



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 August 12th, 2024 @ 6:00 pm

Present-

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

Staff: Chad Whitehead, Rachel Waterhouse, Joe Kasprzak, Fire Chief Bradley Reed, Stacy Jewell

Public: Gillian Sewake, KATV, Richard Boisseau, Dana Gray, Tim Angell, Darrell McLaughlin

Agenda Amendments:

- Chad requested to add letter of attestation for Discovery St. Johnsbury to the agenda after the flooding update.

Public Comment:

- Richard Boisseau thanked the Select Board for their support with the FEMA buyout program. He explained that he is looking forward to working with the Town Manager and FEMA.

Warrants:

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

Minutes:

- On a motion by Frank and second by Dennis to table the minutes from the regular Select Board meeting on July 22nd. All in favor
- On a motion by Frank and second by Dennis to table the minutes from the special Select Board meeting on August 7th. All in favor.

Liquor/Tobacco License:

- Steven Isham presented the following liquor and tobacco licenses and renewals:
 - Nommik Unlimited LLC.- 3rd Class
 - Nommik Unlimited LLC.- 1st Class
 - Rustic Haven LLC.- 1st Class
 - Rustic Haven LLC.- Outside Consumption
- On a motion by Frank and second by Dennis to approve the liquor licenses as presented. All in favor. Brendan abstained.
- Noah from Birches approached the board about their request to extend their liquor license to include the downstairs of the building.

- Stacy explained that the Birches already has a liquor license this is just an edit to include the downstairs area and bar.
- On a motion by Frank and seconded by Dennis to approve the request to extend Birches liquor license to include the downstairs of the building. All in favor. Brendan abstained.

Set the Tax Rate:

- Stacy Jewell, Town Clerk approached the Select Board regarding the tax rate for 2024. She explained that the rate provided is for the budget that was approved by the voters at Town Meeting in March. Based on the grand list and the budget the tax rate would be 1.8754 inside the special services district and 1.8779 outside the special services district.
- Richard Boisseau explained that when he had spoken with Scott Beck he was told the FEMA process could be lengthy. He inquired about property abatements for those who were affected by the flooding. Stacy explained that property owners would have to apply for an abatement with the Town Clerk's Office.
- Dennis confirmed that it would then go to the board of abatement. Stacy said yes.
- Stacy confirmed that the tax rate was based on the approved budget and the grand list as it stands it does not take into effect abatements.
- On a motion by Frank and second by Dennis to set the tax rate as presented. All in favor.

Flood Update:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided the following update regarding the recent storm, flooding and damage in St. Johnsbury. He explained that in the early morning hours of Tuesday July 30th the Local Emergency Operations Center opened due to the flooding. Four swift water rescue teams including were deployed to the area to assist in evacuations. The Town received over 8 inches of rain in a three hour period causing isolated damages. Early reports showed that around 28 Town roads sustained damage which caused road closures. On Tuesday Barre City reached out to offer assistance along with Montgomery and Rutland. DPW continues to work on road repairs. He explained the criteria for a road being open as Emergency Services vehicles can get through and no one is isolated. The Fire Department worked to get to every home that was stranded to check on them. During the storm the Water Treatment Plant was struck by lightning causing damage to the automated system. The water operator has worked to get the plant back to fully automated status.
- The Farmer Drive area remains on a boil water notice. A temporary line was installed to provide water however the main line is being repaired as we speak.
- Remaining road closures include Concord Ave, Severance Hill at Red Village Road and Rt 5 is down to one lane by the State Police barracks. The Town continues to encourage people to stay off the damage areas if they can.
- First response for the flooding is estimated around 1 million with total recovery around 3 million. Employees have been instructed to track their time they are working on flood related items for when there is a declaration.
- Chad thanked the Fire Department, Dispatch, DPW, Fairbanks Museum and volunteer groups along with surrounding towns. St. Johnsbury is very appreciative of all their help and support.
- Flood debris dumpsters have been removed. Residents can place flood debris curbside and email debris@stjvt.com for pick up. Regular household trash can go to the transfer station and household hazardous waste can be held onto until the next HHW Day in September.

- Steve Isham asked about the planned paving. Chad explained that he was not entirely sure where that stands but would talk with Steve about it when he was able to catch his breath. At this point it is a matter of time and labor.
- Richard Boisseau expressed his concern with Depot Hill. He mentioned that the road crew had worked hard from late June through early July. When he came down it today there was enough traffic traveling the road and it has chewed up and rippled the road. Chad mentioned that he would have Steve take a look at it.
- Jim Brown asked if the street sweeper was out. Chad said he would have to find out.

Letter of Attestation for Discover St. Johnsbury:

- Gillian Sewake, Discover St. Johnsbury Director approached the Select Board regarding a letter of attestation. She explained that Discover St. Johnsbury was given a grant from the designated downtown vibrancy fund. In order to receive such grant the municipality must sign the letter of attestation stating that the municipality will not cut funding to the designated downtown due to the grant. She explained that this form letter was required by all municipalities that accept the funds.
- Tracy asked what Discover St. Johnsbury will do with the funding. Gillian explained that the funds will be used for operational needs including increase her hours and rate of pay, hiring an assistant and providing weekend booth staffing.
- On a motion by Tracy and second by Dennis to approve and sign the letter of attestation for the designated downtown vibrancy fund as presented. All in favor. Brendan abstained.

Town Manager's Report:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided the following Town Manager's Report.
- He explained that the main focus these last few weeks has been the flood and recovery efforts.
- Joe Kasprzak, Assistant Town Manager said he has been working on backend grant stuff.
- Chad mentioned that the auditors were on site last week.
- The Water Treatment Plant Construction continues to progress.
- Dennis asked if the mitigation at the Armory had begun. Joe said not yet, the plan is for them to be on site starting the week of Aug. 26th.

Other Business:

- Brendan commended the beautification committee on the flowers and gardens around town. He said their hard work has not gone unnoticed and that he has heard lots of people raving about them.
- Jim Brown mentioned that the beautification committee contracted with Kingdom Gardens this year to maintain and water the plants around town.

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

August 12 Select Board:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/VKid3DniLLkZVaDK3pG2JpyvtzoIReCnD_l4J9wqmjqb8L9WlQK96Cn9R9dT6ett.cYsIEvfLsTAPn5RC

Passcode: J1Y^pJ\$#

