



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 July 10th, 2023 @ 6:00 pm

Present-

Select Board: Steve Isham, Tracy Zschau, Frank Empsall, Brendan Hughes (via zoom)

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

Press: KATV

Public: Jim Brown, Gillian Sewake, Pam Dearborn, Matt, Don Smith (via zoom), Tara Longley (via zoom)

Agenda Amendments:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager requested that approval of alcohol consumption on Town property for the opening of the LVRT and celebration with the Governor be added to the agenda.
- Frank mentioned that it could be discussed under liquor license.

Public Comment:

- Gillian Sewake, Discover St. Johnsbury Director provided an update to the Select Board regarding the first final Friday event of 2023. She explained that the event was really successful and thanked the Town, Chad, DPW and volunteers for their assistance. She mentioned that the next Final Friday event will be taking place on July 28th.
- Stacy Jewell, Town Clerk mentioned that it seemed more road closed ahead signs were needed on Route 5 and Route 2 for the event as the main section of Railroad Street closed at 2 pm on the day of the event.
- Chad said he would review with Steve Beauregard, Director of DPW.

Warrants:

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

Minutes:

- On a motion by Steve Isham and second by Tracy to approve the minutes from the June 12th Select Board meeting as presented. All in favor.
- On a motion by Tracy and second by Steve Isham to approve the minutes from the June 26th Select Board meeting as presented. All in favor. Brendan abstained.

Liquor/Tobacco License:

- Brendan Hughes recused himself of the discussion.
- Chad explained that the St. J Distillery has offered to provide drinks for the LVRT Celebration with the Governor on July 15th. He mentioned that the Governor is expected to arrive around 7 pm. He explained that they are looking for approval from the Select Board for alcohol consumption on Town property.
- Gillian explained that the only area that alcohol would be allowed in would be in the parking lot and the interior of the Welcome Center. She mentioned that the area would be well marked and roped off.
- Chad explained that the Town ordinance requires approval.
- On a motion by Tracy and second by Steve Isham to allow alcohol consumption at the Welcome Center on July 15th for the LVRT Celebration with the Governor. All in favor.

Grand List Adjustment:

- Frank explained that adjustments to the Grand List are needed due to the grievous property settlement for 17 Eastern Ave. He explained that the property owner contested the appraised value of \$565,900 and settled with the Town on an appraised value of \$499,000. However the property owner has already paid their 2021 and 2022 taxes resulting in an over payment. The over payment for 2021 was \$2,514.99 and for 2022 was \$2,264.28.
- On a motion by Steve Isham and second by Tracy to approve the refund of \$2,514.99 and the adjustment to the grand list for the 2021 property taxes for 17 Eastern Ave. All in favor.
- On a motion by Tracy and second by Steve Isham to approve the refund of \$2,264.28 and the adjustment to the grand list for 2022 property taxes for 17 Eastern Ave. All in favor.

WWTF Equipment Request:

- Chad introduced Jim Brimblecombe, Chief Wastewater Operator of the St. Johnsbury Wastewater Treatment Facility.
- Chad explained that the WWTF needs to either rent or purchase a conveyor system for the end of the press. He explained that the Town looked into renting this piece of equipment and were quoted \$3,500 a month with a \$3,500 delivery fee. He explained that the conveyor system would be needed for at least 4 months this year with a total to rent costing \$17,500. He mentioned that next year the Town would then have to spend the funds to purchase the conveyor system at around \$40,000. Jim was able to locate a portable conveyor system for \$40,000 with a \$3,500 delivery fee from MSD Conveyor. The Town is recommending purchasing the equipment instead of renting it.
- On a motion by Steve Isham and second by Tracy to approve the purchase of the portable conveyor system in the amount of \$43,500 with funds from the wastewater fund. All in favor.

RHIGP Recommendations:

- Joe Kasprzak, Assistant Town Manager introduced Kresten Sterling, Code Compliance Officer. He explained that Kresten has taken over the RHIGP work with the review committee and that Joe is now focusing his efforts on procurement of funds for the program.
- Kresten reviewed the program, the requirements and the outreach with the Select Board. He explained that for FY 2023-2024 the RHIGP Committee had increased the award amount from \$3,000 to \$6,000. He highlighted that the program requires a 1 to 1 match and is a reimbursement fund. He explained that he inspects the completed work before funds are reimbursed. The application period was open from April 1, 2023 until April 30th, 2023 and the program saw a total

of 77 applications totaling \$386,360 in requests that would support a total of 1.62 million in project costs.

