



TOWN OF ST. JOHNSBURY

51 Depot Square, Suite 1

St Johnsbury, VT 05819

802-748-4331

www.stjvt.com

Meeting of the St. Johnsbury Select Board March 14, 2022 @ 6:00 pm

Present-

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

Staff: Chad Whitehead, Rachel Waterhouse, Joe Kasprzak, Stacy Jewell, Steve Beauregard, Kresten Sterling
(via zoom)

Press: Todd Wellington (via zoom), KATV

Public: Paul Berlejung, Mary Berlejung, David Roth, Jordan Cady, Patricia Janssen (via zoom),

Agenda Amendments:

- None

Organizational Meeting:

- Frank Empsall congratulated and welcomed the newly elected Select Board Members.
- On a motion by Steven Isham and second by Dennis to appoint Frank as the Chair of the Select Board. All in favor. Frank abstained.
- On a motion by Brendan and second by Tracy to appoint Dennis as the Vice Chair for the Select Board. All in favor. Dennis abstained.
- On a motion by Brendan and second by Dennis to adopt the rules of procedure with the addition of language to include that the COVID-19 policy will follow Vermont Department of Health and CDC guidelines. All in favor. Rules of procedures will be posted at the Welcome Center.
- On a motion by Brendan and second by Tracy to adopt the Select Board Meeting Schedule as the second and fourth Monday of the month at 6 pm. All in favor.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan to appoint Robert Swartz, Edwin Magnus and Don Smith to the Board of Assessment. All in favor.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan to appoint Barry Waldner to the Development Review Board for a three year term. All in favor.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Tracy to appoint Kelly Doyle to the Design Advisory Committee for a three year term. All in favor.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan to appoint Buddy Chapman, Brooke Demers, Iris Gilbert, Robert Holmes, Katherine Rossell and Bernie Timson to the Housing Board of Review. All in favor.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Tracy to appoint Patricia Janssen, Irene Nagle and Alice Kitchel to the Rental Housing Improvement Grant Program for a one year term. All in favor.

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan to appoint Patrick Shattuck and Fred DeMarzo to the Rental Housing Improvement Grant Program for a two year term. All in favor.
- On a motion by Brendan and second by Dennis to appoint Jim Brown, Tara Holt, Lorrie Brown, Gina Glidden, Heather Alger, Diane Cummings and Kim Behr to the Beautification Committee. All in favor.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Tracy to appoint Pam Parker, Steve Isham, Lynn Wurzburg, John Ajamie, Elmore Dickstein, Keith Whitemore, Ben Deede and David Zajko to the Energy Committee. All in favor. Steve abstained.
- On a motion by Brendan and second by Tracy to appoint Chad Whitehead and Jim Brown to the NVDA Board of Representatives. All in favor.
- On a motion by Dennis and second Tracy to appoint Brendan Hughes and Jim Impey to the Industrial Park Board of Representatives. All in favor. Brendan abstained.
- On a motion by Brendan and second by Tracy to appoint Frank Empsall and Dennis Smith to the Negotiation Committee. All in favor. Frank and Dennis abstained.
- On a motion by Brendan and second by Tracy to appoint Frank Empsall and Dennis Smith as Warrant Signatories. All in favor. Frank and Dennis abstained.

Public Comment:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided an update on the masking policy. Recently the State of Vermont changes its guidelines from requiring masking in public places to recommending masking in public places. The Town still strongly encourages anyone who is experiencing any illness to stay home and attend meetings virtually.
- Brendan Hughes provided a public comment regarding being stopped and processed as a DWI suspect on Saturday night.
- Brendan welcomed Steve and Tracy to the Select Board. Expressed that they both will be a great asset to the board.
- Mary Berlejung expressed her concerns regarding Town sidewalks. She expressed that she will be working with the Bike Ped Committee to bring attention and awareness about the sidewalks. Commented about a private plow truck depositing snow on the sidewalk on Church Street. Frank expressed that the sidewalks are a concern to the Select Board as well and they have been talking about it. The Town does recognize them and the issues and talks are underway about creating a sidewalk fund to help move the repairs forward.
- Stacy Jewell, Town Clerk reminded the public that property taxes are due to the Town Clerk's Office tomorrow March 15th by 4 pm.

