

**SELECTBOARD MEETING
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2003
7:00 PM – MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

A regular meeting of the St. Johnsbury Board of Selectmen was held Monday November 10, 2003. Chairman Gib Handy called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Present were Mr. Handy, Dale Urie, Bryon Quatrini, Elwin Cross and Reginald Wakeham. Also present from the town were Town Manager Mike Welch, Economic Development Coordinator Joel Schwartz, and secretary Ida Rainville.

Also in attendance were Clara and Andy Fisher, Ken Buzzell, Steve Bobrowski, Vincent Carbone, Bill Gilding, Victor Gammell, Jeff Padgett, Kris Fitts-Hoppe, Mark Desrocher.

The minutes of the October 27 meeting were approved as presented (Urie/Quatrini).

Sidewalk System Study

Jeff Padgett from Engineered Solutions Engineering firm, explained how his firm will perform the sidewalk study. This study is intended to identify areas in greatest need of upgrade, replacement, and repair, not for new structure. Using the new GIS system and orthophotography the Town already has in place, Mr. Padgett said they could break down the areas into a grid system that would be easier to understand and plan. All aspects of the sidewalk will be studied, including the sidewalk itself, curb, green strips, materials and condition of each area. Cross walks will be included as they pertain to ADA standards. A representative of the VT Department of Transportation was also present and indicated that once the study is complete, federal funds may be available to assist in a major re-construction program.

Hunting in Town Forest

Several townspeople voiced their opinions on hunting in the town forest. The controversy was prompted by the gift of Arlington Forest to the Town from Passumpsic Valley Land Trust that included a “no hunting” provision.

Bill Gilding’s property is adjacent to the forest and he hunts in the forest for deer and squirrels and feels it is a safe practice as long as a high power rifle is not used. He and his family also make use of the hiking trails. Excessive numbers of deer living in the area are destroying ornamental plantings. Kris Fitts-Hoppe reported that she takes girl scouts and other children hiking in the town forest. She agrees the deer herd needs to be controlled, but would not feel comfortable with people hunting with guns in the area. Glen Bostic, whose property is also adjacent to the forest, is nervous about hunting with guns and fears for the safety of his dogs. Hunters cross his back yard to access the forest. He can also hear gun shots fairly close to his house. He suggested permitted hunting only. Mark Desrochers stated he understood the discharge of firearms is prohibited in the town forest, but perhaps the sound of gun shots from the Buxton farm or the power line, where hunting with firearms is permitted, was carrying to Mr. Bostic’s property. Andy and Clara Fisher indicated they agreed with allowing archery hunting, with continuing no discharge of firearms in the town forest.

Reg Wakeham and Bryon Quatrini suggested the town furnish “Safety Zone” signs to property owners adjacent to the town forest. General consensus of those present was to keep the status quo – continue to allow hunting by bow and arrow and enforce the no discharge of firearms in the town forest. On a motion by Bryon Quatrini and seconded by Dale Urie, the Board voted unanimously to post signs at the town forest prohibiting the discharge of firearms, and supply homes in the perimeter with “Safety Zone” signs, and to enforce the “no discharge” law.

A brief discussion centered on prohibiting the feeding of wild deer in the area. It was noted that this is a fish and wildlife responsibility and should be turned over to that state department..

Appointment – Design Review

On a motion by Reg Wakeham, seconded by Dale Urie, the Board voted unanimously to appoint John Horvatich to replace Marguerite Impey and serve out her term.

Budget Priorities

Mr. Welch reported that Blue Cross had projected a 14 – 17% increase in health insurance. He reminded the Board that employees pay 17.5% of Comp S policies and 7.5% of the Vermont Health Partnership. Gib Handy pointed out he is also concerned about the rest of the Town's insurance policies. All departments will be encouraged to keep budgets in line.

A loan resolution for revenue anticipation in the amount of \$500,000 was voted to be signed (Urie/Cross). On a motion by Reg Wakeham, seconded by Bryon Quatrini, the Board voted unanimously to authorize Chairman Handy to sign the USDA/CSO resolution.

Manager's Report

Reminder of the Veteran's Day parade on November 11. Mr. Welch will be on vacation the week of November 17, leaving Joel Schwartz in charge.

Other Business

On a motion by Bryon, seconded by Dale, the board voted unanimously to enter into executive session at 8:20 PM to discuss contract negotiations. Joel Schwartz was invited to the meeting.

At approximately 8:40 PM on a motion by Reg Wakeham, seconded by Bryon Quatrini, the Board voted unanimously to go back into regular session. The meeting adjourned with no further business transacted.

Respectfully,

Ida W. Rainville, Recording Secretary