



TOWN OF ST. JOHNSBURY

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Meeting of the St. Johnsbury Select Board August 8, 2022 @ 6:00 pm

Present-

Select Board: Tracy Zschau, Steve Isham, Brendan Hughes

Staff: Chad Whitehead, Rachel Waterhouse, Steve Beauregard, Kresten Sterling, Stacy Jewell, Lesley Russ (via zoom), Chief Tim Page (via zoom)

Press: KATV, Todd Wellington

Public: Mary Berlejung (via zoom), Don Smith (via zoom), Jim Brown, Joanne Brown, Pamela Dearborn, James Bentley,

Agenda Amendments:

- None

Public Comment:

- Pamela Dearborn from Express Care approached the Select Board regarding her concerns for staff parking in the parking lot adjacent to the Star Theater. She explained there have been several incidents with staff being scared going to the parking lot by the Star Theater including an incident where a staff member's cat was stolen off their car. She proposed increased lighting and security cameras in the lot and a permitting process to allow employees to park on the street.
- Chad explained that there have been a few other concerns regarding the safety of this parking lot from other businesses. A light will be installed in the corner as part of the sidewalk repair project. Expressed that the goal is to make people feel safe in the parking lot.
- Joanne Brown asked if the theft was reported to the Police Department. Pam said yes.
- Tracy asked if the Town has security cameras anywhere else. Chad said currently only at Depot Square but will be working on installing some at the Three Rivers Trailhead Pavilion.
- Steve Isham asked who was responsible for the lighting as the lot is not owned by the Town. Chad explained that the light will be going in on the sidewalk.
- Chief Page explained that the Police Department is well aware of the concerns from the community and patrols the area on a regular basis.
- Pam asked how practical it would be to ask for a Police escort. Chief Page explained he is ok with that and the PD would be willing to provide an escort if it makes them feel more secure.
- Brendan asked what the typical time range for staff leaving is. Pam said the clinic closes at 7:30 pm but staff sometimes stay as late as 9 pm charting.
- Mary Berlejung approached the Select Board about the need for more sidewalk repair in the Town of St. Johnsbury. She mentioned she attended the most recent ARPA committee meeting where

she noted that low cost housing and sidewalk repair was of high interest. She will continue to follow up with the progress of sidewalk repairs.

- Joanne Brown asked if sufficient lighting and security cameras in the parking lot were financial viable. Chad explained that it was undetermined at this time as no plans or quotes have been obtained.
- Joanne Brown asked if sidewalk repairs would be addressed this year. Chad explained that the majority of sidewalk repairs for the year have been completed. Steve Beauregard explained that the remaining sidewalk repair will take place in front of the Fire Department on Main Street in August. He mentioned that he is aware of what Mary is referring to and is working on obtaining a quote to repair the sidewalk in that area.
- Jim Brown commented that feels the safety in this parking lot is a priority. Chad agreed that it is a priority and the Town will be exploring options. Also reiterated that Chief Page will make the PD available for escorts as business allows.
- Tracy asked when the light would be installed. Chad said it is expected to be installed this fall.
- Tracy inquired about the availability of the PD to make late night requests such as an escort. Chief Page said they would do the best they can to accommodate as business allows.
- Joanne Brown mentioned that tomorrow is the VT primary and voting will take place here. Band concert will be held tonight at 7:30 pm with an ice cream social to follow.
- Joanne Brown approached the Select Board regarding TJ Donovan not seeking reelection this year. Steve Isham explained that there is nothing the Select Board can do regarding this issue. Suggested Joanne speak with representatives regarding her concerns. Chad explained to Joanne that it is not a topic for the St. Johnsbury Select Board and the Town of St. Johnsbury and if she continues to be disruptive she will be asked to leave.

Warrants:

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

Minutes:

- On a motion by Brendan and second by Tracy to approve the Select Board minutes from July 25th, 2022 as presented. All in favor.
- On a motion by Brendan and second by Tracy to table the minutes from the Special Select Board meeting on July 27th, 2022 until a quorum of those present can be formed. All in favor.

Liquor License:

- None

Equipment Plan and Approval:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager reviewed the equipment plan spreadsheet with the Select Board. Explained that typically equipment is bought with a 5 year loan. Explained that the Board has reviewed and approved the equipment plan in the past. Will provide more details regarding equipment plans in budget discussions prior to Town Meeting.
- The bid for the new Front End Case Loader came in at 219,900. The Town of St. Johnsbury has received two grants from the Dept. of Conservation to help offset the cost.

