



TOWN OF ST. JOHNSBURY

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Meeting of the St. Johnsbury Select Board December 11th, 2023 @ 6:00 pm

Present-

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

Staff: Chad Whitehead, Rachel Waterhouse, Chief Bradley Reed, FF Hunter Tallman (via zoom)

Public: KATV, Todd Wellington Jim Brown, Dan Olszanski, Ashley Van Zandt, Scott Beck

Agenda Amendments:

- None

Public Comment:

- Ashley Van Zandt from Catamount Arts discussed the upcoming First Night North on Sunday Dec. 31st beginning at 3 pm. The event held in St. Johnsbury will have over 70 shows, over 175 artists and food trucks. She mentioned last year over 2,000 people attended the event. She thanked the Select Board, the Town and the community for their support of the vent.
- Jim Brown asked where buttons could be purchased. Ashley explained that buttons were available at the Catamount Arts space at the Caplan's building or online and the day of the event they would be available at the St. Johnsbury School and the Information booth.
- Rank thanked Ashley for spear heading this great event.

Warrants:

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

Minutes:

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Tracy to approve the minutes from the Nov. 27th meeting with the noted correction. All in favor.

Liquor/Tobacco License:

- None

St. J Transformation Grant- RINK Inc. Grant Agreement:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager mentioned that the grant agreement is similar to the other agreements the Town has issued. He presented the Select Board with a draft of the RINK Inc.

STJRF Grant Agreement for the award of \$100,000 from the STRFGP. RINK is looking to use the reimbursement grant in the amount of \$100,000 for consultant work upon securing ownership of the property located at 699 Bay Street.

- Scott Beck mentioned that he was thankful for the funds and this agreement that will help get the study completed and the land under control. He mentioned that Elevate 802 is still on board with the project and this is a really good step towards moving forward.
- Steve Isham asked if the facility would be able to able venues such as concerts and conventions. Scott explained that it was still up in the air but he would hope so.
- Steve Isham asked if there was an update on the hotel coming in. Scott said not yet and explained that there have been talks but nothing yet.
- Scott mentioned that RINK secured a grant to update their outdoor rinks located at 4 Seasons Park and Portland Street. He explained that they have all the needed equipment to do the upgrade absent from the leveling but will get help from DPW.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Tracy to authorize the Town Manager to enter into a grant agreement with RINK Inc. as presented. All in favor.

Fire Apparatus Replacement:

- Chad explained that two fire apparatuses are due for replacement. One has a broke frame and one is overdue for replacement and has had its frame repaired multiple times. He explained that Chief Reed prepared a memo and provided apparatus replacement funding options to the Select Board. Given the information Chad recommended moving forward with placing the bond request on the ballot for Town Meeting. This would give the Town the ability to borrow if that is determined to be the best option for the Town.
- Chief Reed mentioned that he was recommending moving forward with the purchase of the two fire apparatuses from Ferrera with the total cost of the purchase plus equipment not to exceed \$1,653,334. He mentioned that the upside of moving forward with Ferrera is the savings of around \$150,000 which is significant.
- Dan Olszanski, Ferrera Vendor explained that the fire truck is in the process of being built and St. Johnsbury is being given the opportunity to customize some pieces of the apparatus if an agreement to purchase is approved. He explained that he expects delivery of the Fire Engine in December of 2024 and delivery of the Rescue in early 2025.
- Frank asked what the warranty on the trucks would be. Dan said there is a 2 year bumper to bumper warranty and the frame rail has a lifetime warranty. He also mentioned that the price quote given to the Town is a price for an engine 2 years ago. Prices have increased approximately \$100,000 a year.
- Frank asked if the Town would still be eligible for the warranty. Dan said yes and explained that the warranty would start when the Town accepted delivery of the trucks.
- Chief Reed explained that the fire department services make up 50% of the calculations for the Insurance Services Office. The ISO examines equipment, pumping capacity, training and the number of fire apparatus both active and in reserve, and a range of other considerations. IF these fire apparatuses are not replaced, it will put the Town's class 4 rating at risk of increasing which may cause a rise in home owners and commercial insurance premiums.
- Steve Isham confirmed that the bond vote would give the Town two options to either lease the equipment or bond it. Chad said yes.
- Steve Isham confirmed that if the voters did not approve the bond vote that the Town would still have the option to lease the equipment. Chad said yes.

- Chad mentioned after this purchase of two fire trucks that the Town would not need any more fire apparatus for a while. Brad confirmed that the next need for replacement would be the Tower and an Engine in 2038.
- Dennis asked if the \$30,000 was needed for commitment to hold the Town's place on the assembly line.
- Brad mentioned that the funds were in capital reserves for the down payment of \$30,000. Dan mentioned that the Town needed to make a decision if they wished to move forward as the fire trucks were on the assembly line and now would be the time to make the modifications needed for the Town.
- Frank asked Dan where he was out of. Dan said that his business has offices in New Hampshire and New York and has done business with Windsor Town and Rutland.
- Frank expressed that he thought the Town really didn't have a choice to not move forward.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Tracy to approve the use of \$30,000 from capital reserves to secure the purchase of 2 fire apparatuses as discussed. All in favor.

Town Manager's Report:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided the following Town Manager's Report.
- Budget development is currently a priority in the Town Manager's Office. He explained that he will be reaching out to schedule 1 on 1 meetings to review the budget and is expecting to have a public presentation at the December 27th Select Board meeting.
- Conversations with Calex regarding a merger continue. The Town is working to try to understand the finances.

Other Business:

- Jim Brown provided an update on behalf of the Planning Commission. He mentioned that the Planning Commission is working on a reformation of land use bylaws with Place Sense and continues to work on the Town Plan for 2025.
- Jim Brown mentioned that the new Zoning Administrator is working out really well for the Planning Commission.
- Frank asked Him how many more people are needed for the Planning Commission. Jim said there was still 1 opening on the Planning Commission.

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