



# TOWN OF ST. JOHNSBURY

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## Meeting of the St. Johnsbury Select Board Dec. 28, 2022 @ 6:00 pm

Present-

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

Staff: Rachel Waterhouse, Chad Whitehead, Joe Kasprzak, Stacy Jewell, Paul Berlejung, Anthony Skelton,  
Chief Bradley Reed, Chief Tim Page (via zoom), Steve Beauregard (via zoom), Lesley Russ (via zoom)

Press: KATV, Todd Wellington (zoom),

Public: Gillian Sewake (via zoom), Jim Brown,

### Agenda Amendments:

- On a motion by Brendan and second by Tracy to add Tax Stabilization Appointment to the agenda following the Knob Property Management Committee Appointment. All in favor.

### Public Comment:

- None

### Warrants:

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

### Minutes:

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan to accept the regular Select Board minutes from Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022 as presented. All in favor.

### Liquor License:

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Tracy approve the 2nd class liquor license for Family Dollar. All in favor. Brendan abstained.

### Tobacco Licenses

- On a motion by Brendan and second by Dennis to approve the tobacco license for North East Cannabis. All in favor.

### Grand List Adjustments:

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan to approve grand list adjustment #12 and #13. All in favor.

#### NAKASAN:

- Libby Hillhouse, co-founder of NAKASAN presented an overview of NAKASAN and their services. Thanked the Select Board for adopting the inclusion statement. Expressed how important the statement is and how St. Johnsbury is setting a model for surrounding towns. Libby explained that NAKASAN's mission is to welcome asylum seekers and refugees to the Northeast Kingdom. The program is funded through donations, volunteer time and grants. NAKASAN has provided assistances to 6 adults and 2 babies.
- Tracy thanked NAKASAN for their work and commitment and help making St. Johnsbury such a welcoming community. Libby explained she felt it was important to let the Select Board know as there is a growing need.
- Frank thanked Libby for bringing this to the Select Boards attention. Libby explained that everyone has been welcoming and warmed by the sense of safety here.
- Jim Brown asked how housing for these folks has been working out and how the Town could help. Libby explained currently they hold the lease on one apartment in St. Johnsbury however housing is an issue and if anything comes their way they are grateful. Libby expressed that many people are in need of housing not just NAKASAN.
- Steve Isham commended Chief Page of helping out and sending NAKASAN to the Select Board. Libby voiced that Chief Page was very kind to us and he is aware of our work. He advised if pulled over that they should follow the law and will be ok.
- Chad thanked NAKASAN and complimented them on the great work they are doing.

#### Proposed Budget Presentation:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided an overview of the proposed Budget for 2023-2024 and the budget development process. Expenses have an increase of 10.8% which includes an increase in labor costs, pension contributions and increase in fuel material costs. The proposed budget impact on taxes inside the special services district is a 6.06% and outside the special services is 3.22%. The Town is recommending stabilizing the taxes by use of un-allocated reserve funds for 2023-2024. He explained there are no unusually large increase in any of the Town's department budgets. Based on feedback throughout the year the Town has included a planned increase in the paving and sidewalk budgets for 2023-2024. Chad explained that there is a need for repairs to sidewalks and streets and the Town anticipates seeking grant funds to help offset the costs. There is also a recommended increase to the planning and zoning budget due to the Town's growth including new businesses and projected Town Plan renewal in 2025.
- He explained the proposed budget can be found on the Town website as well. He expressed that the Town expects a couple changes to some of the figures over the next month and will update accordingly.
- Chad encouraged anyone with questions to please reach out to him or the Select Board. Following the public input meetings the budget will go to the Select Board for approve and then be sent to the voters for Town Meeting. Tax rates would then be set in August of 2023.
- Frank encouraged the Select Board members to review the budget and prepare any questions they may have.
- Chad thanked the staff and Select Board for moving the budgets forward each year.

#### Knob Property Management Committee:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager explained that the Town received several inquiries from community members regarding participating on the Knob Property Management Committee. He is recommending the board appoint the following individuals until March of 2023.
  - Jamie Murphy
  - Mike Moriarty
  - Steve Isham
  - Tracy Zschau
  - Joe Fox
  - Kiko Pacun
  - David Pacun
  - Barry Moore
  - James Sweeny
  - Jon Rice
  - Diane Chadderdon
  - David Brown
  - Chad Whitehead
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan to appoint Jamie Murphy, Mike Moriarty, Steve Isham, Tracy Zschau, Joe Fox, Kiko Pacun, David Pacun, Barry Moore, James Sweeny, Jon Rice, Diane Chatterton, and Chad Whitehead to the Knob Property Management Committee. All in favor.

#### Tax Stabilization Committee:

- Joe Kasprzak, Assistant Town Manager explained that currently the committee consists of Ron Steen, Ed Magnus, Jamie Murphy and Jim Impey. Ed Magnus has tendered his resignation from the Tax Stabilization Committee. Joe thanked him for all his time and energy spent working on this committee. Given the resignation it leaves 2 vacancies on the committee. Recommending appointment of Heather Alger and Doug Reid until March 2023.
- On a motion by Brendan and second by Tracy to appoint Heather Alger and Doug Reid to the Tax Stabilization Committee until March 2023. All in favor.

#### Town Managers' Report:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided the following Town Manager's Report.
- Thanked DPW, Green Mountain Power, Chief Reed and the Fire Department for the hard work during the recent storm. He explained that plans were in place with the EOC if needed. Chief Reed a great job coordinating everything and getting the message out.
- Joe Kasprzak, Assistant Town Manager had nothing to add.
- Jim Brown asked how the grand list, budget and property taxes are connected. Chad explained that it's a proportionality calculation

#### Other Business:

- None

#### Executive Session:

- None

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