



# TOWN OF ST. JOHNSBURY

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## Meeting of the St. Johnsbury Select Board June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023 @ 6:00 pm

Present-

Select Board: Dennis Smith, Steve Isham, Frank Empsall, Brendan Hughes (via zoom)

Staff: Chad Whitehead, Rachel Waterhouse, Stacy Jewell, Joe Kasprzak (via zoom), Lesley Russ (via zoom)

Press: KATV

Public: Jim Brown, Robert Desrochers, Peggy Pearl, Staci Smith-Lantagne

### Agenda Amendments:

- None

### Public Comment:

- None

### Warrants:

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

### Minutes:

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Steve Isham to approve the Select Board minutes from April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023 with the noted correction. All in favor.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Steve Isham to approve the Select Board minutes from May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023 with the noted correction. All in favor.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Steve Isham to approve the Select Board minutes from May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 with the noted corrections. All in favor.

### Liquor/Tobacco License:

- None

### May Financials:

- Lesley Russ, Finance Officer provided the following May Financials.

- At the end of May the General Fund had a surplus of \$1,114,012. During the month of May the Town received \$98,000 in delinquent taxes. Departments in the general fund are on target at this time except for the Public Safety Building. Overtime continues to exceed the budget in dispatch and the fire department. The new employee in dispatch is expected to be available to fill shifts starting June 12<sup>th</sup> and an offer has been made pending the results of his medical for the vacancy in the Fire Department.
- The Special Services Fund at the end of May had a deficit of \$36,723. Regular salaries and overtime combined are at 98% of the budget. Currently there are 2 full time positions and 1 part time position open in the PD and recruitment continues.
- At the end of May the Highway Fund had a surplus of \$368,842. There is one large loan payment to be made in June which will reduce this surplus. Winter maintenance came in under budget by \$107,570 due to a mild winter.
- The Water Fund at the end of May had a deficit of \$265,066. Expense are on budget except for chemical supplies and fire hydrant purchases. Revenues are under budget due to year-end audit adjustments.
- At the end of May of Sewer Fund had a surplus of \$1,764,449. The Sewer Fund has received \$2,502,503 in grant funds for the Pleasant and Gilman project. To date the Sewer Plant has spent \$62,000 to make repairs from the April flood. We expect to file an insurance claim on this event.
- The Parking Meter Fund at the end of May had a surplus of \$18,098. Revenues are ahead of projections.
- Auditors will be in the office Tuesday and Wednesday this week beginning the preliminary audit. They will be back the second week of August to wrap things up.

#### History and Heritage:

- Peggy Pearl from History and Heritage provided an overview of their work and upcoming projects to the Select Board. She explained that History and Heritage started in 2015 and is run by strictly volunteers. The goal is to preserve the history of St. Johnsbury by collecting, exhibiting and teaching it. She mentioned that History and Heritage has recently taken over the Walking Tour of St. Johnsbury, continues to offer the Cemetery Walk and has created a history of St. Johnsbury curriculum for the local schools. History and Heritage is looking to expand their foot print with more exhibit space and has raised an excess of \$340,000 for a building at 421 Summer Street.
- Robert Desrochers reviewed the plans for the new exhibit hall, courtyard and bathrooms with the Select Board. He explained that the building is currently under construction now and the hope is to have the project completed by later this fall. He explained that being able to obtain some ARPA funding from the Town would allow the projects to move forward quicker. Robert mentioned that they will be looking forward about \$20,000 for the courtyard project, \$30,000-\$40,000 for the exhibits and \$100,000 for the bathrooms, with a total application around \$150,000.
- Steve Isham asked if the curriculum would be available to residents as well. Peggy explained that she thinks the answer is yes however they are still figuring that out. She mentioned that History and Heritage received a grant to cover enough curriculums for the schools and library.
- Robert mentioned that a lot of the curriculum is what is on the evolution of display walls. Peggy mentioned that visitors stand and read it all. Frank commented that it is very extensive and impressive.
- Peggy asked if they were to submit an application for the \$150,000 what the deadline was. Chad explained that the deadline for the transformational projects is July 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Peggy asked if they should withdraw their other application. Chad said no not at this time. He explained that if both applications were awarded they would have to choose at that time. Stacy

Smith-Lantagne confirm that they could keep both applications submitted and withdraw one if both are approved. Chad said yes.

- Steve Isham asked how folks could donate to History and Heritage. Peggy said they can stop by at 421 Summer Street, mail a check or donate online.
- Dennis confirmed that History and Heritage has 2 applications in and that the smaller one would not exclude them from the larger application if awarded. Chad said that was correct it would not excluded them but they could not accept both awards.

#### Readiness to Serve Transfer Request:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager explained that annually the Town received a \$50,000 DOC payment. The Town has for the past years moved \$30,000 of those funds into the Economic Reserve Fund. He requested that the Select Board approve moving \$30,000 from this year's payment to the Economic Reserve Fund.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Steve Isham to move \$30,000 of the DOC payment from the general fund to the economic reserve fund. All in favor.