- Stacy Jewell, Town Clerk questioned how long would wait for other equipment to be purchased before going for the loan. Steve Beauregard that we are waiting for Ford to build the truck so unsure how long that will take. He explained it has been done that way the last two years since I have been here. Roll all the equipment purchases into one loan.
- Stacy asked if in the past they have waited up to 6 months. Steve Beauregard explained that last year one truck was purchased in October and the other was not purchased until the end of January.
- Tracy asked if there was any risk to waiting. Chad explained that the risk would be cash flow and if the remaining equipment is significantly delayed then the Town will apply for the loan. Lesley Russ, Finance Officer explained that at this time she does not see any concerns with regards to cash flow. She mentioned the longest the Town has waited to go for a loan was 3-4 months before going for to bid. If cash flow becomes a concern the Town could choose to go to bid sooner.
- Stacy questioned if the banks could say no to a loan 6 months after the purchase. Don't have the money budgeted for 200,000 purchase. Brendan explained he thinks the bank would be pretty happy to do business with the municipality.
- On a motion by Brendan and second by Tracy to approve the Equipment Purchase Plan. All in favor.
- On a motion by Brendan and second by Tracy to approve the purchase of the Case Front End Loader in the amount of \$219,900. All in favor.
- Joanne Brown asked how the Town guarantees they get the best pricing for equipment. Steve Beauregard explained that the equipment purchase goes to bid to different dealers.
- Joanne Brown asked if the bidding is exclusively Vermont. Steve Beauregard said no. Generally the Town goes with the lower bidder but not always the case. He provided the example of this Case Loader and the reason they went with the Case was because it doesn't have a diesel particulate filter which in the past has given DPW some issues.

Internal Control Policy:

- Lesley Russ, Finance Officer reviewed the updated section of the Internal Controls Policy regarding for reserve funds. The process will require two signatures from the Finance Officer and Town Manager along with supporting documentation for the request. This will allow for better control over the process, assures the accounting is done in a timely fashion, provides good audit trail and is overall a better practice.
- Tracy asked if that was the only change to the Internal Control Policy. Chad said yes.
- On a motion by Tracy second by Brendan to approve the Internal Controls Policy with the noted update. All in favor.

Town Charter Review:

- Select Board was provided with an updated Town Charter that set the Select Board terms at 3- 3 year terms and 2- 1 year terms. Explained that it is the same Charter that has been reviewed in the past.
- Stacy stated that it will be considered a Special Town Meeting and will be on the ballot for the November 8th election. Provided the following date deadlines:
 - First Public Hearing will need to be held between October 3rd and 7th
 - The Warning will need to be posted by Sept 2nd
 - Post in the newspaper between Sept. 23rd and Sept. 26th depending on public hearing date.
 - In newspaper between Sept. 23rd and Sept 26th depending on date of Public Hearing.
 - Official copy in the Town Clerk's Office between Sept 19th and Sept. 23rd depending on date of Public Hearing.

- On a motion by Brendan and second by Tracy to approve the proposed Town Charter with revisions. All in favor.
- Will come back at next Select Board meeting on August 22nd to determine dates for Public Hearings.

Salvage Yard Certificate of Approval:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager explained that this is just an updated certificate of approval for a current salvage yard in St. Johnsbury. Process requires that a Public Hearing is needed 15 days after warning of such hearing. Plan is to host this Public Hearing at the first meeting in September. The Public Hearing will begin at 5:30 pm with the regular Select Board meeting to follow. Will work to get the meeting warned. Process is similar to DRB meetings but when asked VLCT who is in charge of the Salvage Yard Certificate of Approvals and was directed to the Select Board.
- Steve Isham asked if it would be possible to have Zoning and the DRB attend the meeting as he felt their insight could be helpful. Chad said they could attend if available.
- Steve Isham asked if approved do they have to obtain a certificate of occupation and if those requirements have been met. Chad said he would verify with Zoning. But initial take is it's a state approval so they manage salvage yards. We don't have control or enforcement requirements following the states approval.
- Steve Isham asked if the State was responsible for handling the complaints once approved. Chad said yes.
- Jim Brown asked the location of the salvage yard in question. Chad explained that it is located on Duke Street. Stacy commented that it is owned by Ronnie Fafa.
- Jim Brown inquired about what the property is zoned as. He asked if it required Zoning and DRB approval or if all done by the state. Chad said no all done by the state as it is currently in use as a salvage yard and this is just a renewal certificate and not a change of use in this case.

USDA RD Police Cruiser Grant:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager explained that the Town of St. Johnsbury has been awarded an USDA RD Police Cruiser Grant but the paperwork has not been received by the Town yet.
- On a motion by Brendan and second by Tracy to table the USDA RD Police Cruiser Grant until the paperwork is received. All in favor.
- Joanne Brown noted that the cars are primarily Fords and probably from 1 dealership. Stacy Jewell, Town Clerk explained that the purchase is placed out to bid like everything else but only certain companies that make cruisers for Police Departments. Chief Page explained that only so many companies make police cruisers.

VOREC Grant Purchase Request:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager explained that the Town in partnership with St. Johnsbury Academy, Link and Discover St. Johnsbury applied for a VOREC Grant for outdoor recreation. The awarded grant is \$128,000. Included in the funding is installation of bike kiosks and amenities, outdoor marketing, purchase of bikes for recreation program and a bike trailer. No local match is required for this grant. Since the purchase is not budget need Select Board approval.
- James Bentley explained bids were received for the purchase of 20 bikes. A bid has been accepted and a down payment of \$8,325 is required.