Warrants:

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

Liquor License:

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Tracy to approve the following liquor licenses. All in favor. Brendan abstained.
 - St. Johnsbury Distillery- 1st class, 3rd class and outside consumption renewal
 - Dispencery, LLC- 1st class, 3rd class and outside consumption renewal
 - Walgreens Eastern Co Inc.- 2nd class renewal

- Pagani Enterprises, LLC – 2nd class renewal

Minutes:

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan to approve the Select Board Meeting minutes from 02/28/22 with the correction of residents. All in favor.

RHGIP 2022:

- Joe Kasprzak, Assistant Town Manager provided the Select Board with updates on the Rental Housing Improvement Grant Program. The program strongly encourages universal design and energy efficient improvements.
- The maximum grant is \$3,000 and requires a 1:1 match.
- The Town takes over the program once the awards are approved by the Select Board.
- Reviewed the program requirements, application and scoring information. Application deadlines for 2022-2023 would be 4/1-4/30 if approved by the Select Board.
- Patricia Janssen provided the process and scoring insight to the Select Board. The goal is to be fair, transparent and consistent. Everyone is held to the same standards and we take that very seriously.
- Joe explained the outreach process which will include direct mailing and advertising through the Caledonian Record, Restorative Justice Center, Town Facebook page, Town website, NVDA and word of mouth.
- Patricia Janssen thanked the people that have served on the committee for the last two years and the launch of the program. Thanked Joe and the Town Office for taking on the extra work it takes to run this grant program. Couldn't do it without the Town's help.
- Joe thanked PJ for her dedication to St. Johnsbury and the rest of the committee.
- Joe provided an overview of the proposed funding for the 2022-2023 program. Commented on the good work of Doug and Kresten. Housing Rental Registration is at 99.69%.
- Joe reviewed the previous projects. 16 projects have been awarded to date and 9 still remain open. The Committee is still planning on a round 2 if the funds are not all used up after the first round. This has been done the past two years and works well.
- Dennis asked if the 9 that are still in the works are fund out of the funds presented. Joe said no.
- Steve Isham asked for clarification on the maximum \$3,000 per unit. Joe explained that the \$3,000 is per unit and properties can get up to 3 grants. Common spaces are considered as one unit.
- Frank thanked the committee for doing this.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan to approve the transfer of \$20,000 from the 2021 Rental Registration Fees from the unallocated reserves to the general fund for the 2022-2023 Rental Housing Improvement Grant Program. All in favor.

CWSRF & DWSRF Additional Authorized Representative:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided the Select Board with the authorization form to add Stacy Jewell as an authorized representative for all CWSRF and DWSRF loans as she provides data and documents pertaining to these loans.
- On a motion by Brendan and second by Dennis to approve and sign the paperwork to add Stacy Jewell as an authorized representative for Clean Water State Revolving Fund and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund. All in favor.

Fees and Fines:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided the Select Board with an updated fees and fines for the Town of St. Johnsbury. Chad explained the Town Manager's Office is recommending the following changes:
 - Increase night ban fine from \$10 to \$25
 - Increase fire hydrant fine from \$10 to \$25
 - Increase in parking lot fines from \$10 to \$25
 - Increase in annual parking permit fees from \$240 annually to \$280 annually
 - Increase in fines for handicap parking from \$50 to \$100
 - Increase in zoning permit application fee from \$30 to \$55
 - Increase in DRB Hearing fee from \$30 to \$55
 - Increase in major subdivision from \$10 to \$20
 - Increase in excavation fees on public property to \$10 per square foot.
- Chad explained that the Town reviewed 7 other towns' fees and fines including Barre City, Newport, St. Albans and Burlington.
- Changes to the handicap and towing fines will require changes to the ordinance. Will provided the Select Board with the recommended ordinance changes at the next meeting on March 28th.
- Tracy asked Chad if handicap parking has two fines. Chad said yes two separate tickets.
- Frank commented that he would like to go through the ordinance process then adopt the changes to the Town's fees and fines with a goal of change for July 1.
- Joe commented that for logistics it would be nice to think about a time line as parking tickets will need to be ordered.

