



TOWN OF ST. JOHNSBURY

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Special Meeting of the St. Johnsbury Select Board Oct. 24, 2022 @ 5:30 pm

Present-

Select Board: Dennis Smith, Tracy Zschau, Steve Isham, Brendan Hughes, Frank Empsall

Staff: Rachel Waterhouse, Chad Whitehead, Stacy Jewell

Public: Jim Brown, Joanne Brown, Kevin Oddy, Lauren Jarvi, Lenny Gerardi, Paul Taylor

Press: KATV

Charter Pubic Hearing:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided an overview of VT laws with regards to Town Charters.
- Kevin Oddy thanked the people on the charter committee for all of their hard work on cleaning up the charter. He explained the process the Town took including review from the Town Attorney and Committee, the committee then reviewed several other VT Town Charters, revised structure to be more organized and made 4 minor changes. Highlighted the following changes made were with regards to the board of assessment, creation of a charter committee, appointment of the zoning administrator and charter borrowing. Kevin explained the charter was written about 30 years ago and had a minor change in 2014. By assigning a charter review committee the charter will be looked at every 5 years. Allowing for charter borrowing would allow the Town the option to borrow piece of other approved charters if approved by the voters without getting legislative approval from the State of Vermont.
- Paul Taylor asked if moving the appointment of the zoning officer to the duties of the Town Manager was a better thing. Kevin explained that yes it was for a couple reasons including it allows for better supervisor, evaluations and process. Chad explained that the Town Manager interacts on a day to day basis with the Zoning Administrator. This just allows the Town Manager to address things as needed, however the Select Board will still have the general oversight of the Town Manager.
- Lenny Gerardi explained he had the chance to read the proposed Charter and has a couple of typos. Asked if the Town would like those submitted in writing or now. Chad explained if it was a matter of substances now would be ideal. Stacy explained that only typos can be changed.
- Lenny Gerardi explained that under the downtown district it references Listers but Listers have been removed from the proposed charter. He also explained that 515 doesn't exist and that 506 should be 504. Stacy Jewell, Town Clerk mentioned that only typos can be changed at this point. Chad explained that the Town can asked the legislation to make those changes.
- Paul Taylor asked why the Charter didn't include the advisory vote information. Asked if this was something that should be in the Charter. He questioned if the creation or abolishment of committees should be included in the Charter and if the State Statute was taken into account. Kevin explained that a 5% of voter petition would still get items onto the ballot. Stacy explained

that to be on the ballot there would need to be a petition with 5% of voter signatures or approval from the Select Board.

- Paul Taylor asked why the Town Manager isn't a member of the Development Review Board. Chad explained that the Town Manager per state statute cannot also be a DRB member.
- Paul Taylor asked why in 151-505 Downtown Section 13 it discusses supporting the Fairbanks Museum. Stacy explained that this goes on the ballot each year but the Charter also says the Town will support it. Only the Fairbanks Museum is specified in the Charter.
- Lauren Jarvi asked if it was in the original Charter. Chad said yes and that the Charter Committee felt that it is a part of who St. Johnsbury is and proposed to keep it as part of the document.
- Chad reviewed the process explaining that the Select Board approved the proposed Charter changes on 8/8/22 and it will be on the ballot for 11/8/22. If approved by the voters, it will go to the legislation and if approved by legislation it will then be enacted into law.
- Joanne Brown voiced that it is easier if the Select Board were to request the special commission to place something on the ballot than to have 5% of the voters to do so. Frank explained the board would take items into consideration. Dennis mentioned that it is another alternative.
- Kevin voiced that the Charter makes sense and thanked everyone.
- Frank thanked the Charter Committee for all their time and hours spent on this.

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