



TOWN OF ST. JOHNSBURY

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Meeting of the St. Johnsbury Select Board February 22, 2021 at 6:00 PM-Via Zoom Select Board Meeting

Present-

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

Staff: Chad Whitehead, Rachel Waterhouse, Lesley Russ, Stacy Jewell, Joe Kasprzak, Tim Page, Jon Bouffard, Anthony Skelton, Steve Beauregard

Press: Todd Wellington, KATV

Public: Barbara and Darryll Rudy, James Brown, Don Smith, Stephanie Clarke, Joe Weith, Bob Joly, Susan Cherry, Pamela Dearborn, Alice Kitchel, Patricia Janssen

Agenda Amendments:

- None

Public Comment:

- None

Public Hearing- Armory VCDP Funding Application:

- Stephanie Clark and Joe Weith from White and Burke presented an update on the Armory, 1187 Main Street and Fire Site projects. Currently 1187 Main Street is not fully functional for a Dispatch Center, Police Department and Fire House at this time.
- Joe Kasprzak, Assistant Town Manager spoke on behalf of the Fire Site developments. Rural Edge continues to be cooperative with the Town. Surveying and site assessments are being completed and expect a corrective action plan soon.
- Stephanie Clark presented the Select Board with building site plans for the Armory. Working with a historical preservation consultant as the building is over 100 years old and would like to preserve some of the history.
- Continue to work on the brownfield contamination and environment assessment. EPA grant has been submitted. Slums grant is due in the spring.
- Time Line Presented:
 - 2023 Sept. Open Doors
 - 2022 Nov. Begin Construction
 - 2022 July Begin Remediation

- 2022 April Bid Construction
- 2022 February Bid Remediation
- 2021 Fall Bond Vote
- 2021 Spring/Summer Permitting
- Expect moving forward bi-monthly updates to the Select Board.
- Tim asked if the board or public had any questions.
- Tim asked when the brownfield clean up would begin. Stephanie explained they were hoping for Summer of 2022.

Warrants:

- On a motion by Kevin and second by Dennis to approve the warrants as presented.

Minutes:

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan to approve the meeting minutes from 02/08/2021 with the correction of the spelling of Dr. Ricca's name. All in favor.

Liquor Licenses:

- On a motion by Kevin and second by Dennis the following Liquor Licenses were approved. Brendan abstained.
 - Caledonia Brewing Company, LLC - 1st class renewal
 - Whirligig Holdings, LLC- 1st class renewal
 - Howell Hospitality Group, LLC- 1st class renewal
 - Lamplighter, Inc.- 1st class renewal
 - Price Chopper Operating Co. Of Vermont Inc.- 2nd class renewal
 - Ocean State Job Lot Stores of VT, Inc.- 2nd class renewal
 - Howell Hospitality Group, LLC-2nd class renewal
 - Walgreen Eastern Co Inc.- 2nd class renewal
 - Caledonia Brewing Company, LLC- 3rd class renewal
 - Lamplighter, Inc. – 3rd class renewal
 - Whirligig Holdings, LLC- Outside Consumption
 - Howell Hospitality Group, LLC- Outside Consumption

Armory VCDP Funding Resolution:

- Joe Kasprzak approached the board to consider approving the Town to apply for the CBDG slums and blight grant in the amount of \$500,000 for planning and remediation for the Armory site's future development.
- Warrant has been placed on the Town website and in the Caledonian Record for greater than 15 days.
- No questions from the Select Board or public.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan to allow the Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager to apply for and manage the CBDG slums and blight grant for the planning and remediation for the Armory site. All in favor.

2021 Rental Housing Improvement Program:

- Joe Kasprzak, Assistant Town Manager provided a quick overview of the Rental Housing Improvement Program. He asked the select board to consider releasing funds in the amount of \$20,000 from 2020 to be used towards the 2021 program.
- Joe shared some letters from the 2020 awardees.
- 2021 Program Details were presented and include the following.
 - March/April 2021- Outreach and applications
 - May 2021- Review applications and make a recommendation to the select board
 - June 2021- Grant award announcements
 - Dec. 2021- Project Closure and Completion
 - Jan. 2022- Grant close-out procedures
- Daniel asked if money received from the rental housing funds was also available to existing landlords. Joe explained it can be existing or new landlords and there is no income restrictions. It just needs to be a rentable property by December of that year. Daniel expressed that he believes it is important that people who pay into the program can also reap the benefits of it. Jim Brown agreed with Daniel that if people pay in they should be able to get benefit out of it.
- It was asked if upgrades and improvements done to the building are required to be within code. Joe explained that there are guidelines that must be followed in regards to improving the rent ability of the unit.
- Brendan asked if they saw renovations being completed only for what was applied for or if more renovations were also being completed. Joe explained that about \$40,000 worth of renovations were completed in 2020 with about \$17,000 in funding from the program. Expect an increase in 2021 and hopeful the program will be more successful moving forward.
- On a motion by Brendan and second by Dennis to approve the transfer of \$20,000 from the general restricted fund to the general unrestricted funds for the 2021 program. All in favor.
- Tim asked if other areas within the state had a similar program and were doing this. Joe explained that this program is unique to St. Johnsbury and the Town is setting the board on a program without an income restriction. Joe explained the intent is to grow the program and make a bigger impact to the rental community in St. Johnsbury.
- Tim thanked the committee for all of their hard work.

