TOWN OF ST. JOHNSBURY

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Meeting of the St. Johnsbury Select Board
December 22nd, 2025 @ 6:00 pm

Present-
Select Board: Steve Isham, Frank Empsall, Dennis Smith, Brendan Hughes
Staff: Chad Whitehead, Kate Bent, Joe Kasprak, Stacy Jewell (via zoom), Karen Budde, Matthew Walsh, Chief Pierce, Chief Reed, Steve Beauregard, Sarah Gagne, Lesley Russ (via zoom)
Public: KATV, Jim Brown, Jason Marks (viz zoom), Richard Boisseau, Chase Empsall, Isaiah Wilson, Don Smith (via zoom), Ashley Van Zandt, Dana Gray, krispette70@gmail.com, Lorraine, Ben

Agenda Amendments:

- None

Public Comment:

- Karen Budde wanted to check in about the Green Burials. Chad said he will meet with Karen at a different time to discuss further.
- Resident Lorraine from Passumpsic View Apartments came to express concern about the shoveling of the sidewalks. She asked about installing a ramp in the accessible parking spot to make it easier for residents of that building to access their rides to doctor appointments and other errands.
- Dennis suggested that Lorraine speak to her landlord or the property owner. Lorraine said Rural Edge stated it is the Town's responsibility.
- It was also suggested to Lorraine to seek volunteers who would also be willing to help.

Minutes:

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Frank to approve the November 24th and December 8th 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

First Night North Event:

- Ashley Van Zandt from Catamount Arts gave an overview of the First Night North Event. It will mark the 32nd year the event has been held in St. Johnsbury.
- To add a bump in admissions, buttons are free for volunteers and children under the age of 18 years old. The event runs from 4 pm to just after midnight.

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- There are nine buildings in total to hold all the different performances throughout the Town.
- The ball is larger than the one in NYC. Catamount Arts expects to see more people attend from surrounding States.
- There will be a warming tent, which stems from NEKCA's heating in crisis program.
- Catamount Arts is looking to turn the event into a sponsorship in the future.

Proposed FY27 Budget Presentation:

- Town Manager's office compiles the draft budget for public presentation with the Selectboard at this selectboard meeting, with public input sessions following before adoption by the Selectboard.
- The final budget is then adopted by the Selectboard and sent to the Voters for Town Meeting Day.
- The Selectboard sets tax rates in August after the budgets are adopted.
- General Fund: $5,940,303
- Special Services Fund: $1,939,409
- Highway Fund: $4,305,917
- Parking Meter Fund: $61,00
- Recreation Fund: $156,099
- Expenses- General Fund:
- Town Manager's Office: $646,095
- Town Clerk's Office/ Treasurer's Office: $203,078/$170,128.
- Board of Civil Authority: $6,740
- Assessor's Office: $117,105
- Economic Development: $157,530
- Zoning and Planning: $103,280
- Maintenance: $93,246
- Code Enforcement: $125,591
- Public Safety Building: $42,000
- Dog Control: $6,000
- Selectboard: $6,900
- Dispatch Center: $914,238
- Fire Department: $1,890,935
- Solid Waste: $42,500
- Cemeteries: $26,237
- Pomerleau Building: $127,700
- General Fund: $1,260,909

Total Fund expenses: $5,940,303

- Special Services Fund:
- Police Department: $1,546,234
- Special Service Fund Expense: $393,175

Total Special Services Fund Expense: $1,939,409

- Highway Fund Expense:
- Highway Garage & Equipment: $466,434
- Sumer Maintenance: $1,454,201
- Winter Maintenance: $1,078,465
- Street Safety and Traffic: $185,526

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- Highway Fund Expense: $1,121,290

Total Highway Fund Expense: $4,305,917

- The budget summary and property taxes raised:
- General Fund: $3905,872
- Special Appropriations: $341,350
- Special Services: $1,581,228
- Highway Fund: $2,501,168
- The impact on Tax Rates would be:

Inside Special Services: 3.52%
Outside Special Services: 5.72%

- Municipal Taxes per $100,000 in value:

Inside Special Services: $1,210.66
Outside Special Services: $790.49

Equipment Purchase-Sidewalk Plow:

- Steve Beauregard requested $70,371 from the Equipment reserves for the purchase of a second sidewalk plow.

- On a motion by Brendan and second by Frank to approve the use of Equipment Reserves for the Sidewalk Plow Purchase. All in favor.

Proposed Bylaw Modernization Update:

- On a motion by Brendan and second by Frank to approve the Proposed Bylaw changes. The Bylaw changes were approved by a vote of 3 in favor and 1 opposed, with Dennis voting opposed.

Town Manager's Report:

- Working on the state-level change in public safety. Rep Debbie Dolgin has been attending.
- Ice rinks are up, but Chad reported staying off the ice until it is completely finalized.
- The new fire department's truck has arrived.
- The Town has taken possession of the EV vehicle from St. Johnsbury Subaru.

Other Business:

- Dennis asked Chad if there were any updates on the environmental at the R.K Miles property. Chad said there are people out, but no results currently. The River Corridor Committee has been working with Northern Forest to brainstorm potential uses for the properties.
- 217 Concord update is that Chad has engaged contact with legal services and the insurance company- there is nothing they can do. Chief Pierce has made contact with the owner, and the fence is up. There are no further updates currently.

Executive Session:

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan for a need to enter an Executive Session.

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- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan to enter executive session and invite the Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, and the Finance Director. All in favor.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan to exit executive session.
- The chair had nothing to report.

On a motion by Dennis and second by Frank voted unanimously to adjourn.

December 22nd Select Board Meeting Video:
https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/Jo13M2YezqavWqcEuZRlGtmrfVdhQbHhUszcwUEW5T_HaprxLnsmyNlyblDu2tPr.SP07jT7Czu_jzEsf?from=hub

Passcode: 2w7QVxT?

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