



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 April 11, 2022 @ 6:00 pm

Present-

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

Staff: Chad Whitehead, Rachel Waterhouse, Joe Kasprzak, Lesley Russ, Kresten Sterling, Bradley Reed

Stacy Jewell

Press: Todd Wellington, KATV

Public: David Reynolds, Jim Brown (via zoom), Don Smith (via zoom), Nancy Reynolds (via zoom), Jesse Stratton (via zoom), Cady (via zoom)

Agenda Amendments:

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan to add the Town Highway Annual Fiscal Plan and Standards to the agenda before the Town Manager's Report. All in favor.

Public Comment:

- Stacy Jewell, Town Clerk approached the board regarding her recent ARPA fund request for the digitalization of land records. She explained that she received a quote of \$45,000 to start the project and advised that the cost would go up from there as 45 books have photo static paper. The company who provided the quote is currently booked out until July. Expresses her disappointment with the ARPA request process. She explained that the intent of the ARPA funding is to support and remedy issues that arose due to the pandemic. The Town Clerk's Office was mandated by the governor to be open during the pandemic. Expressed she is confused where she got bumped for the funding for this project. She asked for the boards thought.
- Frank explained that an application is currently being developed and not available yet. Chad confirmed that the application is being developed.
- Frank expressed that Stacy's request is valid and that if the sprinkler system went off the books would be ruined so a backup is vital.
- Chad agreed that it is a vital project and agrees with Stacy on the need to digitalize the land records. Explained that was his intent all along was to support the project but not to bypass the ARPA committee. Chad indicated that he was still available to assist with the process as he had indicated at the previous board meeting.
- Frank asked how long the project will take. Stacy said they would be onsite for about a week depending on how it goes.
- Steve Isham explained that he is for this project however there needs to be a process in place and followed. Recommended not putting the cart before the horse.

- Tracy asked how the application process would happen. Chad said he envision the ARPA Committee would collect public input from the community. He also sees the need for a short term process as some requests need the funding sooner rather than later.
- Chad explained that he is completely supportive of Stacy's project and says it makes sense to move forward with the process. However the funds need to be moved and made available before any requests can be approved.
- Stacy stated she feels she is getting bumped. Chad explained that is not the case. The idea is to take the 2 million in ARPA funds and leverage it with other funding sources in the best interest of St Johnsbury. The intent is not to slow down her project.
- Frank stated it was determined that a process and application need to be in place in order to request the funds. Therefore the other requests have been slowed down.
- Stacy explained that the funds were received 9 months ago and she wants to move forward. There are only a few companies out there that do this type of digitalization.
- Dennis asked if a down payment was required. Stacy said no just to sign the quote. The project would be payable upon completion. The check would probably be written sometime in September or October.
- David Reynolds commented that he believes the Town could act on this project without having to open the flood gates as it is a Town project.
- Frank asked if the Town Clerk's Office had other funds to appropriate to the project. Stacy explained there is a records restoration fund. Lesley commented that the records restoration fund has \$28,000 currently.
- Steve Isham explained that it makes sense and would be wise to determine if a grant is available to help offset the cost of the project.
- Tracy asked if \$45,000 was just to start the project. Stacy said yes. Tracy asked if it could be a multifaceted project. Stacy explained it has been ongoing since 2020.
- Frank stated he believes we need to table this, do more homework, get our ducks in a row and wait to hear from Kaitlyn at NCIC about other potential funding.
- Tracy expressed that she believes Town projects should have the same process and same consistency as the other projects.
- Stacy Jewell, Town Clerk expressed her concerns over payroll internal controls and expense reimbursements.
- Lesley Russ, Finance Officer explained that she is currently reviewing and updating internal controls as she does every year.
- Dennis questioned the dates of the email. Chad stated he was unsure what he was referring to.
- Frank asked about the switched entry. Lesley explained that the switched entry had nothing to do with when the invoice was dated for. The journal entry was completed to switch to a different account due to classification. Lesley explained it was an atypical situation and a one off. Typically expense vouchers are for mileage and uniforms.
- Tracy asked if there was a different way to handle it. Lesley explained this has not happened in the 8 years she has been with the Town. Stacy stated it can go through accounts payable.
- Brendan asked if a reimbursement form with receipts was provided. Lesley said yes.
- Brendan asked if reimbursements are currently signed off on. Lesley said yes managers sign off on them and moving forward the finance officer or assistant town manager will sign off on the Town Managers expense vouchers.
- Steve Isham commented that it sounds like the procedure has been added and it is done and over with. Lesley said yes and she is currently updating the internal controls and fraud risk assessment now like she does every April.

