if hazardous materials are found, they may not need to be addressed, depending on how deep they are.

Paul asked if we take ownership prior to assessment. Tasha said yes. But she would not worry. The town can decide what to do with the properties after we find out the cleanup cost.

Tasha said in some communities there have been low-income people whose home was flooded and who did not realize there was a brownfield on their property. Eben said he doesn't know that the previous owner is 100% absolved. But generally the easier path is to get the cleanup done if there is federal money available. Adrienne said one property owner may have money to pay for cleanup but another may not. Why don’t we care about the people who don’t have anything? Mike said he cares about the people who don’t have anything, because the cost is coming out of their taxes to benefit those who do have money.

Adrienne asked how the planning grant is distributed among towns. Tasha said it will be used for all towns, but especially those most affected by flooding.

Adrienne asked if LCPC will come to the board with ideas for planning projects. Tasha said yes. Everything they do will be based on the town's ideas, but they want to make sure the process moves forward and sometimes they will need to say that there are constraints that will keep an idea from being usable.

Adrienne said she used to be on the planning commission and they were working on the town plan at that time. She noticed the approach seemed to be that LCPC wrote the whole plan and then came to the town for feedback on each section. Tasha said the town does not have planning staff, so LCPC meets with the planning commission and the planning commission says what they want covered in each chapter and the points that they want to be made. LCPC staff then can work on it. LCPC can also point out things that need to be included because they are required by statute. Adrienne said she didn't think the town had enough input before the first draft. Tasha said it is important to get input, not just from the planning commission but also from public outreach. She encourages the town to start preparing for work on the next town plan 2 or 3 years ahead of time and have a public process for input. Paul said last time we started 2 years in advance but we did not get much public input. Tasha suggested a visioning process.

Diana Osborn asked about the visioning project that was done in the past. She was anticipating a meeting that never happened. It was canceled and was going to be rescheduled. Paul said the visioning project was canceled because it seemed redundant to some of the other things that were going on and it didn't seem to have a concrete focus. We did cancel the second meeting. But it was a small portion of the overall Reimagine Johnson effort. Diana said community members often don't see the fruits of the things they participate in.

Tasha said part of that visioning process was through a grant from the Vermont Council on Rural Development and their funding ran out. But a lot of the discussions will provide a great starting point for work we are doing now. Paul said there will be a series of public input events related to the Lowe Lecture Hall, the Sterling Market property, etc. Adrienne said the Legion Field planning resulted in a map and we have hired a person to do work there. Tasha said, regarding public input, when LCPC was working on the new land use maps, Johnson always wanted a bigger designated village area and with the new law, LCPC was able to do that. That will create new opportunities for visioning.

8. ***Gomo Property Easement***

Mollie Flanigan of the Green Mountain Club said she was here on June 15 with a request for a trail right of way easement in the Gomo Forest. After the discussion at that meeting she worked with Paul to come up with three different scenarios. A table comparing them was sent to the board. Any of the three options would be welcomed by the Green Mountain Club. Paul said in addition to the easement, the Green Mountain Club is also asking for the right of first refusal if the property is ever sold. They would like the opportunity to match any offer we are seriously considering. We would have to have lawyers help figure out the best wording.

Eben asked, our town attorney is advising against giving right of first refusal, right? Paul said not really. The attorney explained that it is typically called right of first refusal, but it doesn't just apply to the first offer; it applies to the best offer. Eben said the attorney had concerns because it would be filed as an easement deed, not a warranty deed, and as the board changes it might get lost and not found in future deed research. Paul said our attorney would need to work with the GMC attorneys to nail down on the language. But first, the board needs to decide whether it wants to proceed with an easement and if so, which easement option we would like.

Mike asked why it can't be left the way it is. Mollie said this is part of GMC's ongoing effort to protect the trail. There is just 4.5 miles of the Long Trail that does not have a legal arrangement protecting it. They are looking to get as close as possible to 100%.

