



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 June 26th, 2023 @ 6:00 pm

Present-

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

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

Press: KATV

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

Agenda Amendments:

- None

Public Comment:

- Frank Empsall, Select Board Chair started the meeting off with a moment of silence in honor of Ann Cosgrove who recently passed away. He explained that she was the wife of former Select Board member Kevin Oddy.
- Kevin Fontesha approached the Board to let them know that since opening at the end of May he has met the requirement in the Tax Stabilization agreement and has 38 full and part time employees at 98 Mill Street.

Warrants:

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

Minutes:

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Tracy to table the June 12th minutes. All in favor.

Liquor/Tobacco License:

- None

WWTF Truck Purchase Request:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager explained that with the takeover of the WWTF the Town needs to purchase two vehicles. The current vehicles at the plant are owned by H2O Innovations. Chad explained that one truck is needed for water and sewer meter reads for billing and the other truck

would be the operator's truck. He explained that Steve Beauregard has priced several different trucks.

- Steve Beauregard mentioned that new trucks are running anywhere between \$75,000 and \$80,000. He explained that he looked at trucks that were around a year old with about 20,000 miles and they are coming in at \$20,000 less than new.
- Chad explained that Towns are no longer being offered municipal discounts.
- Frank asked where the trucks were coming from. Chad said one is right here in St. Johnsbury. The other has yet to be committed to as there are a few options.
- Chad explained currently the Water Fund has a balance of 1.3 million and the Sewer Fund has a balance of 2.2 million. He explained that the Town is suggesting that the cost of the vehicle purchased for the water and sewer meter reads be split 50/50 between the Water Fund and the Sewer Fund. He mentioned that the Town is suggesting that the cost of the vehicle for the operator be funded through the Sewer Fund. The cost of the meter read truck is estimated at \$50,000 and the cost of the water operator truck is estimated at \$55,000.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Tracy to approve \$55,000 from the sewer fund for the purchase of the WWTF Operator truck and approve \$50,000 with \$25,000 from the water fund and \$25,000 from the sewer fund for the purchase of the meter read truck, for a total of \$105,000. All in favor.

17 Eastern Avenue Assessment Settlement:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager explained that the Select Board and Town Manager's Office has been working with the Town Attorney on the Alexander Bouley tax appeal for his property located at 17 Eastern Ave. Chad mentioned that the courts have asked both parties to try to come to a settlement. Chad read the Stipulated Judgement Order which highlights that the assessed value for the property located at 17 Eastern Ave for 2021, 2022 and 2023 will be \$499,000.
- Chad explained that taxes for 2021 and 2022 have been paid. He asked Stacy how much the Town would have to reimburse to Alexander Bouley.
- Stacy Jewell, Town Clerk said that the Town would have to reimburse \$4,700.
- Chad explained that the Town could choose to pursue moving forward with the court system but estimated that the attorney fees to move forward would be over \$20,000. Chad explained that discussion have taken place on the best next steps for the Town and the Select Board and Town Manager's Office has decided it would be best to move forward with the Stipulated Judgement Order and reimburse the \$4,700.
- Chad explained that currently the property is assessed at \$560,000 and initially Alexander Bouley offered an assessed value of \$420,000. He mentioned that they are meeting more in the middle at \$499,000.
- Frank asked what happens next. Chad said if the Select Board agrees they will authorize the Town's Attorney Michael Terrant to sign the Stipulated Judgement Order.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Tracy to authorize Michael Terrant to sign the Stipulated Judgement Order with regards to 17 Eastern Ave. on behalf of the Town of St. Johnsbury Select Board. All in favor.

Town Manager's Report:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided the following Town Manager's Report.
- The final vacancy in the Fire Department has been filled.

- Congratulations to Captain Hawthorne and his wife welcomed their son Jameson on June 25th.
- Paving is about 90% complete. Steve Beauregard explained that Elm Street was done today and they will be moving onto Undercliff weather permitting.
- Vacancies in the Police Department continue. Chief Page and Rachel continue to work on recruitment and the Town has seen a up lift in applications in the last week.
- Chief Tim Page has mentioned his plan to retire in the future. While he has not set a definite date the Town is working on beginning a search for a new Police Chief fairly soon.
- The Town has received the concurrence to move forward with the Water Treatment. Expect to have a sign contract with the contractor soon. Expects activity to begin by the end of the summer onsite.
- Final Friday for the 2023 summer kicks off Friday night.
- Gillian Sewake, Chamber Director mentioned that the Food Truck Pop Up is tomorrow night June 27th at the Pavilion. She explained that if the forecast continues with predicted thunderstorms they plan to move the event to the Welcome Center but she will let everyone know tomorrow morning.

Other Business:

- Jim Brown thanked Gillian Sewake for her hard work on the Pavilion gardens. He mentioned that they looked really good.
- Jim Brown mentioned that the Planning Commission is working with Rod Francis and Brandy Saxton from Place Sense with regards to the bylaw modernization. He explained that they are going to conduct a comprehensive survey of the Town and will help the Planning Commission understand how they can help with the housing crisis. Jim mentioned that he is impressed with what they are doing. He expects that a in September there will be a public presentation and again in March 2024 with Town Meeting.
- Tracy inquired how this would integrate with S-100. Chad explained that it was included in part of their scope of work.
- Stacy mentioned that 2024 is a presidential election year and asked that they don't complicate it.
- Chad explained that the Place Sense understands and will be sensitive to it. He explained that he doesn't believe they will have anything that will need to go on the ballot.
- Chad mentioned that the Governor will be in St. Johnsbury on July 15th. He explained that the Governor will be riding 94 miles of the LVRT in that one day and is expect to arrive in St. Johnsbury between 7 and 8 pm. The Town Manager's Office is working to determine what that event planning will look like for the grand opening of the rail trail.
- Frank asked if Senator Sanders would also be partaking in the event. Chad said he had not heard that he would be at this time.
- Chad mention that Irene Nagle from NVDA is retiring at the end of the month. He thanked her for all the work she has assisted the Town with over the years.
- Frank commented that Irene will be missed.

Executive Session:

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Tracy 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 Tracy to enter executive session and invite the Town Manager. All in favor.

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Tracy to exit executive session. All in favor.
- The Chair had nothing to report.

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