January Financial Update:

- Lesley Russ, Financial Manager provided the select board with the January financials. Including the following.
- General fund is on target.
- Special Services is at 96% of their OT budget.
- Highway fund has a deficit due to the purchase of a truck and timing of a loan payment.
- Water and Sewer funds have a deficit due to billing in the rears but expense are on target.
- Parking fund has a deficit due to lag in parking permit sales and parking tickets. Expecting deficit of \$15,000-\$20,000 by the end of the year.
- Tim questioned the 96% of the OT budget for the special services fund and the plan for the remaining year.
- Chad confirmed that the special services fund had used 96% of their OT budget already. Chad has asked Chief Page to have a plan put together for the remained of the year.
- Tim asked about tax sale.

- Chad explained that tax sale was taking place on Thursday 2/25/2021.

Budget Approval:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager presented the select board with the 2021 budget. The only revision was the addition of contracted services of less than \$2,000 for 1187 Main Street. The proposed budget would increase taxes 1.87% in the special services district and 0.80% outside of the special services district. Chad made the recommendation for the board to approval and support the 2021 budget.
- Tim asked if there were any appropriation changes for the 2021 budget. Lesley explained that there were no new appropriation requests and no increases in appropriations.
- On a motion by Brendan and second by Kevin to approval the 2021 Budget as presented. All in favor.
- Chad thanked the staff and select board for their support.

2021 Annual Town Meeting Warning:

- Stacy Jewell, Town Clerk presented the Select Board with the Town Meeting Warning and ballot for approval.
- On a motion by Kevin and second by Dennis to approval the 2021 Town Meeting Warning and ballot as present. All in favor.

Solid Waste Implementation Plan Update:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager explained where the town currently stands with the solid waste implementation plan updated. Next steps include moving forward with public comments.
- The updated solid waste implementation plan includes composting requirements and outlines the three household hazardous waste days that the Town of St. Johnsbury splits with the Town of Burke.
- Tim opened the floor to public comment.
- No questions from the public or the select board.

Emergency Check Signatory:

- Stacy Jewell, Town Clerk explained to the board that currently her office only has two check signers herself and Diane Perkins. Since Town of St. Johnsbury checks require two signers this means that if a check is needed and one of them are on vacation they need to come in to sign. Recently happened with a Payroll check. Kelly Wiley is unable to sign due to internal process as she is the one who processes the AP checks.
- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager explained that him and Lesley are unable to be an emergency check signor due to their duties.
- Daniel asked if the auditing standards was for dual signatures. Stacy was unsure. Daniel asked if Kelly would be able to sign since checks require dual signatures. Suggested double checking with the auditors on this as well.

- Tim asked if Joe Kasprzak, Assistant Town Manager would be able to be the emergency check signatory. Chad explained that Joe cannot as he approves invoices when Chad is out of the office.
- It was asked if the addition of Rachel as an emergency check signatory had been approved by the auditors. Kevin suggested that Stacy review the job responsibilities with Rachel and obtain approval from the auditors before the board approves.
- On a motion by Kevin and second by Dennis to table this until further notice. All in favor.

Managers' Report:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided the following Manager's Report.
- The Town of St. Johnsbury Police Department has voted to change unions. Engaging in contract discussion soon. Tim and Kevin currently represent the board for these discussions but Tim will not be running for another Term. Need to appoint another select board member to assist with the contract discussions.
- Tax Sale is scheduled for this Thursday February 25th, 2021 at 10 am.
- Chad will be working with the school to determine the process for public comments for Town Meeting Day.
- Joe Kasprzak, Assistant Town Manager had nothing to report.

Other Business:

- Dennis asked if the board would be interested in having Nick Anzalone from the CUD come to the next select board meeting to provide an update. Tim said yes. Chad will add to next meeting's agenda.
- Jim Brown presented a question for Chad on behalf of the Planning Commission Members. Recently a town in FL had their water treatment plant hacked. What is St. Johnsbury's water treatment facility situation and the town with online hacking? Chad commented that the town has securities in place for such attacks. IT provided is up to date. Chad explained the Town was hacked a few years ago and the Town had all the fall backs in place and no leaks happened. Jim questioned if the Town is protected now. Chad said he would get an updated to see if anything has changed since the incident and FL and will let Jim know.

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