



# TOWN OF ST. JOHNSBURY

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51 Depot Square, Suite 1

St Johnsbury, VT 05819

802-748-4331

[www.stjvt.com](http://www.stjvt.com)

## **Meeting of the St. Johnsbury Select Board December 14, 2020 at 6:00 PM-Via Zoom 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, Jon Bouffard, Lesley Russ, Stacy Jewell, Bill Krajewski

Press: Todd Wellington, KATV

Public: Don Smith, Alice Kitchel, Patricia Janssen, Barbara Edelma

### Agenda Amendments:

- None

### Public Comments:

- None

### Minutes:

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Kevin the select board meeting minutes from 11/23/2020 were approved with the following corrections change is to if under the fire department bracket system and second bullet under the local cannabis retail ballot language to state Dennis made the comment. All in favor.

### Warrants:

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan the warrants from Nov. 11<sup>th</sup> to Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> were approved as presented. All in favor.

### Liquor Licenses:

- None

### November Finance Update:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided the board with the November Financial Update.
- General fund is on target.
- Tax Sale is scheduled for January 2021.
- Special Services fund is at 72% of their OT salary. Town has applied for a COVID grant to offset these costs.

- Town sustained \$41,188 in storm damages there were unbudgeted expenses. Director of DPW has obtained grants to help offset the cost when able.
- Tim questioned if the Town had applied for the Cares Act grant for the Special Services Department. Town Manager stated the Town is eligible for up to \$308,000 and has submitted all required documentation and should be hearing shortly on the grant.
- Dennis questions the highway expense of \$30,000 for the Undercliff Project and if Hutchins was involved. Town Manager explained that the cost of the work and the materials came in under \$35,000. With LGER and NRCD grants it should cover the cost of the Undercliff Project.

#### Grand List Adjustment:

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan the board approved the grant list adjustment for 2020 homestead # 6 in the amount of \$165.82. All in favor.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan the board approved the grand list adjustment for 2020 homestead #7 in the amount of \$456.84. All in favor.
- Bill Krajewski approached the board asking for an adjustment to the grand list for the Northern Senior Housing LP at 1207 Main Street in the amount of \$49,980.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Daniel the board approved the grand list adjustment for 2020 Northern Senior Housing LP in the amount of \$ 49,980.

#### Fire Department Software Purchase:

- Jon Bouffard, Fire Chief provided an update to the Select Board's questions from the November 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting.
- Question #1 1 year contract vs 5 year contract? Chief Bouffard informed the board that a 5 year contract was not offered. Only single year contracts were offered by ESO.
- Question #2 pertained to the cost jump in the bracket system if the department had over 12,000 calls. Chief Bouffard informed the board that the bracket system is only based on medical calls and typically the Fire Department only sees 4,000 to 7,000 medical calls a year. Fairly secure with the 12,000 call volume bracket system.
- Discussed what the software was capable of providing and the cost for transition. Explained that the annual cost would be included in the yearly budget moving forward and expect a 3% increase in cost yearly. Total cost for the first year including set up fee was quoted at \$10,038.50.
- Daniel questioned if there was a fee to convert away from the new program. Jon stated there is no termination fee and the cost to convert to another platform would be the responsibility of the new platform.
- Daniel questioned if it was worth going back to the platform that cost more. Chief Bouffard stated the higher costing program didn't have what the Town was looking for including no inspection module and no grand list link. Chief Bouffard said the other two programs would be more work and not provide the same results.
- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager stated Chief Bouffard has made room in the fire department budget to purchase this software this year and has included it in his budget for next year.
- On a motion by Daniel and second by Dennis the board approved the purchase of the Fire Department Software in the amount of \$10,038.50. All in favor.

#### Rental Housing Improvement Grant:

- Joe Kasprzak, Assistant Town Manager provided an update regarding the Rental Housing Improvement Grant Program.
- Assistant Town Manager recapped the purpose of the program was to encourage landlords to invest in their property and increase the housing stock in St. Johnsbury.
- 6 grants were awarded in 2020 in the amount of \$17,113.50.
- 2020 was a challenging first year given the pandemic. Planning for 2021 includes providing application assistance, timelines for outreach, project previews and close-out procedures.
- Currently have approximately \$40,000 in the reserve and a balance of \$13,000 left over from 2020 program year to move forward to 2021.
- Plan to come to the board in January of 2021 to request the release of \$20,000 from the restricted housing fund for the 2021 program year.
- Daniel asked if others had anything to add.
- PJ stated that she was really pleased to be a part of this housing improvement and commitment to benefit St. Johnsbury and landlords. Pleasure to work with everyone.
- Alice thanked PJ and Joe for all of their hard work and dedications to committee work. Proud of the work done.
- Daniel questioned if the committee has run into any resistances and what they have done to mitigate the resistance. Joe commented the biggest resistances has been the long term owners.
- Alice asked if Daniel has any ideas or suggestions.
- PJ commented that they are hoping to have a complete story to tell. Want to share with the community what the program is all about and help other hesitant landlords.
- Tim commented that the first year finished out with great success. Excited to see the end results and get them out to the public in hopes to entice others to sign on to the program. Thanked the housing committee and expressed appreciation for all of their hard work.
- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager commented on the good work done by all on this unique to St. Johnsbury Rental Housing Improvement Program.

#### Economic Development Reserve Transfer:

- Joe Kasprzak, Assistant Town Manager approached the board to ask them to transfer the Readiness to Serve Payment in the amount of \$30,000 to the Economic Development Reserve Funds.
- Joe Kasprzak also provided a recap of the Armory Project.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan the board approved the request to move \$30,000 from the Readiness to Serve Payment to the Economic Development Reserve Fund. All in favor.

Manager's Report: Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided a manager's report which included the following updates:

- No public meetings are being held at this time.
- Updates have been made to the website so links to zoom meetings are easy to locate
- Due to the increase in COVID in the area the EOC has been meeting bi-weekly.
- Continuing budget development and plan to meet with the Select Board to discuss.
- Town Clerk's Office is currently closed to walk ins. People who need to visit the office need to call and schedule an appointment. Otherwise people are ask to utilize the drop box, email, mail or fax if possible.
- No changes with regards to the Police Department
- No changes with regards to the Fire Department
- DPW is at full staff and reinforcing mask wearing, cleaning and sanitizing and practicing social distancing.
- Water Treatment Plant has a backup plan in place should the operator contract or be exposed to COVID 19.
- Undercliff Project has been completed.

Other Business:

- None

Executive Session:

- On a motion by Daniel and second by Dennis the board voted that there was a need for an executive session to discuss a contractual matter where premature public knowledge would place the Town at a substantial risk. All in favor.
- On a motion by Daniel nd second by Dennis the board voted to enter executive session and invited the Town Manager to join them. All in favor.
- On a motion by Tim and second by Brendan the board voted to exit executive session.
- The chair had nothing to report.

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