



TOWN OF ST. JOHNSBURY

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Meeting of the St. Johnsbury Select Board April 27th, 2026 @ 6:00 pm

Present-

Select Board: Frank Empsall, Ellen Burt, Dennis Smith (via Zoom), Brendan Hughes, Steve Isham

Staff: Chad Whitehead, Kate Bent, Stacy Jewell (via Zoom), Lesley Russ (via Zoom), Joe Kasprzak, Chief Brad Reed, Kresten Sterling (via Zoom)

Public: KATV, Jim Brown, Richard Boisseau, Rep Debbie Dolgin, Chase Empsall, Mike Sullivan, Jason Marks (via Zoom), Lonnie, Victor Gamel, Lauren Jarvi, Stephanie Rowe, Barbara Edelman, Darryll Rudy, Andrew McGregor, Larry Ruggles, Kathy K, Scott Campbell, Peter, Pamela, Tim Angell, Mark Shepley, Susan Parker, William, Jacqueline, Betty, Issaiah Wilson, David Roth

Agenda Amendments:

- None

Public Comment:

- None

Minutes:

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Ellen to approve the meeting minutes from April 13th as presented. All in favor.

Warrants:

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

Liquor Licenses/ Tobacco Licenses:

- On a motion by Steve and second by Ellen to approve the Liquor Licenses as presented. Brendan Abstained. The motion passed.

March Financials:

Chad and Lesley gave the following financial update as follows:

- The property taxes are prorated in the governmental funds as well as interdepartmental and reserve transfers in all the funds.
- General Fund: At the end of March 2026, the General Fund revenues were \$4,321,905 and expenses were \$5,819,437 resulting in a deficit of \$1,497,532. The deficit is due to revitalization expenses of \$130,505, the purchase of RK Miles, the new fire truck purchase, overtime in dispatch and fire and legal and IT expenses.

The delinquent tax balance was \$543,265 at month end (up from \$93,361 the previous month) and the operating cash balance was \$3,710,710.

- Special Services Fund: Special Services Fund revenues were \$1,428,020 and expenses were \$1,548,177 resulting in a deficit of \$120,157.

The deficit is due to the purchase of two new police vehicles which were funded by equipment reserves.

- Highway Fund: The Highway Fund had \$5,541,544 in revenues and expenses were \$3,784,867 resulting in a surplus of \$1,756,677.

The surplus is due to grant payments and FEMA reimbursements. To date the Town has received \$2.4 million from FEMA towards storm damage. The Town received additional FEMA funds in April and as of today only \$117k is owed. We will be paying off the \$1.1 million bridge loan on April 10th.

- Water Fund: The Water fund revenues were \$1,022,288 and expenses were \$1,194,961 resulting in a temporary deficit of \$172,673. This is due to billing in arrears.
- Sewer Fund: Sewer Fund revenues were \$1,343,722 and expenses were \$1,407,682 resulting in a temporary deficit of \$63,960 due to billing in arrears
- Parking Meter Fund: Revenues in the parking meter fund were \$47,657 and expenses were \$26,031 resulting in a surplus of \$21,626. The surplus is due to permit sales.
- Recreation Fund: Revenues in the recreation fund were \$90,991 and expenses were \$103,546 resulting in a deficit of \$12,555.

Internal Controls:

- On a motion by Ellen and second by Brendan to accept the Internal Controls. All in favor.

Co-op CDGB Grant Resolution Agreement:

- On a motion by Brendan and second by Dennis to accept the Co-op CDGB Grant Resolution Agreement. All in favor.
- Peter shared the opening date for the Co-op is set for June 24th.

Local Emergency Management Plan 2026 (LEMP):

- On a motion by Brendan and second by Ellen to accept the 2026 Local Emergency Management Plan. All in favor.

Health Officer:

- Chief Reed's resignation as the Health Officer is set for April 30th.
- On a motion by Steve and second by Ellen to appoint Kresten Sterling as the Health Officer effective May 1st, 2026. All in favor.

Armory Update:

- Joe brought Larry Ruggles to the Selectboard meeting to discuss his findings and suggestions of what he could do with the Armory building.
- Larry stated he was sure from the time he looked at the building that he could save the existing structure based on his experience with other wood structures meeting this design criteria. Larry suggested using concrete straps instead of steel. Larry also presented a different price range compared to the original quote.
- Joe provided a PowerPoint that includes grant funding the Town secured to pay for environmental mitigation and the already approved \$5.4 million, totaling just over \$8 million. This would leave a shortfall of \$1.1 million to fully fund the reduced project cost.
- Joe stated he would look into getting any additional savings in the total project cost and explore grant options to help fill the \$1.1 million gap.
- Some amount remaining could come from a voter-approved bond.

- On a motion by Ellen and second by Dennis to get a second opinion of the design and cost of the Armory. All in favor.

Immigration Customs Enforcement and Border Patrol Discussion:

- Resident David Roth asked the Selectboard to consider adopting a language that immigration enforcement is a federal responsibility and that public safety agencies should not participate in immigration enforcement.
- State Rep. Scott Campbell stated he thinks it is important that the Town provide clarity to the Town's police, fire and health officials about how to respond if federal authorities come to them asking for help.
- There were also other residents that stood up and spoke on the topic. Betty, Jacqueline, and William who also shared similar viewpoints.
- There will be a group that will work together to gather more information then come back in a month to develop more recommendations. Public comments will be invited to that meeting for more in-put.
- The hopes for the work group are to come up with a resolution.

Town Manager's Report:

- Chad shared that the Town is working on the honking tunnel direction.
- May 2nd is Green Up day! There will also be a bike event, being hosted by the Bike Committee.
- Stacy sent Chad the Delinquent tax list.
- Chad gave the heads up that the sidewalks on Railroad and Portland Street are going to have some work done.
- There will be a mixer at the Dispensary on Friday May 22nd that is being hosted by the Rec Director Sarah Gagne for adult sports!

Other Business:

- Jim Brown shared that the Academy is helping the beautification committee on May 1st.
- Planning commission is working on the bylaw on short-term rentals and civil ordinance is on-going.

Executive Session:

- On a motion by Brendan and second by Ellen to enter an Executive Session. All in favor.
- On a motion by Brendan and second by Ellen to exist the Executive Session. All in favor. The chair had nothing to report.
- On a motion by Ellen and second by Brendan to adjourn. All in favor

April 27th Select Board Meeting Video:

https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A_us02web.zoom.us_rec_share_homIcTzViUQMHeGNCCpB3Y7LlqWI92WxxxN2d9gRNJ7qqbDkoYnpNdL8sAlgBZCJ.pwUSO0JUeMeSUn9f&d=DwMFAw&c=euGZstcaTDllvimEN8b7jXrwqOf-v5A_CdpgnVfiiMM&r=Ju1b0XBllVfVAGEVrHquICPACXIn_2b1lVTCCbe_28U&m=Cb61RlaelJyz0VLDbUxvGgFZKB6XeuYnt-FwecMvcW7-QD4yWqFKgubGJx78lpwh&s=UToMlutNJ7qHkEkOdwz2qcetJzBby6y44Z-x_ckFrV0&e=

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