- James Bentley provided the Select Board quote for the bike trailer. Trailer will also double as storage and security for the bikes. He mentioned that he didn't get a clear sense on what the trailer company would want for a deposit. They said they could have the trailer to us in October.
- Chad mentioned that approve from VOREC to proceed with purchases has been granted but the paperwork for the grant has not been received yet.
- Tracy asked if there is any time frame on the grant paperwork. Chad said no.
- Steve Isham asked if the \$8,325 would be recoup from the grant once the paperwork is received. Chad said yes it is an eligible expense.
- Tracy asked if the bike trailer was an eligible refundable expense. Chad said yes.
- Chad mentioned that funding was also designated for Link to create lending library of bikes and snowshoes for the public.
- Steve asked if the program would be just for residences or tourists as well. James said owned by St. Johnsbury Recreation which means anyone who in program can use the bikes either for free or at a charge depending on what is decided. This gives us the opportunity to serve the entire region not just St. Johnsbury residences.
- Tracy asked if looking to next year for this program. James said yes soft deadline a year from now.
- Steve Isham asked if the bikes would be stored at St. Johnsbury Academy. James said as of right now that is the plan but open to other suggestions.
- Tracy asked who owns the bikes. James said technically St. Johnsbury Recreation. Chad explained the grant was written for town use.
- Stacy asked who is going to register and insure the bike trailer. James said he believes the St. Johnsbury Academy business office is ready to register and insure the bike trailer. Chad said we will work out those details as we move closer to the trailer purchase. Chad expressed how grateful he is with the partnership with the St. Johnsbury Academy to manage and operate St. Johnsbury Recreation.
- Jim Brown asked who the head of the recreation department is. James said Rich Alercio is the head of St. Johnsbury Recreation now that Joe Fox has left.
- Steve Isham asked if St. Johnsbury Academy has looked at a partnership with Link to maintain the bikes. Chad explained Link would be available to service the bikes as needed.
- Tracy don't know when the Town might get reimbursed but is there anything state has to approve ahead of time for this purchase. Chad no only requirement is that it is placed out to bid which was done. Now it is just timing on the State to finalize the grant paperwork. Tracy explained that she has experienced this as well with her day job and it is frustrating.
- On a motion by Tracy and second by Brendan to approve the bike deposit in the amount of \$8,325 to be reimbursed by the VOREC Grant. All in favor.

RF1-215-3.1 Gilman and Pleasant Loan Amendment:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager reviewed the loan amendment for RF1-215-3.1 Gilman and Pleasant Street project. This loan is for the water portion of the Gilman and Pleasant Street Project. The loan amount if \$1,740,587 with \$728,000 in loan forgiveness. The remaining would be paid over 30 years at a 0% interest rate.
- On a motion by Brendan and second by Tracy to approve the amendment to loan RF1-215-3.1 in the amount of \$1,740,587. All in favor.

Town Managers' Report:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided the following Town Manager's Report.
- The auditors were in the office last week. They will be working to compile their report and expect the report back sometime in October.
- The ARPA Committee continues to work with HCH consult. HCH is planning public outreach to include gathering community input at the August Final Friday Event and focus groups. Still expecting a final spending plan for the Select Board by fall.
- Chad mentioned he submitted an application to the APRA Committee for remaining \$236,000 in funding for the LVRT. This is the portion not covered by federal funds and is required in order to access the remaining 1.5 million in funds. Expect to be in front of the Select Board with this request in the next month.
- Tracy asked if the potential applications the Select Board had heard before would be coming back. Chad said he expects the homeless study application to come back to the Select Board in the next month or two.
- Tracy stated that Mary Berlejung had mentioned that there was high interest on certain things. Asked where that feedback was came from. Chad said that the committee of about 15 members was surveyed on what they felt were important projects. The top ranking was pedestrian improvements, bikes and LVRT. But what does that mean is it marketing or something else.
- Brendan asked if the public outreach would be committee or consultant driven. Chad explained that it would be consultant driven.
- Congratulations to Andrew Ruggles and Troy Darby both who have been promoted to Lieutenants within the Fire Department after a rigorous process.
- The Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund is currently in the public comment period. Expect that the remaining funding for the upgrades to the Water Treatment Facility will come from this loan. Will bring the application to the Select Board once available.
- COVID case delayed the Habitat for Humanity visit to 955 Portland Street. Working on rescheduling. Keep board posted as where that stands.
- Final Food Truck Tuesday will take place tomorrow starting at 4 pm at the Pavilion on Bay Street.
- Thanked the Rotary Club for the donated plants located at the Pavilion on Bay Street. Looks really good.
- VLCT will join the Select Board Meeting on August 22nd to host a training on Roles and Responsibilities specific to St. Johnsbury and our Town Manager form of government.
- Solids dewatering still scheduled for August 29th. Expect to be able to dewater enough solids to get us through until our new press is here next April.

Other Business:

- None

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