



# TOWN OF ST. JOHNSBURY

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## **Meeting of the St. Johnsbury Select Board February 13, 2023 at 5:30 PM Special Select Board Meeting**

Present-

Select Board: Dennis Smith, Brendan Hughes (via zoom), Frank Empsall, Steven Isham, Tracy Zschau

Staff: Chad Whitehead, Rachel Waterhouse, Joe Kasprzak Stacy Jewell

Press: Todd Wellington, KATV

Public: Bob Joly, Mary Ellen Reis (via zoom), Gary Chester (via zoom), Robin Burnash (via zoom), Jim Brown, Don Smith (via zoom), Brynn Evans, Fred Faferrein, Kevin Mazuzan, Michaela Olm, David Hare, Adam Kane, Olivia Plunkett, Gillian Sewake, Bob Theriault (via zoom), Ashley Van Zandt (via zoom), Diane (via zoom),

### Special Appropriations:

- Northern Vermont Chapter of the American Red Cross in the amount of \$1,800. Kevin Muzuzan and Michaela Olm spoke on behalf of this special appropriations request. They provided an overview of the services offer by Red Cross including trainings, disaster relief, blood drives and out resources. They highlighted that in 2022 they provided services for 8 St. Johnsbury residents that were displaced from their homes. Expressed that the funds would help provide a better experience for individuals using the Red Cross services. Steve Isham asked what other Towns the Red Cross will be asking for special appropriations from. Kevin listed towns including Lyndonville and Cabot.
- Caledonian Home Healthcare and Hospice in the amount of \$18,382. Brynn Evans spoke on behalf of this special appropriations request. She highlighted that they are requesting the same funding as last year to provide services to the Town of St. Johnsbury residents. In 2022 the program provided 1,297 visits in St. Johnsbury serving a total of 412 residents. The program services the community from birth through death and is the designated agency by the State to cover Caledonia County and Southern Essex County.
- Catamount Arts in the amount of \$5,000. Ashley Van Zandt presented on behalf of this special appropriation. Ashley highlighted that in 2022 over 100 events were conducted through Catamount Arts including the Final Fridays, Performing Arts Series, Films Weekly, Metro Opera, the Art Port and the Levitt Amp Series. Plans for events in 2023 continue to develop.
- First Night North in the amount of \$3,000. Ashley Van Zandt spoke on behalf of this special appropriations request. The event returned to in person in 2022 and had several thousand attendees. She explained that 2022 was highly successful with over 200 artists and

75-80 performances. Steve Isham asked if Ashley knew how much revenue these events brought to St. Johnsbury. Ashley said she estimates it totals over a million a year.

- Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium in the amount of \$63,000. Adam Kane spoke on behalf of this special appropriations request. He explained that the requested amount is only 4% of the operating budget but really helps. Adam mentioned that St. Johnsbury Residents can access the Museum free of charge and find that many come again and again. He explained that the Museum is an anchor institution for the Town attracting tourists and provides a public relations value as they are on VPR every day. Adam highlighted the upcoming events for April vacation week and Dinosaurs Among Us coming in June. The butterfly house is expect to open again this summer and the Science Annex late summer early fall.
- Good Living Senior Center in the amount of \$20,000. Bob Theriault spoke on behalf of this special appropriations request. He explained that the Good Living Senior Center is back open to gatherings for seniors. He said the \$20,000 helps cover the costs of rental, programs such as tai chi and trips. Expressed how key socialization is to seniors.
- Kingdom Animal Shelter in the amount of \$2,000.
- Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging in the amount of \$7,200. Mary Ellen Reis spoke on behalf of this special appropriation request. She explained the mission is to provide tools for residents to age well and live in their homes as long as possible safety. In 2022 670 clients were served with 27 staff split between offices in Newport and St. Johnsbury.
- NEK Human Services in the amount of \$7,983. Terri Lavelly spoke on behalf of this special appropriations request. She explained that during 2022 NEK Human Services assisted 2,887 individuals in mental health crisis 593 were St. Johnsbury residents. NEK Human Services employs 85 people who live and work in St. Johnsbury.
- Northeast Kingdom Youth Services in the amount of \$5,500.
- Support and Services at Home Rural Edge (SASH) in the amount of \$2,000. Gary Chester spoke on behalf of this special appropriation request. He explained that SASH supports 4 counties and has been in St. Johnsbury since 2011. 520 people were served last year.
- Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) in the amount of \$810.
- Rural Community Transportation (RCT) in the amount of \$13,050.
- St. Johnsbury Athenaeum in the amount of \$115,000. Bob Joly spoke on behalf of this special appropriation request. He highlighted that the Athenaeum has been requesting the same special appropriations from the Town since 2011. He explained expenses have increased but the special appropriations request has not. In 2022 the Athenaeum circulated over 40,000 items including 8,000 downloaded books and videos to over 4,000 people. The Athenaeum is open 40 hours a week Monday thru Saturday. In 2022 over 313 programs were offered to children through the youth services portion of the Athenaeum.
- St. Johnsbury Kiwanis Pool in the amount of \$29,000. Fred Lafarrier spoke on behalf of this special appropriations request. He explained that it costs about \$70,000 annually to operate the pool 7 days a week. This includes 2 weeks of Red Cross swim lessons to over 380 youth. In 2022 a new water slide and deck were put on. Steve Isham asked if this was a one year increase or an increase moving forward. Fred explained that the increase is moving forward as it takes a lot to keep the pool going.
- St. Johnsbury Town Band in the amount of \$770. David Hare spoke on behalf of this special appropriations request. He explained that the St. Johnsbury Town Band was formed in 1830 and is the 3<sup>rd</sup> oldest band currently operation. The first special appropriations request for the Town band was in 1912 for \$1,000. He explained additional funding is sought through concerts, parades and donations from community members and tourists. He invited citizens to join the band.

- St. Johnsbury Meals on Wheels in the amount of \$10,000. Diane spoke on behalf of this special appropriations request. 38,153 meals were served in 2022. Meals on Wheels operated a route 5 days a week in town and 1 day a week on the outskirts of St. Johnsbury. While suggested donation of the meal is \$3.50 the return to Meals on Wheels is less than \$1.
- Umbrella Inc. in the amount of \$9,500. Olivia Plunkett spoke on behalf of this special appropriations request. She explained that Umbrella provides advocacy services, social change services and family-based services. In 2022 88 individuals were assisted with domestic violence advocacy and 216 families received services. The special appropriations request will assist Umbrella to continue to offer these diverse services.
- Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (VABVI) in the amount of \$675.

On a motion by Dennis and second by Tracy the board adjourned the special appropriations section of the meeting by unanimous decision.