



TOWN OF ST. JOHNSBURY

51 Depot Square, Suite 1

St Johnsbury, VT 05819

802-748-4331

www.stjvt.com

Meeting of the St. Johnsbury Select Board September 14, 2020 at 6:00 PM-Pomerleau Building Select Board Meeting

Present-

Select Board: Tim Angell, Chair, Kevin Oddy, Vice Chair, Brendan Hughes, Dennis Smith, Daniel Kimbell

Staff: Chad Whitehead, Rachel Waterhouse, Joe Kasprzak, Lesley Russ (via zoom)

Press: Todd Wellington (via zoom), KATV

Public: Jim Brown, Diane Cummings, Ray Cummings, Joe Weith (via zoom), Aaron Foundery, Mathew Ghrafori.

Agenda Amendments:

- None

Public Comment:

- Diane Cummings approached the board regarding Halloween events in the town of St. Johnsbury. She stated that they have privately funded over \$1,800 to provide bags of candy to the schools in St. Johnsbury for the kids. Due to COVID the Halloween parade has been canceled. She did state however they are still hoping to do scarecrow and pumpkin carving competitions. She questioned the board if they are still planning on having trick or treating in the area.
- The Select Board thanked Diane and Ray for their continued support to the kids of St. Johnsbury.

Select Board Appointment

- On a motion by Kevin and seconded by Dennis for the select board to appoint Daniel Kimbell as a select board member for the remaining term due to expire in March of 2021. Unanimously all in favor.
- Daniel Kimbell was sworn in as a Select Board Member.
- On a motion by Dennis and seconded by Brendan to appoint Kevin Oddy and the Vice Chair of the Select Board. Unanimously all in favor. Kevin abstained.

Minutes:

- On a motion by Kevin and second by Dennis the minutes from 08/31/2020 were approved with the following corrections: Brendan was present via the phone and the Town Clerks office plan to print tax bills Tuesday 9/8/20 and mail them by Thursday 9/10/20. All in favor. Daniel abstained as he was not present for the meeting.
- On a motion by Brendan and seconded by Kevin the minutes from 08/24/2020 were approved as presented. All in favor. Daniel abstained as he was not present for the meeting.

Warrants:

- On a motion by Kevin and second by Dennis the warrants were deferred until later in the meeting. All in favor of deferring until later in the meeting.

Liquor Licenses:

- None

Finance Update:

- Lesley Russ, Financial Manager presented the select board with the August 2020 financials.
- Lesley confirmed that the Town is moving towards tax sale in the new few months.
- Dennis questioned the lacking revenue with regards to parking. It was explained by Lesley that the deficit was due to a few things including parking permits not being billed out until January and parking meters being removed and not reinstalled yet.
- Tim asked for an update with regards to the audit.
- Lesley stated she has received the draft audit to review and believes that the finalized audit information will be available at the second meeting in October.

Armory Update:

- Assistant Town Manager Joe Kasprzak provided the Select Board with an update of the Armory project.
- Joe Weith from White and Burke provided a financial analysis and update for the Select Board. The option of own vs. lease was presented to the town. Under either project the key assumption was the town would be responsible for the environmental clean-up of \$800,000-\$1.35 million. The recommendation to the Town from White and Burke was for the Town to retain ownership and self-develop the Armory.
- Tim confirmed that under either option the town was still responsible for the environmental cleanup.
- Questions from the Select Board arose regarding how the project goes from 3.75- 4 million down to 2.95 million. It was explained that the 2.95 million is net present value to the Town over a 10 year period.
- Joe Kasprzak offered to share the financial spreadsheet with the select board.
- Dennis questioned if the Town decides not to use the Armory as it is no longer attractive to the town would the space potentially be attractive to the private sector.
- The overall assumption of the financial information was to use the site as a Police Department/ Dispatch Center. This project would help lead the town and private investors in the revitalization and development of Main Street. Pertinent to note that at the completion of this project the empty current Fire Station would be another investment property for the town. And the 1187 Main Street property is of interest to the private sector.

