



# TOWN OF ST. JOHNSBURY

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## **Meeting of the St. Johnsbury Select Board July 12, 2021 at 5:30 PM Select Board Meeting**

Present-

Select Board: Kevin Oddy, Dennis Smith, Frank Empsall, Brendan Hughes

Staff: Chad Whitehead, Rachel Waterhouse, Joe Kasprzak, Tim Page (via zoom), Anthony Skelton (via zoom)

Press: KATV,

Public: Don Smith (via zoom), John Ajamie (via zoom), Jim Brown, Pam Parker, Steve Isham, Nancy Cohen, Mike Lemceck, Kim Lemceck, Bernie Timson, Ben Deede, Molly Mallory, Karen Bufka, James Zorn, Tracy Zchau, Jean Malesko, Cathy Miles Grant, Charles Grant, Scott Campbell, Linda Caamano, David Brown, Victor Caamano, Jim impay, Otto Wurzburg, Tara Holt, Lisa Emerson, Maney Family, Philip Brown, Jason Bedon, John Raser, Robert (via zoom), Irene Nagle (via zoom)

### Special Meeting- Town Plan/ Enhanced Energy Plan Hearing:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager started the meeting by reading the executive summary of the enhanced energy plan.
- Pam Parker and Steve Isham approached the board and provided an overview of the proposed enhanced energy plan. Plan serves 2 purposes- 1. Linked 2016 Plan 2. Support Act 174. This plan gives the Town a say and the opportunity to act proactively. Summary of the plan gives measurable descriptions and identifies who is responsible and the level of priority.
- Dennis asked about the life expectancy of solar panels. Thought to be about 25 years. Pam commented that it really is unknown as there is a lot of differing data out there.
- Dennis asked what happens at the end of their life expectancy. Recycle them? Who is responsible at the end for the cost to recycle the installation company or the consumer? Curious how that plays out. Kevin commented that he expects the government will have a recycle plan for solar panels within the next 20 years. Steve commented that the use is laid out in Act 174.
- Nancy Cohen approached the board regarding her concerns with the Enhanced Energy Plan and solar panels. Provided the select board with an overview of hydro history. Referenced Derby Solar Panel Project that was denied. Provided the select board and town manager with a letter regarding her concerns. Potential solar fields will devalue property around it. Explained situation with abutting property. Asked the select board to be very careful. This could set the Town up for legal challenges.
- Bernie Timson suggested checking with over states to see what happens when solar panels reach their life expectancy. Reminder that such projects impact other people's property. Commented the F Webb did a great job with their solar panels they are out of sight. Look more into this before moving forward.

- Steve stated that the Enhanced Energy Plan doesn't specify any projects but would give the Town and select board assistance when projects were presented.
- Review again in two weeks on July 26<sup>th</sup>. Suggest that everyone reads the plan.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Frank to adjourn. All in favor.

#### Agenda Amendments:

- None

#### Public Comment:

- Jim Brown commented on the how great the #GETDOWNTOWN event was on Saturday July 10<sup>th</sup>. It was great to see the town alive and people having a good time. Encourage more events like this.

#### Minutes:

- None

#### Warrants:

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Frank to approve the warrants as presented. All in favor.

#### Liquor Licenses:

- None

#### Armory Update:

- Joe Kasprzak, Assistant Town Manager provided an update on the Armory project and expect timeline. Shared a draft of the proposed resolution, warning and sample ballot to the Select Board. Explained that at July 26<sup>th</sup> meeting he will be asking that the board adopts the requirements to move forward with a Sept 2021 bond vote.
- Requested to hold two public hearings on August 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6 pm and Sept. 7<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm. Board saw no issues with those dates.

#### Vermont Land Trust- Knob Land Acquisition Letter of Support:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided the board with a recap of the interest in the Knob Land.
- Tracy provided the board with an update regarding the status and requested a letter of support from the Town. Appraisal has been completed. Property is valued at \$205,000. Currently working on a grant application for \$200,000 that is due next Friday. Working to coordinate fund raising within in the community and seeking other grant opportunities.
- Chad explained he spoke with Finance who expects a surplus in the general fund. Town would be able to pledge \$20,000 to the cost of the property.
- Community members support the purchase of the knob as present by the audience.

- Kevin read the letter of support and asked the boards pleasure.
- On a motion by Brendan and second by Frank to authorize Kevin as the Chair of the Select Board to sign the letter of support for the purchase of the Knob. All in favor.

#### Pleasant and Gilman Bids and Amendments:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager presented a letter of recommendation from Dufresne Group to award JA McDonald with the Bid for the Pleasant and Gilman project in the amount of 7.2 million. The increase in the cost is in part due to an increase in material cost and an increase in labor rates. Room still within the bond authority to cover these costs. If awarded the project JA McDonald would be able to start as early as August 1, 2021.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Frank to award the Pleasant and Gilman bid to J.A. McDonald and authorize the Town Manager to executive and sign. All in favor.

#### WWTF Solids Management Planning Loan:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager approached the board regarding changes within the legislations regarding PFAS and PFOAs. The Town will no longer be able to land apply. A short term plan for the remained of the year has been developed. However moving forward the Town will need a long term plan which would include purchasing and building new equipment to dry sewage as it currently comes in at 95% water and 5% solids. Requesting \$38,600.00 loan to conduct an engineering report.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Frank for the Town Manager to apply for the WWTF Solids Management Planning loan in the amount of \$38,600.00. All in favor.

#### Wastewater Master Plan:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager explained that the Wastewater Master Plan requires an in depth inspection and a prepared response plan. Total cost for the 20 year evaluation is estimated at \$150,000. Of that \$100,000 would be eligible for loan forgiveness and the remaining \$50,000 would be subject to 0% interest with a repayment of 20% a year for 5 years. This evaluation and inspection is required for permits.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan for the Town Manager to move forward with the Wastewater Master Plan. All in favor.

#### Town Manager's Report:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided the following Town Manager's Report.
- #GETDOWNTOWN Event was well attended. Next event takes place on 8/14/21.
- Dog Mountain Concert Series has started.
- Congressman Leahy announced his support for the \$547,000.00 for the next phase of the 3 Rivers project. This funding would assist in adding lighting, a cross country trail, art exhibits, honking tunnel improvements and parking improvements. Total cost of the project is estimated at 1.55 million.
- Brendan inquired if Chad knew what other town portions were like. Chad said he was unsure but St. Johnsbury has been heavily invested in this. Currently seeing use of the trail now.

- Dennis inquired about the state movement on the trail project. Chad explained that V-Trans has taken over the project and it is still expected to be completed by next summer. They have already bid out a few sections.

Other Business:

- Jim Brown mentioned that the beautification committee has put together a memorial garden in memory of Clara Fisher. It is a work in progress hoping to get some mulch down soon.

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