



TOWN OF ST. JOHNSBURY

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Meeting of the St. Johnsbury Select Board June 10th, 2024 @ 6:00 pm

Present-

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

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

Public: Gillian Sewake (via zoom), KATV, Jim Brown, Don Smith, Dana Gray, Kerry (via zoom)

Agenda Amendments:

- None

Public Comment:

- Jim Brown mentioned that this past weekend a fight in front of the Welcome Center was witnessed by a couple visiting the area. He said the couple didn't want to get out of their car and the Welcome Staff locked the doors and visitors were unable to get in. He mentioned that it was disturbing that people coming to St. Johnsbury don't feel comfortable as this is the first thing they are seeing of this town.

Warrants:

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

Minutes:

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan to approve the minutes from the May 28th Select Board meeting with the noted correction. All in favor.

Liquor/Tobacco License:

- Steven Isham presented the following liquor and tobacco licenses and renewals:
 - Legion Post 58- 3rd Class
 - HH Haven- outside consumption
 - VFW - 3rd Class
 - VFW- 1st Class
- HH Haven Company explained to the board that they hope to obtain an outside consumption license to allow liquor at their outdoor tables.

- Dennis asked if this area would be on the sidewalk. HH Haven explained that they has measured and ensure the Select Board that a 4 foot walkway would remain for handicap access.
- Frank asked is a perimeter would be set up around it. HH Haven explained that yes, it is a requirement if serving alcohol out there. They mentioned that it would be something similar to planters with a rope line. They are still trying to figure out all of the logistics.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Frank to approve the outside consumption liquor license for HH Haven with the stipulation that they maintain handicap accessible sidewalks and have a perimeter fence. All in favor. Brendan abstained.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Frank to approve the other liquor licenses as presented. All in favor. Brendan abstained.

St. Johnsbury Revitalization Grant Fund Program Update:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided an update on the St. Johnsbury Revitalization Grants to date. He explained that the program has obligated \$1,898,488.00 and has a remainder of \$240,925.67. These projects have leveraged around \$32,569,923.56 in funds leading to an investment of around 34.5 million.
- Brendan asked about the process for revoking a grant that may not be completed. Chad explained that the micro grants and implementation grants are reimbursement grants and are not paid out until proper documentation is received. He explained that the transformational grants have a clause in the contract allowing the Town to revoke should it need to.

Water/Sewer Budget Presentation:

- Chad Whitehead presented the Water and Sewer Budget for FY25. H explained that since the last time he presented a few changes have been made. Those changes include removing the funds that would be set aside to replace RBC frames at the sewer plant. He explained that Jim has been working to get those frames included in the plant upgrades as they are more of a capital project. Chad mentioned that Jim was also able to reduce his budget by \$50,000 in contracted services.
- Proposed rates would be 6% in Sewer and 4% in Water. By increasing the Sewer rate by 1% it allows the Sewer to stay in a healthy financial status moving forward. Chad explained that when the Town was no longer able to land apply the impact was around 20%. The Town has tried to slow the increase and spread it out over 5-7 years and also keep healthy reserves.
- Dennis asked about the transfer from the Sewer Department to DPW. Chad explained that change was included in the DPW budget when it was created. It covers the cost of construction, repairs and other operating needs for the Sewer Plant. There was also a transfer of \$50,000 from the Water Fund to DPW.
- Frank asked why the transfer to the highway department jumped so much. Chad explained that is based off of labor and equipment expenses that have been used in DPW for the sewer plant.
- Frank asked if such a large jump would occur next year. Chad explained that he did not think so.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan to accept the Water and Sewer Budget as presented. All in favor.

Town Manager's Report:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided the following Town Manager's Report.
- The Fire Department was busy over the weekend with a fire at 117 North Ave and 14 Harrison Ave.

- The St. Johnsbury Charter Changes were approved by the State of VT on May 31st, 2024.
- Construction on Depot Hill will begin this week. The road will be closed during this time.
- The water main break on June 3rd has been isolated. The Town is working on obtaining cost estimates and permits. Chad explained that the Town can sustain without the river crossing for a short time. However to maintain sustainability and redundancy the line needs to be repaired.
- The Town was awarded a \$200,000 grant for design work with regards to Eastern Ave sidewalk and lighting.
- Joe Kasprzak, Assistant Town Manager mentioned that St. Johnsbury hosted the NEVDD board meeting last week at the Fairbanks Museum. He said the feedback from those that attended was incredible.
- Chad mentioned that the State Treasurer was in St. Johnsbury over the weekend and had a tour of the Town.
- Frank inquired about the grant work for the sidewalk on Railroad and Portland Street. Chad explained that it is currently in design and includes the lighting and security of the Pearl Street lot.
- Frank asked if it would be completed this year. Chad explained he was hopeful however the grant does into next year if needed.
- Brendan asked if the lights across Concord Ave and in the area of 98 Mill Street has been discussed with Green Mountain Power. Chad said he would reach out.

Other Business:

- Steve Isham mentioned that the first food truck pop up event of the season takes place tomorrow at the Three Rivers Trailhead Pavillion.

Executive Session:

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Frank that there was a need for an executive session to discuss a contractual matter and personnel matter where pre-disclosed public knowledge could put the Town at substantial risk. All in favor.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Frank to enter into executive session and invite the Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager and Town Clerk. All in favor.
- On a motion by Brendan and second by Frank to exit executive session.
- The Chair had nothing to report.
- On a motion by Brendan and second by Frank the board approved the buyback of 2 weeks of vacation time for the Town Clerk/Town Treasurer. All in favor.

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