



TOWN OF ST. JOHNSBURY

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Special Meeting of the St. Johnsbury Select Board February 12th, 2024 @ 5:30 pm

Present-

Select Board: Steve Isham, Frank Empsall, Tracy Zschua, Dennis Smith, Brendan Hughes

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

Public: KATV, Bob Joly, David Hare, Kelsey Stavseth, Scott Beck, Adam Kane, Meg Anzalone, Bob

Swartz, Joe Kasprzak, Treny Burgess, Jim Brown, Sarah Lemnah (via zoom), Todd Wellington, Mel (via

zoom), Diane (via zoom), Bob Theriault, Gary Chester, Peter Van (via zoom), Gillian Sewake (via zoom),

Truly Wingert (via zoom)

Special Appropriations:

- Frank started the meeting by thanking all the agencies and stating that they are asset to St. Johnsbury.
- Good Living Senior Center in the amount of \$20,000. Bob Theriault explained that the \$20,000 allows for the Senior Center to provide programs and support to seniors within St. Johnsbury. He mentioned that the center hosts music 6 times a week along with health programs and activities that keep the St. Johnsbury seniors active and engaged. He thanked the community for the continued support.
- St. Johnsbury Athenaeum in the amount of \$115,000. Bob Joly mentioned that the Athenaeum has been asking for the same amount since 2011 even though they have seen an increase in expenses. He explained that the Athenaeum is frugal with the funds and is fiscally sound. In 2023 the Athenaeum was open 40 hours a week Monday through Saturday, over 40,000 items were circulated and 322 programs were provided to area children. Bob highlighted that on Feb 27th at 6 pm the Athenaeum will be hosting a talk with Police Chief Joel Pierce. He encouraged folks to come out and ask any questions they may have.
- St. Johnsbury Town Band in the amount of \$7,500. David Hare and Jim explained that the Town Band was founded in 1898 and is an embodiment of the Town. The band is open to anyone who plays an instrument. They mentioned that the increase in funding provides a reasonable level to move the band forward as expense increase each year. The band is scheduled to pay 10 concerts from June to August in St. Johnsbury.
- Caledonia Home Health Care and Hospice in the amount of \$18,382. The program was founded in 1968 and provides programs and services to the community from birth through death. Caledonia Home Health Care and Hospice is the designated agency by the State of VT to cover Caledonia County and Sothern Essex County. 2023 brought unique challenges including staffing challenges. In 2023 Home Health and Hospice spent upwards of 1.5 million on travel nurses to continue the services offered.
- 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 of 1.5 million. In 2023 2,985 St. Johnsbury residents visited the Museum. He explained that 2024 is going to be an epic year for the Museum as the Science Annex opens later this week, a Total Solar Eclipse takes place on April 8th, and the butterfly house is expect to open again this summer. The \$63,000 helps make all of this happen.

- St. Johnsbury Kiwanis Pool in the amount of \$29,000. Scott Beck spoke on behalf of this special appropriations request. He explained that 2024 will be the 81st year of the Kiwanis Pool in St. Johnsbury. The pool operates 10 weeks in the summer and provides free swim lessons to over 550 kids. He explained that it costs about \$75,000 annually to operate the pool for those 10 weeks. New pumps, fence, deck, slide and diving board have recently been installed. He thanked the community for the support.
- Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging in the amount of \$9,000. Mel provided an overview of the programs offered by the Council on Aging and explained the mission is to provide tools for residents to age well and live in their homes for as long as possibly safe. NEK Council on Aging covers Caledonian, Essex and Orleans Counties and in 2023 assisted 721 St. Johnsbury residents through numerous programs. She explained that this is the first time in 14 years the Council of Aging has requested an increase in appropriations.
- St. Johnsbury Meals on Wheels in the amount of \$10,000. Diane spoke on behalf of this special appropriations request. In 2023 Meals on Wheels served 31,245 meals. Each meal costs them around \$8.25 a piece the return to Meals on Wheels is around \$0.50. She explained for most of those that receive these meals it is more than a meal.
- Northern Vermont Chapter of the Red Cross in the amount of \$1,800. Sarah Lemnah explained what the Northern Vermont Chapter of the Red Cross provides for the community and its residents including support following a disaster and trainings. She mentioned that in 2023 39 blood drives were held in Caledonia County and over 1,300 pints of blood were donated. These funds help offset the cost of the services provided.
- Umbrella in the amount of \$9,500. She explained that Umbrella provides advocacy services, social change services and family-based services. In 2023 750 individuals received services and 2,600 youths were provided workshops. The special appropriations request will assist Umbrella to continue to offer these diverse services.
- Northeast Kingdom Human Services in the amount of \$7,983. Kasey Stavseth provided an overview of the services that NEK Human Services offers and highlighted that the funds from this appropriation help offset the cost for the St. Johnsbury Community.
- SASH in the amount of \$2,000. Gary Chester explained that SASH has been in the area since 2011 provide wellness programs and assistance for the elderly and disabled.
- NEKCA in the amount of \$12,000. An overview was provided regarding the services NEKCA offers including community based activities and supports. She explained that recently NEKCA opened a homelessness shelter located at 72 Moose River Drive in St. Johnsbury. She requested support of the \$12,000 to continue to programs offered through NEKCA.

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