- He reviewed the scoring process for applications. He reviewed the program funding highlighting that the program has a total balance of \$140,208. He explained that the committee is recommending awarding 25 applications in the award amount of \$140,208 with total project costs of \$972,390. This would include adding 20 new units to the rental market in St. Johnsbury.
- Kresten thanked everyone on the committee for all of their hard work and dedication.
- Frank thanked everyone involved in this valuable program.
- Steve Isham mentioned that his nephew Kevin Fontesha has applied for the grant and based on the scoring process he feels he can be impartial voting on tonight's awards.
- Pam Dearborn explained that the committee is considering adding a point on the scoring if the work is for safety. Tracy asked for an example. Pam said like repairing stairs and adding handrails.
- Chad thanked Kresten and the committee.
- Brendan explained that he is excited to see the growth of this grant program. He commented that 77 applications is amazing.
- On a motion by Tracy and second by Steve Isham to award the recommended 25 applications as presented. All in favor.

STJRFGP Recommendations:

- Chad explained that on March 13th, 2023 the Select Board set aside \$50,000 of the St. Johnsbury Revitalization Fund Grant Program money for micro grants. He reviewed the micro grant requirements and the deadline due for applications, May 30th, 2023. The program requires applicants to be located within St. Johnsbury, requires a 10% match and operation expense are not eligible.
- Worked with the review committee which consisted of Doug Reid, Heather Alger and Jamie Murphy to determine recommendations.
- Chad presented the following applications.
 - RINK INC- Outdoor rink enhancement including installing new liners and boards for the ice rinks located on Portland and Main Street. Total project cost is \$254,660. Asking for award of \$7,400. The committee felt this was ok since it was a Town project.
 - St. Johnsbury Public Basketball Courts- The application was prepared by Matt and Tara Longley to purchase 4 new goals for the reestablishment of two basketball courts at the St. J School for the public to use. The total project cost is \$135,188. The school has put up \$100,000 in funds for this project and the Longley's have also collected donations totaling \$5,750. Asking for \$9,438 in STJRFGP funding for this project. The committee felt that it was ok for this amount as it is a Town project. Jim Brown inquired what was meant by goals. Chad explained the stand, hoop and backboard.
 - Kingdom Animal Shelter- to assist community residents with companion animal vet care. Kingdom Animal Hospital gives a 50% discount on services to the Community Fund. Other funding for this program comes from the Lumonski Fund, private donations and the Kingdom Animal Shelters budget. Request is for \$5,000.
 - NEKCA Youth Advocacy- Working on creating a drop in youth center on Eastern Ave for area teens. The request is for \$5,000 and will cover costs associated with planning, design, building/paint supplies and furnishing. The total project cost is estimated at \$15,000.
 - American Game Table- Requesting funds in the amount of \$5,000 for digital expansion with the enhancement of online marketing and development of a social media presences to

increase sales for the American Game Table which is made in St. Johnsbury. Total project cost is \$5,500, with \$500 coming from their own funds.

- Stevens Wood Polish- The request is for \$4,500 to research the product development, design packaging and establish new legal and accounting foundations. Anticipate to see employment in St. Johnsbury one day. Total project cost is \$9,500 with the \$5,000 coming from cash reserves.
- The committee did recommend not moving forward with two other applications. Both did not meet the criteria of the micro grants. One was not located within St. Johnsbury and the other was for operating expense which was excluded from the grant.
- Chad explained that the applications the committee is recommending totals \$36,338 of the \$50,000 that was set aside for micro grants.
- Steve Isham asked if the planning and implementation applications came in over the set aside amount. Chad said yes the total amount for the planning and implementation applications came in around \$500,000.
- Tracy asked if the remaining funds would be moved over to the implementation grants or if another round of micro grants would be offered.
- Chad explained that the remaining funds would be left in the micro grant bucket as the plan was to offer a second round. Tracy explained that she felt once the news of the grants got out it would spur more interest in the next round.
- On a motion by Steve Isham and second by Tracy to approve the STJRFGP Micro Grant awards in the amount of \$36,338. All in favor.

Town Manager's Report:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided the following Town Manager's Report.
- The contract with Penta Corp. for the Water Facility has been executed. Penta Corp. is working on schedules for this two year project.
- Storm preparations began yesterday and the Town has only seen minor damage so far. The Town will continue to watch overnight and into tomorrow. The storm is predicted to peak around 9 am tomorrow morning. He asked people to obey road closed signs if they are needed.

Other Business:

- Steve Isham mentioned that on May 8th the Select Board awarded STJRGF to the St. Johnsbury Development Fund. It has been 45 days since the award and the Select Board has yet to receive an application from the Development Fund.
- Chad explained that he has seen a draft application but not the final application.
- Steve Isham requested that the St. Johnsbury Development Fund provide an update to the Select Board at the next meeting on Monday July 24th.
- Stacy mentioned that they have not closed on the property yet.
- Steve Isham explained that according to the application requirements if an application is not received within 45 days of the request that they will be required update the Select Board. He mentioned that he is just requesting that they update the Select Board possibly at the next meeting on July 24th.
- Chad mentioned that on a different note he has received the updated application for Catamount Arts.

Executive Session:

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

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