Adrienne asked, the GMC would take care of the land and trail covered by the easement, right? Mollie said they would take care of the area covered by the right of way. Most of the Gomo Forest would not be covered. Adrienne said we would get money for the easement and we would not have to take care of part of land. Currently we don't take care of the property on either side of the trail. She thinks it is good that GMC would take care of that.

Peter and Adrienne both said they are in favor of Option A. Paul said Option A is more in our favor than what was proposed at the previous meeting. The easement is proposed to be 500 ft. centered on the trail, not 1000 ft. And the Green Mountain Club is offering to contribute $10,000 toward a survey of the Gomo lot. That is enough to pay for the whole survey. Previously they were offering $5,000.

Mike said he could support Option C, modified to say that there will be no cost to the town for the survey or legal review and if the duration of the right of first refusal is changed from 30 days to 20 days.

Paul said we previously decided that we wanted to survey the Gomo property. Mike said the taxpayers shouldn't have to pay anything for the survey. Peter said the taxpayers were going to spend $10,000 for the survey. Adrienne said now they would not have to. The GMC would pay for it with Option A.

Mike said he does not want Option A. Why give away 500 feet of town property? Adrienne asked what Mike wants to happen with the town forest. Does he want it to stay a town forest? Mike said yes. But we can give them a 20 ft. right of way. Adrienne said the more property we give, the less we have to maintain. Eben said GMC won't maintain anything but the trail. But if they had an easement, the trail could potentially be made better because they would be more willing to invest funds in trail maintenance if they knew they could not be kicked off the property. Mollie said that is an important factor.

Paul said he thinks we should support this. He thinks Option A is very fair. We would be signing away 13 acres, but we are currently not doing anything with it.

<u>Adrienne moved and Peter seconded to direct the town's attorney to work with Green Mountain Club attorneys to determine the necessary steps to proceed with granting the Green Mountain Club a 500-ft. easement as described in Option A and to proceed with granting a right of first refusal to the Green Mountain Club.</u>

Eben asked if the conservation commission is fine with this. Conservation commission members present said yes.

Eben asked about keeping an easement for power across the trail. Adrienne said her motion does not include that.

The motion was passed with Mike opposed and Eben abstaining.

9. ***Industrial Park Bid Documents***

Carl said a draft invitation to bid and instructions to bidders were included in the meeting packet. He sent them to Pat Ripley of the Lamoille Economic Development Corporation, who thought they looked fine, and to Luke Willey at Mumley. He hasn't heard back from Luke. He is asking the board to approve them. Mumley needs to prepare bid forms. Construction plans will be available. And he has a list of 15 appendices to the bid package. He has to go through the NBRC requirements very carefully to make sure Mumley picked up every one. There might be another appendix added on.

Eben moved and Peter seconded to accept the Invitation to Bid and Instructions to Bidders for the Johnson Mixed-Use Park as presented.

Carl said questions from bidders will be directed to him. As needed, he will then go to Mumley to get technical assistance. Bidders can acquire the plans from Mumley for a $50 fee. Mumley can keep a master list of contractors who pick them up in case revisions are needed.

Eben asked if the invitation to bid will be posted on Works in Progress. Carl said it might be. It will be mailed to local contractors. It will be posted in three public places in town. It will be published in the newspaper and it will be on the town website and Front Porch Forum. We have to reach out to minority-owned businesses. The due date will probably be a minimum of 3 weeks from when the bid packages go out. Bid opening will probably be a week before a report needs to be given to John to include in the meeting packet.

The motion was passed with Mike opposed.

10. ***Community Food Shelf / Old Mill House***

Martha Macchia said she and Cathy Fuller are here to talk about the food shelf and how it serves the local community. This is somewhat in reaction to discussion about potential sale of the current home of the food shelf. They have provided food and supplies to people in need since about 1993. They currently serve about 400 people per month. Some of those people are working and are still unable to meet their needs. Cathy said areas served by the food shelf include Johnson, Hyde Park, Waterville, Eden and Belvidere. Home deliveries are made to some shut-ins. The food shelf has 46 volunteers. Meals on Wheels helps deliver some food.