Fire Hydrant Reserve Fund Request:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided the Select Board with a synopsis of what took place in regards to fire hydrants during the fire on Shadow Drive. Since a plan has been developed between the Fire Department and DPW to check the fire hydrants throughout the summer.
- Training was provided to the Fire Department by the Water Operator recently.
- At least 16 ineffective fire hydrants have been identified. Steve Beauregard, Director of DPW found money in his current budget to order a total of 12 replacement fire hydrants. However additional fire hydrants are needed.
- Requesting that \$29,079.36 is authorized to spend on the purchase of 12 more fire hydrants. Water fund cash balance is currently at about \$44,000 and receivables due is about 2.5 million.
- Steve Beauregard explained the plan will be to first replace the 8 bagged hydrants and to conduct more active fire hydrant checks and trainings.
- Steve Beauregard explained that currently with the climate with COVID prices change quickly and are going up a lot. Unsure if we will be able to lock in on a price. Steve Beauregard explained that the last order of fire hydrants he priced out 3 places and the fire hydrants were \$2,500 per hydrant. However he was made aware that those amounts are increase to \$2,800-\$3,200. Price is based upon delivery.
- Frank asked if the board felt comfortable authorizing spending up to \$35,000 for the hydrants. Dennis commented that he was comfortable with that.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan to authorize \$35,000 to be spent on ordering 12 more fire hydrants. All in favor.

Pomerleau Building Door Replacement:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager explained that in 2016 a reserve fund was created for doors and windows replacement at the Pomerleau Building. At that time it was determined that replacement of the windows and doors on the first floor would cost around \$275,000. It was determined that they would pick away at it piece by piece with thermal efficiencies in mind. Currently the reserve fund has an estimated balance of \$84,500.
- Chad provided the board with a quote from Acuglass in the amount of \$20,697.85 for the replacement of the front doors of the Pomerleau Building.
- Steve Beauregard, Director of DPW explained that the quote is for two alumni doors with glass windows.
- Frank asked how long it would take to get the doors installed. Chad said about six weeks. Steve mentioned that the doors have to be custom made.
- Dennis asked what if any say did historical preservation have on the doors. Chad said there was no requirements at this time.
- Dennis asked if what keying of the door would cost. Chad said he was not entirely sure.
- Frank asked if the new doors were energy efficient. Stacy commented that they were more energy efficient than what is currently there. Steve explained that the doors have insulated panels and hard glass.
- Brendan asked if both doors would open. Steve said yes
- Steve Isham asked if the price was locked in. Steve Beauregard said yes but need to get them the 50% down as soon as possible to move forward.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan to authorize \$20,697.85 be moved from the Pomerleau Building Reserve Fund to the General Fund for the purchase of two front doors. All in favor.
- Steve Isham commended Chad for setting up funds like this so things can be taken care of quicker.

Town Managers' Report:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided the following Town Manager's Report.
- Provided an update regarding the ice jam. A long stick excavator was used to create channels in the river to aid in preventing flooding and keeping the river moving.
- The recent damage to the sewer infrastructure from the ice jam has been temporarily repaired. JA McDonald will be installing a permeant line as soon as possible.
- The Town of St. Johnsbury was recently awarded \$543,000 in funding for the LVRT Riverfront Path Extension through Congressionally Directed Spending. This funding combined with the NBRC funding means that St. Johnsbury is receiving around \$1.5 million towards the completion of this project.
- DPW is working on requesting bids for new equipment including a new truck, loader and trailer. Some DEC grant funding has been secured towards these purchases. Steve Beauregard, Director of DPW spoke on the increasing cost of equipment and the availability.
- Will bring requested ordinance updates to the next Select Board meeting on March 28th to address the handicap and towing language.
- Joe Kasprzak, Assistant Town Manager provided a brief update on the Armory Project. Working on an action plan for the brownfield clean up. Will invite White and Burke and plan to provide a more in-depth project update at the next Select Board meeting on March 28th. Frank commented he would like to see the project get rolling as costs keep increasing.

Other Business:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager shared with the Select Board and public that Fire Fighter Brenden Greaves has completed his one year of probationary employment with the Town of St. Johnsbury. He has come off probation and was pinned on Friday afternoon.
- Frank also congratulated Fire Fighter Brenden Greaves.

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