- Daniel questioned if it made sense to bond the remediation first and then go to phase 2.
- Joe Kasprzak explained that depending on the development plans it change the way the property would need to be remediated and the grant funding requires development plans.
- Next step is to investigate and identify cleanup service awards.

Brownfield Grant Application

- SCANTECH has provided the town with a draft proposal in the amount of \$10,900 to include reports, APCA and full submittal of the EPA clean up application for a \$5,000 grant. This is a 70% discount for the town.
- NCIC has provided the town with an approximate \$6,100 grant to move forward with SCANTECH.
- Joe Kasprzak informed the Select Board of the intent to use appropriated funds in the amount of \$4,737.50 from the Main Street Project to move forward with SCANTECH.
- Tim commented that either way the town is responsible for the cleanup and this seems like the natural progression and a good move.
- Jim Brown commented that this is an important development for the town. He would like to see the information get out to the public. The Town is making progress and steps in the right direction and he would like the public to know it and have more access to it. He suggested a possible article or post in the local newspaper.

Intent to Convey Real Estate- 98 Mill Street

- The Town Manager approached the board to request the board to consider selling the property listed at 98 Mill Street. The Town acquired this property via deed 08/31/2020 as the result of tax sale. The public has 30 days to petition the intent to sell.
- On a motion by Dennis and seconded by Brendan to approve the intent to sell 98 Mill Street, St. Johnsbury, VT. Unanimously all in favor.

MRI Fire Department Contract

- The Town Manager presented the Select Board with a draft contract from MRI for an internal evaluation on the Town of St. Johnsbury's Fire Department. The contract would cost \$20,000 for 6 months and would include an evaluation of the fire department, policy, procedure and job description review, along with staff development and Chief mentorship. The funding for the contract would come out the Fire Departments current budget.
- Kevin expressed that he believed this would be a good investment as it would give the Town a look at where we are, where we need to go and help build the core strength of the department.
- On a motion by Kevin and seconded by Dennis to authorize the Town Manager to enter into a contract with MRI. Unanimously all in favor.

Warrants:

- On a motion by Kevin and seconded by Brendan the warrants were approved.

Manager's Report: Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided the following updates:

- The Town of St. Johnsbury has submitted an application to both FEMA and the State of VT for expense reimbursement regarding COVID related expenses including but not limited to overtime costs, supplies, including a proposed AV system upgrade for the Welcome Center for meeting purposes.
- The Town of St. Johnsbury in partnership with Catamount Arts and the St. Johnsbury Chamber for art and music event, outdoor market place and dining in compliance with state guidelines. The first #GETDOWNTOWN event ran on 9/12/2020 and was fairly well attended. The second #GETDOWNTOWN event will take place on 9/26/2020 from 1 pm to 4 pm on Railroad Street, at the Three Rivers Trail head and Welcome Center.
- The Town of St. Johnsbury Household Hazardous water day is scheduled for 9/26/2020 from 9 am to 1 pm at the Main Street Municipal Parking lot located behind the Fire Station.
- The Town Manager anticipates the Police Department contract to be on the next Select Board Agenda scheduled for September 28th.
- The Town is currently accepting bids for the Main Street Water Project.
- The Town Manager anticipates that the Director of DPW will be securing a bid for the Over Cliff project within the next few weeks and anticipates the project to be completed this season.
- Dennis questioned if anything had been heard from the Department of Corrections and the invitation for them to attend a Select Board Meeting. The Town Manager will follow up.

Other Business

- With the Halloween parade canceled Kevin brought up door to door trick or treating and whether the town would consider something. It was determined that it would be best to see what the Department of Health is recommending statewide before making a decision. This will be addressed again at the September 28th meeting.

On a motion by Kevin and second by Dennis the board adjourned by unanimous decision.