Cathy said their biggest concern is a potential sale of the mill house. She would like to know if any selectboard members know of another place the food shelf could use if the building was sold. Will they will be able to stay there? When will the board let them know if they have to move?

Mike said if it was up to him he would give them the building. A community trust could be formed and it could get grants to maintain the building.

Paul said the building is jointly owned by the town and village. There has been no decision about what to do with it. He asked if food shelf volunteers have had any conversations with the college. Martha said there is some potential for a conversation with the college. They looked into the Union Bank building before they discovered it was in the floodplain. There is a possibility of exploration on their end to find a potential home. But they are all volunteers and would need support with grant writing and help with financial management if they occupied a building they were responsible for. Cathy said all the donations and grants they get go for food, not to the volunteers.

Peter said there is no timetable for a decision. He thinks the board would agree that we would not surprise the food shelf with having to move. He would hope we would be in constant communication with the food shelf about any plans.

Cathy said the mill house needs a lot of help. There is a broken window or two. There are a couple of holes that should be sealed around the chimney area. She doesn't know who she should call if there is no heat in the building. Paul said she should contact John or Erik Bailey. Mike said he was told that the thermostat is in the room that used to be the electric department office, which is locked and can't be accessed. He doesn’t think the village uses that office anymore. It should be opened up so the food shelf could have more room and could control the thermostat. Cathy said they used to use that area but the village used it while their garage was being rebuilt. Paul said he reached out to Ken Tourangeau to see if it is possible for the food shelf to use it but he hasn’t heard back yet. John said he talked to Erik Bailey about it. The village used it to store personnel records while the village garage was being worked on, but now they are cleaning it out.

Eben said he personally would like to see the food shelf move, with support from the town, so the building could be used for tourism for the rail trail.

Adrienne said she is a big proponent of the work the food shelf does. She thinks there are some things we need to do now with the current location and we need to make plans for the future. She thinks right now we need to know the status of the building. She does not think it is working not taking care of the building. We need to make a plan with the village to maintain the building. At food shelf meetings there have been discussions about the food shelf contributing to the CEDS salary so the CEDS can apply for grants for the food shelf. She doesn't know if they are still interested in that, but she thinks that is a good idea. Martha said they haven't voted on that yet.

11. Assessor Reports Errors and Omissions Related to Commitment

Justin said the errors and omissions certificate updates the value of the Village of Johnson utility. The Village of Johnson is exempt from paying property tax within village limits on its own grand list but under 32 V.S.A. § 3659, they now have to pay town taxes on utility property that is on the town grand list. The value going from exempt to taxable is $2,773,900. That results in a tax bill of about $80,518 on the 2026 grand list. Tax rates have already been set for the village and town. If the selectboard decides to approve this change, it would be an addition to the funds raised. This value was reported to the state by the village and then came back to the town. One reason for the errors and omissions certificate is that there was some confusion between the town and state about the way our grand list and tax bills are set up, with separate tax bills for the village and the town. That has been clarified.

Paul said if we approve this change, the village will be stuck with an unexpected tax bill. What are the alternatives to approving it? Justin said the board can choose not to approve it. In that case, he will go to the state and let them know and they will have a discussion about whether that will affect our CLA. If the selectboard does approve it, the village can pay the bill or they can appeal the valuation or ask for taxes to be waived or reduced.

Village treasurer Ashley Isabelle wanted Justin to share that the village wants an opportunity to review the documentation submitted. If the selectboard approves the change tonight, he will send them a change of appraisal notice and they will have time to review the documentation and appeal if they feel there is an error.

Paul asked if there has been communication with the village to date. Justin said there has. He has included Ashley in communications about this and once he got the verdict from the state he contacted Ashley, Rosemary and Ken Tourangeau.

