



TOWN OF ST. JOHNSBURY

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Meeting of the St. Johnsbury Select Board December 28, 2020 at 6:00 PM-Via Zoom Select Board Meeting

Present-

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

Staff: Chad Whitehead, Rachel Waterhouse, Joe Kasprzak, Lesley Russ, Stacy Jewell, Matt Krajieski, Tim Page, Paul Berlejung

Press: Todd Wellington, KATV

Public: Bob Jolly, James Brown

Agenda Amendments:

- None

Public Comments:

- Jim Brown had a question regarding side walk snow plowing. Chad Whitehead, Town Manager will follow up with Director of DPW regarding policy and procedure but believes they do not plow unless there is more than 3 inches of snow.

Minutes:

- On a motion by Kevin and second by Daniel the select board meeting minutes from 12/14/2020 were approved with the following corrections change from Kevin requesting executive session to Daniel. All in favor.

Warrants:

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Kevin the warrants were approved as presented. All in favor.

Liquor Licenses:

- None

Grand List Adjustment:

- Matt Krajieski approached the board asking for an adjustment to the grand list for the #8 in the amount of \$909.86 due to a current use change.
- On a motion by Kevin and second by Dennis the board approved the grand list adjustment for 2020 #8 in the amount of \$909.86. All in favor.

2021/2022 Budget Presentation:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager presented the 1st power point presentation to the board for the 2021/2022 budget.
- A special select board meeting will take place 1/4/21 at 6 pm to answer questions regarding the proposed 2021/2022 budget.
- Discussions regarding the budget will also take place at Select Board meetings on 1/11/21 and 1/19/21
- Copies of the proposed budget are available on the Town's website.
- Highlighted accomplishments of 2020
- Explained budget development review process
- 1, 146,916.00 was secured in grant funds in 2020.
- Reviewed proposed budget. General fund increase is primarily due to increase in costs associated with contractual obligations and benefits.
- Outlined the following funding amounts: general fund = \$3,927,831, special service fund = \$1,452,401, highway fund = \$3,000,115.
- The highway fund had the biggest increases. This is in part due to an increase in the paving line item and increase in chloride expense and grading.
- Currently the proposed budget reflects a 8.04% increase in the special services district and a 7.62% increase outside of the special services district in taxes in comparison to the existing adjusted budget.
- Increases were broken down to the following: 3.75% due to the August budget adjustment, 1.5% due to increase in labor and benefits, 2.25% increase due to highway maintenance, 0.5% increase due to other items such as cemetery obligations, server upgrades and Armory Reserve.
- Dennis asked is anyone else is concerned with the 8% increase for the town residences.
- Chad said the increase was not taken lightly. Making forward progress with the Town of St. Johnsbury. Important to get voter input.
- Tim commented that getting voter input is hard. Questioned the last time dispatch raised their fees.
- Chad said fees for dispatch services were last raised in 2019.
- Tim asked if the fees for dispatch services were going to increase this year.
- Chad said yes, the fees were increasing.
- Kevin commented that he shares the concern with Dennis but is unsure how to reduce the budget without reducing services. Encouraged Select Board members to review the budget with the Town Managers office and encouraged voter input.
- Daniel inquired if the budget has been gone through project by project. 13% increase over last year's budget. Does each project have to happen in 2021/2022 budget year?
- Chad said Steve Beauregard, Director of DPW will be at the next Select Board meeting on 1/4/21 and will be able to answer more questions about the projects.
- Kevin commented that it will be an important year to spend time explaining to the public what the Town is doing.
- Dennis questioned the outreach to the community regarding the upcoming budget and select board meetings to discuss the budget.
- Chad commented that he plans to reach out to a variety of platforms including Radio, Todd Wellington (who was present for the meeting) and KATV to get the information out to the residence of St. Johnsbury.
- Dennis agreed with the need to get the information out on more platforms

- Chad reassured the board that they don't take an 8% increase lightly. The highway fund has been below where it needs to be for the town for some time. Chad provided the figures of what the increase would look like for someone whose property is valued at \$150,000. Inside the special services they are looking at an increase of \$181.50 and outside of the special services district they are looking at an increase of \$110.00.
- Tim commented that the budget has no bells and whistles.
- Chad explained the all increases are necessary including the addition to the highway paving budget when the town has over 60 miles of paved roads.
- Tim asked if the public had any comments
- Todd Wellington asked about the 3.75% increase in the budget adjustment and what that means.
- Chad explained that in August of last year due to COVID the tax rate was set lower and reserve funds were utilized.
- Todd Wellington questioned if spending was cut in the early part of the pandemic and now the funds are being put back.
- Chad stated reserve funds were used to offset the expenses
- Tim questioned what the increase in insurance was.
- Chad stated there was a 12% insurance increase which equates to about \$111,000 over the last year.
- Jim Brown questioned what time the Select Board meeting would be taking place at on 1/19/21 as the Planning Commission has a that night as well. Chad said they would figure it out and let Jim know.
- Tim said if any year this is the year for public comment

Economic Development Reserve Transfer:

- Joe Kasprzak, Assistant Town Manager approached the board to ask for \$30,000 to be transferred from the Economic Reserve Fund to the unallocated economic development fund.
- Provided update on the Armory Project.
- Working with engineering firm for site work at the Armory. Preparing grant application to be submitted in April 2021.
- Tim asked if the continued work included working with White and Burke. Joe said yes.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Daniel the board approved the request to move \$30,000 from the Economic Development Reserve to the unallocated economic development fund. All in favor.

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

- Primary business has been the upcoming 2021/2022 budget.
- Received grant funds and will be working with finance on allocation of funds.
- Housing registry is at 97% which is a positive note. Doug has done a good job.
- Present a more in depth managers' report at next meeting.
- Dennis asked the progress with moving forward with tax sale. Chad said the town is moving towards tax sale which has been scheduled for the end of January.

Other Business:

- Tim commented that this was the last meeting of 2020 and wanted to thank all the town employees and department heads. Appreciate everyone stepping it up. Thank you.

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