Warrants:

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

Minutes:

- None

Liquor License:

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Tracy to approve the following liquor licenses. All in favor. Brendan abstained.
 - Khams Thai Cuisine- 1st class renewal
 - Catamount Film & Arts- 1st class renewal
 - St. Johnsbury Country Club- 1st class renewal, 3rd class renewal and outside consumption
 - St. Johnsbury Elks Lodge- 1st class renewal, 3rd class renewal and outside consumption
 - Horizons Deli-2nd class renewal
 - Mooseriver Lake & Lodge- 2nd class renewal

Armory Project ABCA Review:

- Joe Kasprzak introduced Jesse Stratton and turned it over to him to review the environmental studies.
- Jesse Stratton provided an overview of the environmental studies. He explained that a number of issues were identified and three alternative remediation plans were reviewed. The first plan was determined to be the best option for the Town as it is the cleanest option, most cost effective and removes the bulk of the contaminated materials.
- Joe explained that the option that is recommended would consist of remediation of all materials and results in no long term problems. This is the most cost effective option, provides less exposure to the Town and less contaminated materials are left over after remediation.
- Steve Isham commented that he agrees proceeding with remediation plan to remove the contaminated materials resulting in less exposure for staff who will be working in the Armory.
- Joe explained that when ABCA creates a cost estimate they use the most conservative estimate. While when the Town develops a cost estimate they use more of an optimistic estimate.
- Jesse Stratton explained that the transportation cost with disposal of contaminated materials is the most variable in terms of cost.
- No questions from the board
- No questions from the public

March Financials:

- Lesley Russ, Finance Officer provided the March Financials.
- The property taxes are prorates in the governmental funds as well as interdepartmental and reserve funds. The final quarterly payment for this fiscal year has been made on property, liability and workmen's comp insurance in all the funds.

- General fund at the end of March had a surplus of \$58,147. The Fire Department and Dispatch overtime line items continue to remain an area of concern but overall those departments are on budget. Tax sale has been scheduled for June 16th.
- Delinquent tax receivables are \$449,346 vs \$525,266 at this time last year.
- Special Services fund at the end of March had a surplus of \$58,147. Regular salaries and overtime combined are at 75% of those budgeted line items and are on target at this time. Overtime in the special services fund will continue as the recently hired employee is now attending the police academy and another employee has resigned. Recruitment to fill this vacancy is underway.
- The Highway fund at the end of March had a surplus of \$219,413. The highway fund is on target. Winter maintenance ended the year \$86,000 under budget.
- At the end of March the water fund had a deficit of \$328,486. Revenue is under budget due to booking revenue to the prior year during our audit. Water distribution had \$105,000 of expense in March for tank cleaning, inspections, meters and fire hydrants.
- The Sewer fund at the end of March had a deficit of \$609,186. Revenue is under budget due to booking in the revenue to the prior year during our audit. Expenses were impacted by the Moose River sewer line break.
- At the end of March the parking meter fund had a deficit of \$5,439. Revenues are improving and expense are on target at this time.
- No questions from the board.
- No questions from the public.

ARPA Reporting- Standard Allowance:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager explained that the final ruling on expending the ARPA funds are eligible for a one-time decision to take the Standard Allowance. The decision and filing must be completed by April 30th. By electing the Standard Allowance it simplifies reporting as well as gives the Town more flexibility in how the funds can be spent. Taking this election allows the Town to spend the money on any “governmental services” that a Town would normally spend money on.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan to move the Town of St. Johnsbury to make the one-time irrevocable decision to elect the Standard Allowance approach for our ARPA award in the amount of \$2,139,413.68 to spend on the provision of government services throughout the period of performance of the grant. All in favor.

Water and Sewer Budget Review:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided an overview of the proposed Water and Sewer Budget for 2022-2023.
- Chad reviewed the 10 year projections for water and sewer.
- Provided an overview of the upcoming projects and payment schedules for water and sewer.
- Proposed budget would include a 1.5% increase in water rates and a 3% increase in sewer rates.
- The Town anticipates an increased costs in solid handling for the next few years. Starting next year the Town will see an increased expense of \$100,000 to send bio solids to the landfill.
- 2022-2023 draft water and sewer budget and 10 year projections are available on the Town’s website.