#### Housing Development Reserve Fund Transfer Request:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager requested that the Select Board move \$30,086 from the housing development restricted reserves to unallocated funds to cover the grants expended so far this year.
- On a motion be Dennis and second by Steve Isham to move \$30,086 from the housing development restricted reserves to unallocated funds to cover grants that have been awarded this year. All in favor.

#### Transfer to Highway Fund Equipment Reserve:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager explained that a loan was obtained for equipment in the highway fund this year and we have yet to receive the truck. He explained that the truck was ordered but has not been completed yet and at this point we do not expect to take delivery in this fiscal year. The Town is requesting that the Select Board move the excess funds from the loan in the amount of \$134,743 into a restricted reserve to ensure the funds are available when the truck specified in the loan is received.
- Steve Beauregard mentioned that the truck is built and is currently in paint. He doesn't have an exact delivery date yet but said paint will take 1-2 months and then it will go for up fitting which will take 2-3 months.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Steve Isham to move the loan funds in the amount of \$134,743 into a restricted reserve. All in favor.

#### DWSRF Water Treatment Facility Upgrade:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager explained that the loan agreement for the Water Treatment Facility has been finalized by the VT municipal bond bank. The loan amount is for \$9,974,898 leaving a short fall of around \$2,472,873.40 for the project. He explained that the Town has secured 50% of subsidy on funds leaving a contingency around \$402,246 on the project. Chad explained that the Town is recommending moving forward on this project and awarding the project to Penta Corp as the low bidder coming in at \$10,314,000. Dufresne Group has also recommended the Town move forward with awarding the contract to Penta Corp.

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Steve Isham to approve the loan in the amount of \$9,974,898 for the Water Treatment Facility Upgrade. All in favor.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Steve Isham to authorize the Town Manager to execute the construction contract contingent on the concurrence from water supply. All in favor.

#### Dispatch Radio Grant Purchase:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager explained that Dispatch has obtained a grant from Homeland Security in the amount of \$213,909 to upgrade 2 transmitters in St. Johnsbury and Waterford and to add an additional 3 transmitters in surrounding areas. These upgrades will alleviate dead spots and improve responder safety. Dispatch received 2 bids for the project and has awarded the project to Burlington Communications in the amount of \$207,254. However since the purchase is an unbudgeted expense it needs Select Board approval.
- On a motion by Dennis and second to Steve Isham to approve the dispatch radio grant purchase in the amount of \$207,254.

#### Pomerleau Building Reserve Transfer:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager explained that one of the AC circulating pumps has failed and the redundant pump is in the process of failing. He explained that the technician from Mountain Air has recommended replacing both pumps and was able to secure 2 pumps for the Town. Chad mentioned that the total cost of the project is \$17,500 and includes the installation. He is requesting a transfer from the Pomerleau Building Reserve Fund to unrestricted funds for this purchase.
- Stacy Jewell, Town Clerk mentioned that the pumps provide AC in the summer and heat in the winter.
- On a motion by Bennis and second by Steve Isham to move \$17,500 from the Pomerleau Building Reserve Fund to unrestricted funds for the purchase and installation of 2 circulating pumps for 51 Depot Square. All in favor.

#### Town Manager's Report:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided the following Town Manager's Report.
- A total of 23 applications have been received for the St. Johnsbury Revitalization Fund Grant Program. Of those applications 8 are for micro grants and 15 are for feasibility and implementation grants. Applications will be going to the scoring committee within the next week and then plan to come to the Select Board in mid-July with recommendations regarding awards.
- The Pleasant and Gilman project has resumed and will be wrapping up this summer. Chad explained that the project once completed will be inspected in 12 months which is equivalent to a 12 month warranty for the work.
- Tomorrow night is the first Tuesday Food Truck Event of the season and Final Fridays plan to resume later this month. For more events around Town he suggested checking out the Chamber's calendar of events.
- The auditors are here in the office tomorrow and Wednesday.
- Joe Kasprzak, Assistant Town Manager mentioned that last week the Town applied to VCDP for \$300,000 under the CDBG. The Town participated in the Northern Forest Open House last week.
- Steve Isham asked if the sidewalk replacement in front of the new Express Care was being completed privately or through the Town. Chad explained that it is a split at the moment. Part of it

is being completed by the Town as the sidewalk was sloped and was part of the sidewalk reserve request at the last Select Board meeting.

- Frank asked when the sewer plant press was being delivered. Chad said that we are expecting delivery in the next few weeks. Frank asked about funding for the press. Chad explained that the press is completely funded however the building for the press is not.
- Joe Kasprzak mentioned that the grand opening for the LVRT is scheduled for July 15<sup>th</sup>. He explained that the Governor will be biking from Swanton to St. Johnsbury and expects that the celebratory event will be planned in St. Johnsbury.

#### Other Business:

- None

#### Executive Session:

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Steve Isham that an executive session was needed to address a contractual matter and that premature general public knowledge would put the Town at substantial risk.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Steve Isham to enter executive session and invite the Town Manager. All in favor.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Steve Isham to exit executive session. All in favor.
- The Chair had nothing to report.

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