



TOWN OF ST. JOHNSBURY

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Meeting of the St. Johnsbury Select Board May 12th, 2025 @ 6:00 pm

Present-

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

Staff: Chad Whitehead, Rachel Waterhouse, Joe Kasprzak, Stacy Jewell, Chief Bradley Reed, Chief Joel Pierce, Collin Gillespie, Kresten Sterling

Public: KATV, Issiah, Don Smith, Barbara Eldelman, Darryll Rudy, Dana Gray, Gillian Sewake

Agenda Amendments:

- None

Public Comment:

- None

Minutes:

- On a motion by Tracy and second by Dennis to approve the Select Board minutes from the April 21st meeting with the noted correction. All in favor.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan to approve the Select Board minutes from the April 14th meeting as presented. All in favor.

Warrants:

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

Liquor Licenses/ Tobacco Licenses:

- None

Delinquent Dog License List:

- Stacy Jewell, Town Clerk explained that every year she is required to provide the Select Board with the list of delinquent dog license registrations.
- Dennis inquired if the list was larger than normal. Stacy explained that it is about the same as past years. She mentioned that a dog survey needs to be done at some point. Tickets are not being

written for dogs that are not licensed and until there is enforcement people will continue to not register their dogs.

- Brendan asked if names carry over from year to year. Stacy mentioned that if they did not pay last year their name is removed from the list.
- Frank commented that it seems to be a greater number than what appears. Stacy said that is correct in the past the Town used to license around 800 dogs where as in recent years it has only been around 500.
- Dennis inquired about what the cost to aggressively enforce would be. Stacy mentioned that at this point it is unknown.

April Financials:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager, presented the April Financial Memo highlighting the following.
- At the end of April, the General Fund had a deficit of \$538,355. The deficit is due to a revitalization expense of \$220,000, storm damage expense of \$48,000, fire truck repairs, computer expenses and contracted services, legal services and employee turnover. Additionally, the general fund was budgeted with a deficit of \$200,000.
- The delinquent tax balance was \$494,000 at month end. The Town did pay off the line of credit by the end of April.
- At the end of April, the Special Services Fund has a surplus of \$55,106. Regular and overtime wages at 76% of the budget which has positively impacted the bottom line in this fund.
- The Highway Fund had a temporary deficit of \$2,892,611 at the end of April. The deficit is due to the \$2,928,973 in expenses associated with July flooding events. Equipment loan proceeds of \$336,725 were posted in April.
- Winter maintenance has exceeded the overtime budget by \$92,000 due to both regular and overtime wages.
- At the end of April the Water Fund had a temporary deficit of \$307,230. This is due to billing in arrears, property tax expense for the new water filter plant and annual debt payments.
- The Sewer Fund at the end of April had a temporary deficit of \$499,071 due to billing in arrears and annual debt payments.
- The Parking Meter Fund at the end of April had a surplus of \$28,029.
- Tax Sale has been scheduled for August 21st. The notice will go out to property owners in the next few weeks.
- Frank inquired about the number of parcels on the tax sale list. Stacy said it is around 27 properties.

Housing Reserve Transfer:

- Joe Kasprzak, Assistant Town Manager, explained that he has worked with finance to clean up the details of funds for the Rental Housing Improvement Grant Program. He asked the Select Board to consider moving \$5,065 from the unallocated reserves to the housing development reserves.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan to transfer \$5,065 from the unallocated reserves to the housing development reserves for the RHIGP. All in favor.

EPA Multipurpose Grant Update:

- Joe Kasprzak, Assistant Town Manager explained that as part of the 1 million dollar multipurpose EPA grant, he should provide updates to the community regularly. He explained that, to date no funds have been expensed. He mentioned that the funds can be used for assessment work or clean up of brownfields, but the property must be owned by the Town for the clean-ups.

Water/Sewer Budget Presentation:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager explained that his office has been working on the Water and Sewer Budget for 2025-2026. He provided the board with a proposed budget, explaining that the water budget saw an increase primarily due to tax payments to the Town of Waterford. He mentioned that the Town of Waterford has decided to tax the town on personal property taxes which the previously had not done. The other increases include an increase in fire hydrants that need to be replaced and radio read water meters, while the water filter plant remains level funded. The Sewer budget has increased associated with solids handling costs since the Town is no longer able to land apply and must transport the waste to a dump. This expense has been years coming. He explained that the reserve funds have been used over the last few years to soften the blow.
- Chad plans to discuss the proposed water and sewer budget at the next Select Board meeting on Tuesday May 27th.

Town Manager's Report:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided the following Town Manager's Report.
- Interviews for the Recreation Director have been conducted.
- Shawn is anticipated to graduate the Police Academy at the end of May
- The Town is currently in negotiations with the Fire Department.
- A new hire for the Fire Department has been secured for a July 1 start date.
- DPW continues to work on gravel roads, flood repair and filling pot holes.
- The first summer crew member started this week.
- A vacancy in DPW has been filled.
- A company has been secured to replace the guardrails throughout Town.

Other Business:

- Stacy Jewell, Town Clerk explained that absentee ballots for the June 3rd vote are available in the Town Clerk's Office.
- Barbara Edelman explained that there is a large pot hole by the St. Johns Street Cemetery. She was advised that DPW would be made aware.

Executive Session:

- None

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

May 12th Select Board Meeting Video:

DRAFT