



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 April 10th, 2024 @ 6:10 pm

Present-

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

Staff: Chad Whitehead, Rachel Waterhouse

Public: Gillian Sewake , Adam Kane, Don Smith (via zoom),

Agenda Amendments:

- None

Public Comment:

- Gillian Sewake expressed how incredible the Total Solar Eclipse Event on Monday was. She explained that a lot of time, talent, effort and funding went into the event. She said it would not have been possible without the Town and the Town leadership of Chad, Steve, PD, FD, Wastewater and the Town Manager's Office. She mentioned that she is working on counting still but estimates upwards of 12,000 visitors for the eclipse. She credited the perfect weather, advance press and the museum event for drawing all these people. She explained that those she spoke with stated they had the best time, felt welcomed and were grateful.
- Adam Kane expressed a huge thank you from the museum to the Town.
- Frank mentioned that he felt it goes together and thanked the leadership of the event.
- Adam mentioned that the museum addition was able to be completed due to a gift from a person who had a great experience in St. Johnsbury as a child. He said you never know how this will ripple out for decades to come. He expects to see people back to the Town because of the positive experience on Monday. This positive event will continue to bring visitors back to our Town for months and years to come. Thank you for helping make this event so successful. This could not have been done without the support from the Town.
- Chad mentioned that he has received over a dozen emails stating how amazing the event was and how well organized it was. He expressed how proud he was of the team that helped with this event.
- Frank expressed that a group he spoke with mentioned how much they liked the tractor/ hay wagon shuttle rides.
- Brendan thanked the people that live here and the assets of St. Johnsbury.
- Steve Isham thanked the businesses in St. Johnsbury for their support of this event. He heard throughout the event what a great Town St. Johnsbury was, how great the architecture was and how well organized the event was.
- Gillian mentioned that the businesses in Town and their employees put a lot of time in and that it felt good to have this economic boost as well.

- Frank mentioned that he liked how patient everyone was.
- Adam Kane mentioned that a letter will be in the Caledonian Record tomorrow thanking the Town.

Warrants:

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

Minutes:

- On a motion by Brendan and second by Frank to approve the minutes from the March 25th meeting as presented. All in favor.
- On a motion by Frank and second by Dennis to approve the minutes from the Special Select Board meeting on March 11th as presented. All in favor.

Liquor/Tobacco License:

- Steven Isham presented the following liquor and tobacco licenses and renewals:
 - Catamount Arts- 1st Class
 - Family Dollary- 2nd Class
 - Lamplighter Corp.- 3rd Class
 - Lamplighter Corp.- 1st Class
 - Martel- Tobacco Substitute
 - Martel- Tobacco
 - Martel- 2nd Class
 - Moose Lodge #1779- 3rd Class
 - Moose Lodge #1779- Outside Consumption
 - R. L. Vallee- 2nd Class
 - R. L. Vallee- Tobacco
 - R. L. Vallee- Tobacco Substitute
 - The Tack Room- 1st Class
 - Whiskey Den- 3rd Class
 - Whiskey Den- 1st Class
- On a motion by Frank and second by Dennis to approve the liquor and tobacco licenses as presented. All in favor. Brendan abstained.

March Financials:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager presented the following March Financials.
- The property taxes are prorated in the governmental funds as well as the interdepartmental and reserve funds.
- The General Fund at the end of March had a deficit of \$1,181,958. Departments within the general fund that are over budget are Economic Development due to the Armory expenses, the Public Safety Building due to a new boiler and cleaning, Pomerleau Building due to a new bathroom for the Town Clerk's Office, the Fire Department due to increases in salaries and the unbudgeted Calex increase and revitalization.

- Steve Isham asked if the Fire Department increases were contractual. Chad said that the increase was outside of the contract due to the large increase in COLA last year. The same thing was done with DPW.
- The Special Services Fund at the end of March had a deficit of \$52,223. Regular salaries and overtime combined are at 76% of the budget. Recruitment continues due to five vacancies in the department. Chad explained that the Chief Pierce and the Town Manager's Office has been working on some recruitment and retention plans for the Police Department.
- The Highway Fund at the end of March had a surplus of \$92,221. The Highway Fund has received the annual State payments to help offset expenses from the flooding and winter maintenance came in under budget.
- The Water Fund at the end of March had a temporary deficit of \$307,071. This is due to billing in arrears and loan payments.
- The Sewer Fund at the end of March had a deficit of \$568,478. This is primarily due to billing in arrears, a vehicle purchase that was not budgeted but approved by the Select Board and loan payments.
- Chad explained that Jim has run the numbers and is projecting a savings of around \$130,000 since the Town took over the wastewater plant.
- The Parking Meter Fund at the end of March had a surplus of \$35,386.

Charter Changes Update:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided an overview of the proposed Charter changes from the State of VT. He explained that he ran the 5 proposed changes with the Town Attorney, Jamie Murphy. He mentioned that the Town Attorney agreed with the recommendations from the State.
- He reviewed each section as follows.
- Sec 2 101 recommended remove for consistency with T 17. Jamie agreed with the removal.
- Sec 2 102 (3) recommended removal as state law covers this. Jamie agreed with the recommendation to remove.
- Sec 2 102 (4) recommended removal of the section regarding governing packaging and labels. Jamie agreed with the recommendation to remove.
- Sec 2 102 (5) recommended removal as water discharge is regulated by the Clean Water Act. Jamie agreed with the recommendation to remove.
- Sec 2 102 (6) recommended removal regarding the ability to adopt from other Town's Charters as it is unconstitutional. Jamie agreed with the recommendation to remove.
- Chad mentioned the Sec 2 102 (6) was suggested by VLCT therefore the Town included it as support for it.
- Chad explained that he doesn't see an issue with removing the recommendations by the State as it doesn't change the essence of what the Charter Committee was proposing.
- Frank commented that he was on the Charter Committee and is fine with the proposed changes.
- Steve Isham mentioned that if the Select Board chooses to move forward with the proposed changes he asked that when the Charter is sent back to the State that Scott Campbell and Scott Beck be included on the email.
- Frank mentioned that he would like to see the Charter passed by the end of this legislative session.
- On a motion by Frank and second by Dennis to move forward with the recommended changes to the Town Charter as presented and to resubmit to the state. All in favor.

Town Manager's Report:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided the following Town Manager's Report.
- Construction at the Water Treatment Plant continues.
- The Sewer Plant is still in the planning stage for their construction project.
- He had nothing else to report.

Other Business:

- None

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