



TOWN OF ST. JOHNSBURY

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Meeting of the St. Johnsbury Select Board December 8th, 2025 @ 6:00 pm

Present-

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

Staff: Chad Whitehead, Kate Bent, Joe Kasprak, Stacy Jewell, Karen Budde, Cathy Hanks, Steve Beaugard

Public: KATV, Jim Brown, Jason Marks, Richard Boisseau, Chase Empsall, Don Smith (via zoom), Eric Skovsted, Gillian Sewake (via zoom)

Agenda Amendments:

- None

Public Comment:

- Karen Budde gave a draft of the Green Burials proposal ordinance to the Selectboard for consideration. She attended as a resident and volunteer.
- Karen stated that the Town has already seen two private green burials, and two additional burials are currently pending, all without formal guidance.
- This current situation puts our Town, and potentially residents, in a position of uncertainty. To proactively address this and ensure we maintain clear public health standards while respecting residents' choices, I have drafted an ordinance that is both comprehensive and flexible. Karen's goal was to provide the necessary tools to address this issue officially in the near future.
- Karen thanked the Selectboard for their support and asked the Selectboard to review the draft ordinance and guidelines she has submitted and consider putting this topic on an upcoming agenda for official discussion.

Minutes:

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Frank to table the November 24th meeting minutes. All in favor.

Warrants:

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

Liquor Licenses/ Tobacco Licenses:

- None

Grant List Adjustments:

- None

St. J Revitalization Fund Presentation:

- Eric Skovsted came in to present an overview of the Co-op Transformational Grant. Eric shared that the Co-op started up in early 2019. Spring 2024 was when the grant was awarded. The first half of the grant was used for the location, which will be set up at the former Walgreens in Town. The second half of the grant was used to hire a project manager. The trade school students have begun demolishing the building. Everything seems to be going smoothly at the moment.
- Eric gave credit to Pete for his dedication to working on this project.

Replacement Water Department Truck Purchase:

- Steve Beauregard presented his findings in the purchase of Dan Gray's work truck that was stolen during his assault about a month and a half ago.
- Steve did some research on used and new trucks, but the most efficient find he found was a Red 2023 Ford Lariat with 20,707 miles for \$73,995. The total cost of the truck with plow equipment is \$75,361, minus the \$34,420 insurance settlement and the \$1,000 deductible, which will require a \$41,941 need from Reserves.
- Dennis said that some residents might have an issue with the purchase, and Steve explained that it is the best option as Dan will be able to bring the truck to the garage to fill up, which will save on gas prices. Steve also explained that one reason he chose this option was that the seat was slightly more comfortable than the others. During winter, they are in the truck for 10-12 hours plowing, and being a little more comfortable is helpful.
- The Water Department Truck will be purchased from the water fund.
- On a motion by Tracy and second by Dennis to approve the purchase of the Water Department Truck from the water fund. All in favor.

EV Car Grant- Vehicle Purchase:

- Chad presented the EV Car Grant. The Town is developing and implementing strategies to reduce costs and environmental impacts. The purchase of a new Subaru Solerra EV aligns with the Town's participation in the EECBG program by reducing fossil fuel emissions, lowering total energy use, improving energy efficiency in the transportation sector, and promoting a clean, equitable economy within disadvantaged communities.
- The vehicle will replace a 2015 Ford Explorer XPL (gas-powered), which is currently used as an unmarked police cruiser. The new EV will also be available for staff to use to attend training, seminars, workshops, and meetings. Currently, employees are asked to use their own vehicles and submit mileage reimbursement requests, which could take seven to ten days to process, and another seven days to receive reimbursement.
- By using a town-owned vehicle, employees will not risk the potential for increased personal insurance costs. Employees will travel in the exact branded vehicle and will not be singled out by others for the type of vehicle they drive. Employees also do not face delays in submitting reimbursement requests or the risk of forgetting to submit them altogether.
- The awarded grant amount is \$45,836.00.
- On a motion by Tracy and second by Frank to accept the purchase EV Car Grant. All in favor.

Stormwater Utility Discussion:

- Chad, Steve, and Cathy from DPW discuss the Stormwater Utility. They shared a plan for long-term stormwater management and a funding mechanism to implement and support it. The revenue is to be used to maintain and upgrade existing storm drain systems, equipment upgrades, develop drainage plans, construct flood control measures, and cover general stormwater costs.
- A reason to consider Stormwater Utility is to allow for the implementation of an effective Stormwater program.
- It will provide a dedicated funding source for the implementation of stormwater management.
- The funds are a predictable and dependable revenue.
- It will free up general funds for other services, and it will support long-term funding.
- The state of Vermont has already implemented its own stormwater utility for MS4 towns that capture any town that does not already have its own stormwater utility. It is important to note that Towns that do not have their own will lose this revenue.
- Determining the costs for a plan would mean assessing the existing stormwater program.
- Developing strategies which would include conducting a GIS analysis, review of Stormwater Ordinance, attending public meetings to help present to the public, and developing a Utility structure that meets the Town's goals.
- Some of the Stormwater Utility benefits include a dedicated funding source, a reliable funding source (current sources of funding, such as FEMA, State of VT Emergency Management involve cost sharing of damages). However, FEMA and the State of VT Emergency Management are not reliable sources for future guidance.
- This would help create a fund to allow us to apply for Grants for infrastructure upgrades.
- Rate Structures will be based on the Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) for impervious.
- ERU will be calculated on an SFR average to be determined by an outstanding consulting company. The minimum impervious area required to be charged a stormwater utility fee is 500 square feet.
- All SFR parcels will be charged 1 ERU.
- All NSFR parcels will be charged per ERU for all impervious surface.
- Chad thanked Steve and Cathy for working on this and coming in.

Town Manager's Report:

- Chad gave the following update about the health order at property 217 Concord Avenue. The Town installed a fence around the property to prevent access to the building due to safety concerns following the fire. Some trash that could attract birds and other animals has been removed. The Town is trying to contact the property owner, but has had difficulty reaching them.
- The R.I.N.K. squad is still looking for volunteers through the Rec Department.
- Fire Engine one should hopefully arrive this week.
- Kresten is working with Patrick Shattuck on the Scattered Site on Thursday, 12-10-25, and they will be attending the VCDB Board meeting.
- Winter has begun!

Other Business:

- Jim Brown communicated that he would need help with a Zoom link at the Planning Commission meetings. Chad said he can help guide him through this.

- Dennis asked Chad how the budgets are going. Chad said he is finishing up meetings with Department heads, will report back after finalizing with Lesley, and expects to have it done by the next Selectboard meeting.

Executive Session:

- None
- On a motion by Frank and second by Tracy, voted unanimously to adjourn. All in favor.

December 8th Select Board Meeting Video:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/Zq7PUZ9PZR3UT770sLj086SI4MQ014b0eOO_Nwa2cEgQq4QmizWF_vrZmcihLcrg.zvbVYqO2cwV84ac5?from=hub

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