Local Emergency Management Plan:

- Fire Chief Bradley Reed provided an overview of the local emergency management plan. Changes to the plan from the previous plan include providing a more readable format, adding more local resources and updating contract information. Otherwise not a lot of changes have been made to the plan.
- Chad mentioned that Steve Isham had asked about pets as it changes how some people respond to emergencies. Chief Reed explained while he was reviewing the local emergency management plan he spoke with both Candice Dane, Animal Control Officer and the local shelter. The local shelter advised him that they are only for cats. Candice expressed that there are boarding business for animals in the area and felt pretty comfortable with these options if there was a large scale event.
- Dennis noted that the generic number for the School was listed on the plan. Dennis expressed his concern that the 817 number would go directly to voicemail and the plan doesn't list the Academy's Facilities Director's cellphone number. He asked if Chief Reed had tried the numbers after hours. Chief Reed explained that he talked with the school and was given the generic number for the plan and that numbers can always be updated. He went on to mention that direct line numbers for shelter managers, Red Cross and the Facilities Director are available in dispatch. Chief Reed confirmed moving forward the plan will include cellphone numbers as well.
- On a motion by Brendan and second by Tracy to approve the Local Emergency Management Plan and provide a copy of the adopted plan to NVDA and Regional Emergency Planning Commission. All in favor.

Town Highway Annual Fiscal Plan and Standards:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager presented the Select Board with the Town Highway Annual Fiscal Plan and Standards. He explained that the certificate for the financial plan states that funds raised by the municipal taxes are equivalent to or greater than \$300 per mile for each mile of Class 1, 2 and 3 Town Highway in the municipality. Chad mentioned that based on the Town's budget and the highway miles, the Town raises just over \$25,000 per mile.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan to approve and sign the 2022 Town Highway Annual Fiscal Plan Certificate for the Town of St. Johnsbury. All in favor.
- Chad asked to table the Certificate of Compliance for Town Road and Bridge Standards until the next meeting so the Select Board can review a copy of the minimum requirement standards.

Town Managers' Report:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided the following Town Manager's Report.
- Household Hazardous Waste Day is scheduled for April 16th from 8 am until 1 pm at the Main Street Parking lot. Conditionally Exempt Generators are required to pre-register for the event. There is no limit on the amounts of pesticides that will be accepted but there is a limit of 10 lbs. on items such as pool chemicals. Fluorescent lights will not be accepted at this event but can be dropped off at Aubuchons.
- The St. Johnsbury Energy Committee is working with St. Johnsbury Subaru to coordinate events for Green Up Day on May 7th. The Energy Committee is also working on hosting a backyard composting event.
- The St. Johnsbury Energy Committee is also working to host e-bike demos.
- Chief Reed is working on vehicle plans for the Fire Departments tow vehicle. Squad 5 is also out of service. Expects that Chief Reed will be coming to the board with in the near future with a vehicle plan and request for the Select Board to authorize the replacement purchase. Chief Reed

has found the funds in his current budget but it has not been specifically appropriated to vehicle maintenance or equipment replacement.

- The RFP for the bike path is currently out to bid. Bids are due back on April 22nd.
- The RFP for the ARPA facilitator is currently out to bid. Bids are due back April 22nd.
- JA McDonald will be resuming construction on the Pleasant and Gilman Street Project this month.
- Tax Sale is scheduled for June 16th.
- The Fire Department vacancies will be filled by the end of April.
- The new Police Officer is currently at the Academy and recently had a resignation in the department. The Town is currently recruiting for this vacancy. Looking for both full time and part time Officers. Part time Officers can help offset the cost of overtime.
- The Town is working on a recruitment and retention plan.
- The Town is working with the Chamber to coordinate the 2022 #GetDowntown events scheduled for June, July and August.
- The Chamber will be hosting food truck events at the LVRT Pavilion on June 14th, July 12th and Aug. 9th from 4 to 7pm.
- Encouraged people to check out Discover St. Johnsbury calendar for more events.
- Joe Kasprzak, Assistant Town Manager mentioned that he will be meeting with the Energy Committee next Monday at 3 pm to discuss the Armory Project.

Other Business:

- Dennis stated that the finance report stated the Town finished the winter season under budget. He inquired if it was possible to dedicate the \$86,000 to sidewalk repairs. Chad said that Steve is working on developing a sidewalk plan and he will ask finance if this is something that could be done.
- Dennis asked about the future of the traffic lights around town. Chad said he will follow up with Steve to see where the plan stands.
- Dennis asked for an update on the hydrants. Chad explained that the first shipment of fire hydrants are due in May at which point DPW plans to get them installed.

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