Eben moved to table this item until the next meeting. He said he is torn because he would not extend this courtesy for another municipal electric utility that had property in our town, but he would like to allow the village time to review this. However, we have never once rejected an errors and omissions certificate. **Peter seconded.**

Paul said he thinks that is reasonable. This is something the state changed. The state apparently didn't have it right last year. Peter said he would hope in our deliberations we would recognize the impact of $80,000 on a small municipality. Eben asked, would we recognize that if it were any other municipality? He struggles with setting a precedent of favoritism. Justin said if this had been found prior to lodging the grand list, this would not be a selectboard decision.

The motion was passed.

Eben asked, if we did not approve the errors and omissions certificate, would we be liable for the education tax? Justin said he needs to talk to someone about it, but he thinks the worst case scenario is that our CLA could drop significantly if we choose to value the property at zero rather than the actual value. Eben said CLA affects our PILOT payment. Our PILOT payment could be drastically lower. We need to know how our CLA will be affected. Justin said he will do his best to get a definite answer.

12. *Skate Park Water Project*

John said previously there was a water line from the shed to the skate park. That line no longer works. Casey Romero has asked what can be done to put in another water line from the shed to the skate park. She got a quote from Greg Fatigate of about $4,700 to dig with an excavator to put in the line. John asked Ryan how long he thought it would take the public works crew to do the job. Ryan thought it would take no longer than a couple of days. John wants direction from the board about whether we should use a contractor or have the town public works crew do the work.

Peter asked, if the public works crew did it, would that in any way help with the fact that there is a camp at the park next week? Casey said she thinks it is too late for that.

Casey said she thinks it is a better idea to have the town do the work because they can coordinate easily with the village and they have the supplies on hand. There is a Vermont Community Foundation grant of up to $5Kwith no match for sudden and urgent needs. We need to send the grant application in by Wednesday or Thursday and decisions will be made by on August 10. It is very simple grant application that Casey can write.

Mike said he has no problem with the town doing this as long as we are reimbursed.

Eben moved and Adrienne seconded upon grant acceptance to authorize John Sutherland to work with Casey Romero to have the Johnson public works crew prepare for installation of a new water line at the skate park if they are able to do it or to have a contractor do the work if the public works crew is not able.

Casey said historically the public works crew had documents telling them what to charge for different types of work. They no longer have them. Ryan googled to find out how much this type of work costs in our area. He found prices ranging from $90 to $180 per hour. So it was decided to use Greg Fatigate's hourly rate of $125. If the public works department finds their pricing documents, we can change the number, but right now that is what she is using.

Noel Dodge said when other town groups have asked for the public works crew to do work for them (the water line to the arboretum or tree grates, for example), they have been told no. He is curious whether this is a policy change. Paul said his understanding is that the board has felt the crew could do work for groups if they could fit it in. They have not given a hard no. Eben said there is a different selectboard every year. The tree grates are not on town property. Paul said his personal view is that we want the public works crew to help committees as much as possible without compromising their other work. Peter said he doesn't know that the board has ever made a hard and fast rule. Adrienne said no, but we have turned down other groups in the past who have asked for the public works crew to do work. Noel said he encourages the board to write a policy on this that says the town crew can help if they are available.

Diana Osborn said she thinks town-owned properties should have water. She doesn't see why this is up for debate. The committee is taking responsibility and fulfilling a town obligation.

Peter asked if the skate park committee is taking donations to provide drinking water for the skateboard camp. Casey said they can supply drinking water for $30 or so. The fire department has offered to provide rinse water. She is putting the $30 for drinking water into the grant budget.

The motion was passed.

13. *Tree Removal Behind Library*

John said Howard Romero mentioned that there were two trees leaning toward the library that would be in the way when he puts in his road and asked if we should put out an RFP for taking them down. John asked Ryan if the public works crew could remove them and Ryan said he thought they could. John was going to ask the board first, but the public works crew went ahead and took them down. Then he learned from Noel Dodge that there is a procedure that should be followed before trees are removed.

Noel said he thinks that process would not have applied to those trees. It applies to trees that are not sick or unhealthy or a public hazard. He would have looked at those trees and said they were a public hazard. He talked to Ryan about them. They were leaning over the building and the electric box.

Howard said one tree he flagged is still standing. The board agreed that John should work with Noel to look at the remaining tree before removing it.

Howard said it would be nice if the stumps of the trees could be pulled, but if that is not possible he can probably live with it.

14. Gomo Forestry Contract

Eben moved and Adrienne seconded to approve the timber sale contract for the Gomo Town Forest as presented. Eben said the board's questions have been answered and the procurement policy has been followed. **The motion was passed.**

15. Call In Pay

John said at the last meeting there was discussion about Ryan receiving on-call pay. Part of the discussion was that the union contract specifies $125 per week for on-call pay. Ryan was on call for 8 weeks so the board approved paying $1,000. But the union contract says that on-call pay is only for winter. John wanted to ask the board how they felt about the vote and the precedent. One option is to put in the personnel policy that going forward all on-call time during non-winter months would be $50/week.

Paul said this would take effect in the next union contract. He asked if John had had a chance to talk to Ryan or the union steward. Eben said he talked to him. Eben would still like to honor what we already did at the last meeting. Moving forward, the board needs to pick a value for non-winter on-call pay. Fifty percent of what is in the union contract makes sense to him. John said $50/week is what Jason was getting when he was on call.

Mike read from the July 20 minutes. He said it was a mistake for Eben to bring up the issue of on-call pay after learning about it. If the employee had a problem, he should have gone to his immediate supervisor. The comments made at the meeting about $125 week on-call pay being in the contract were mistaken, because the contract states that this pay is for winter. If Ryan had gone to his immediate supervisor, who is John, maybe John would have looked into the contract and said that the previous foreman was getting $50/week, not $125. Ryan should have gotten $800, not $1000. The town should not go to the union unless the union talks to us first. There is a grievance process union employees have to follow. It is not the job of the selectboard to interfere with union contracts or get involved with making motions to pay people something they do not deserve according to the union contract.

Eben said no employee called him. The issue was mentioned to him during a conversation about something else. He felt it was wrong and he felt we should repair it. He is sorry if Mike does not like the amount. The contract says nothing about union employees being on call in summer. But he thinks Mike would be unhappy if no one was on call. Moving forward, the question is how much per week employees should get for being on call outside of winter. He is fine with whatever the board picks.

Paul said he thinks Mike has a point about the process we probably should have followed. What is in the contract is $125, which the board approved. John has the suggestion that we proceed with that and henceforth go with $50 a week, which is what Jason was getting in summer. Paul thinks that is a fair compromise. We can ask the union if they will accept it as an interim measure until the next union contract is ratified.

Eben said he agrees he made a mistake but he is standing by his motion. Peter said once an employee becomes aware of a decision the board makes, he thinks it is not fair to go back on it. Paul said he thinks Ryan has done a nice job standing in as foreman – a job he doesn't want and didn't ask for.

<u>Eben moved to honor the $1,000 on-call payment previously approved and to contact the union about developing an interim agreement for $50 per week on-call pay in summer, Peter seconded and the motion was passed with Mike opposed.</u>

16. Lendway Lane

John said Ryan brought to his attention that when Mark was grading he noticed some slumping on Lendway Lane. John took some photos last week. Today he saw that major movement of the ground has taken place. He reached out to VTrans and left a message to see if they can point him in the right direction to get engineering done for bank stabilization and an emergency permit for work. Ryan will put out stakes to mark the unstable area. His goal tonight is just to bring this to the board's attention. He noted that Tasha Wallis had some concerns about putting in rip rap because it could create issues downstream. But we need to do something. He would go with rip rap. Adrienne said there are other forms of stabilization we could explore.

17. Update Personnel Policy

John said he suggests updating the personnel policy to add $50 per week on-call pay for summer. That is the only change he is talking about tonight.

Mike said he thinks it is not fair for one individual to be on call constantly. It should be shared among all employees. Paul asked, hasn't it historically just been the foreman who has been on call? Adrienne said she feels like the foreman should receive the call and then see who can fulfill the need. Eben said in summer that is often how it works.

Lydia brought up the previous conversation about possibly getting short-term disability coverage for employees vs. having the second bank. There was also the question of long-term disability, which the town currently does have for employees. Susan said the first bank is the only one anyone has hours in.

Lydia said she doesn’t think we need the catastrophic bank because it is essentially long-term disability, which we have. The second bank is valuable if we don’t have a short-term disability policy. But she thinks short-term disability would be more valuable to employees because currently employees have to earn the time in the second bank and use up all their CTO before they can use the time in the second bank. She would prefer short-term disability to the second bank.

Peter said one part of the personnel policy says an employee shall not interfere with or affect nomination or election of any candidate for public office in the Town of Johnson. Shouldn’t that be any candidate anywhere and not just limited to the Town of Johnson? Paul asked what actions are prohibited by that statement. Can you circulate a petition for someone? Can you speak on their behalf? Can you endorse them? Peter said he sees that it says an employee shall not use his or her official authority to interfere with or affect nominations or elections. Given that, the language seems okay as is.

Peter said he would like to see the statement about immediate dismissal for using illegal drugs or alcohol on the job changed to refer to being under the influence instead of or in addition to using. The current language doesn't address employees who come to work under the influence. Eben pointed out that we may need to add marijuana, because it is a legal drug.

Eben suggested that Peter write down any comments about other parts of the personnel policy. John said Peter can send the comments to him.

18. Update Procurement Policy

John said now that we have a separate clerk and treasurer he wants to add Lydia as a purchasing authority in the procurement policy. Currently it only mentions the town clerk. He also made some changes to the bid opening wording.

Eben said he would like to ask Carl, if we make these changes now, does it affect the industrial park bidding? Should we change the wording now or wait until the industrial park bids are in? Paul said he thinks we are covered since we gave Carl permission to go outside the existing procurement policy that was in effect. Eben suggested running it by Carl. The board can approve the policy at the next meeting if Carl says it will not cause an issue.

19. Discussion on Meeting Once Per Month

Mike said he was the one who suggested that the selectboard have two meetings a month. He thought, and he thinks the rest of the board thought, that it would result in meetings ending earlier and having less on each agenda. But it seems there is just as much on each agenda as when the board had one meeting a month. He would have no problem with going back to one meeting a month. He suggested trying that for a while to see how it goes.

Eben said he feels like every year there has been more going on. He thinks it would be tough to meet only once a month. We would need a way to approve orders more often than once a month.

Mike said it seems like some other boards move along more quickly during their meetings. Paul said when he was on the Lamoille FiberNet board, their meetings moved quickly. A lot happened behind the scenes. Motions were written out ahead of time. It was more efficient, but there was more work outside meetings and it limited the ability of the public to contribute. It is hard to keep selectboard agendas under 20 items as it is.

Adrienne said she has watched Morristown selectboard meetings. She thinks they move fast because they have a town manager and a full-time CEDS and more full-time employees. So there is more going on behind the scenes. Eben said the town manager form of government removes a lot of selectboard responsibility.

Paul said he likes the idea of meeting once a month, but he is afraid the meetings would be lengthy. Adrienne suggested meetings could start at 6:00. Peter said he prefers 6:30. He would rather have two shorter meetings than one very long one.

Paul said meeting twice a month is a good way to keep things moving. Adrienne said John would have to wait longer for board decisions with one meeting a month.

Paul said he appreciates Mike saying how he really feels about issues. He feels the board should be able to have frank conversations.

20. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:16.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths