

**SELECTBOARD MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 24, 2003
7:00 PM – MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

A regular meeting of the St. Johnsbury Selectboard was held Monday, March 24, 2003, at 7:00 PM in the boardroom of the municipal building. Present were Reg Wakeham, Bryon Quatrini, Dale Urie, Elwin Cross, Gib Handy and Kim Allen. Present from the Town were Town Manager, Mike Welch, Economic Development Coordinator Joel Schwartz, and Recording Secretary Ida Rainville. Also present were Jeremy Jacquet, Jamon and Gretchen Renaud, Kim Achilles, and the news team from Channel 7.

Liquor and Tobacco Licenses approved and signed:

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| M & S Grenier d/b/a Surf and Sirloin (L) | American Legion (L/T) |
| Irving Oil d/b/a St. Johnsbury Irving Mainway (L/T) | Northern Lights (L) |
| Cumberland Farms (L/T) | Natural Provisions (L) |
| The White Market (L/T) | Rite Aid Headquarters (L/T) |
| Martel Enterprises d/b/a Cole's Discount Beverages (L/T) | |

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Gib Handy, who led the assembly in the pledge of allegiance. Minutes from the March 10 meeting were approved as presented (Quatrini/Wakeham).

Disputed Water Bill

Gretchen and Jamon Renaud presented their case to request the Town pay for thawing their water line. Gib Handy appointed Reg Wakeham and Elwin Cross to meet with the Renauds and Danny Scott to settle the issue.

Tax Stabilization – Jacquet (presented by Joel Schwartz)

Jeremy Jacquet was present to discuss the requested tax stabilization for new construction (projected cost of \$200,000) on their kiln operation on Route 5. Generally the recommendation of tax stabilization is to hold at 50% for the first five years, increasing 10% for the next five years, until the property value reaches 100%. The Jacquets request a lower front-end taxation at 10%, increasing each year by an additional 10% until it's at 50%, and thereafter taxed at 100% of value. The difference in total revenue to the town would be minimal, but it would give the Jacquets a lower front end cost. Since this type of financing had not been suggested or applied in the past, Mr. Schwartz questioned if the Selectboard would be willing to consider it. The Tax Stabilization Committee had recommended acceptance of the proposal with a proviso written in to recover some of the lost revenue in taxes in the first few years, if the property were to be sold. On a motion by Reg Wakeham, seconded by Dale Urie, the Board voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Tax Stabilization committee in offering tax stabilization to the Jacquets and Caledonia Kiln.

Community Advisory Board Appointments

Gib Handy recommended the appointment of Ken Gammell to the NEP Advisory Board if he would accept. Dale Urie volunteered to be the member from the Town, with Bryon Quatrini alternate.

Highway Grant

Highway Superintendent Larry Gadapee requested application for a state grant to construct a box culvert (similar to the one built on Houghton Bridge Road in 2002) on Mt. Pisgah Road just beyond the Green Lantern Trailer Park entrance. It would require approximately \$81,565 to complete the project, with 90% being paid by the State. On a motion by Bryon Quatrini, seconded by Elwin Cross, the Board voted unanimously to apply for the grant. The Board members present signed the application.

Manager's Report

Richard Lyon's resignation from the Planning Commission was accepted. The Board will be looking for a replacement to that position effective June 1, and will be advertising for applicants.**

Mike Welch reported that the second neighborhood meeting, held at the Lively Center for Summer Street area residents, was a great success. At least 40 people attended and many ideas were exchanged. One

problem mentioned most often was if 4-way stops could be installed the full length of Summer Street, which would help reduce the speed of traffic. State statutes do not allow for that many 4-way stops in one area. Another area of concern was parking spaces that block vision on Central Street. They also requested that these neighborhood meetings could be held more often.

Other Business

Joel Schwartz indicated that the Railroad Depot could be gifted to the Town within the next week, and if the Selectboard had any reservations about taking on the project, they should speak up beforehand.

Mike Welch spoke on the very successful “Cabin Fever Reliever” held on March 15. Most of the activities centered around the St. Johnsbury Academy Field House, Streeter Hall, and Main Street. Sixteen teams competed in the jigsaw puzzle contest, with many more people looking on. The horse-drawn trailer rides were a huge success, and the children’s activities in the gym were also well attended. The heart healthy dinner served approximately 300 people.

Goals and Priorities

Mike Welch quickly went through the list of priorities set by the Selectboard for 2002.

- 5-year equipment and capital funding plan is in place, but when the budget was cut for 2003, very little was left for funding.
- Downtown district expansion – The design review district was expanded, not the overall downtown district. Downtown parking has been improved, with overnight parking by permit being offered in certain areas. Working toward better overall parking management.
- Corrections – Formation of the new corrections committee, neighborhood meetings that address some related issues, and a tour of the facilities with local legislators were a few of the positive steps taken in 2002 to improve community relations with the corrections department.
- Economic Development - The new GIS system will be a helpful marketing tool to invite development to the area.
- CSO – Final design is ongoing for Cliff Street and Hastings Street – Right of ways in both areas are in discussion. USDA has announced St. J’s eligibility for up to \$300,000 in grant funds for this project.
- Municipal Buildings – Has not been dealt with as a top priority; noted a complaint has been received for lack of disabled access to the Community building. The outside elevator is not working and was not designed to handle exterior work. Acquisition of the Railroad Depot could also come into place with future municipal plans.
- E. St. Johnsbury – final designs have been completed and set to the State. Building should be done this summer.
- St. J. Center water – Bond vote was positive to move forward and to hook onto the St. Johnsbury water system. The previous designation of boundaries signed by the Selectboard at the February 24 meeting had to be rescinded because they did not follow the guidelines as laid out by the original charter. Attorney Ed Zuccaro issued his opinion that the Selectboard could re-issue the statement of boundaries as long as it included all properties currently serviced by the St. J. Center Fire District, and it was approved by Fire District Members.

Priorities for 2003

The following points were suggested as areas to address in 2003.

- Look at possible usage for the Depot Square buildings; how to link to municipal buildings. Railroad bought by State – adjoining 13 acres could be incorporated with depot property. State wants to keep rails in place at least through town.
- Include Bay Street in assessment of possibilities – possibly close underpass to motorized traffic, but keep open for pedestrian and bicycle traffic.
- Bike path – permitting information will be re-submitted in April or May.
- Gib – Rec. Department budget should be balanced. Work with Eric to that end.
- Uncollected taxes and sale of properties town has acquired and not used by the town.

Other Questions

Elwin asked about the drainage at the Town Garage? There will be on-going testing with a new storm water management plan, which will drain the water away from the river. Still unknown if there will be penalties assessed. A new facility for housing salt/sand mixture will have to be built with the next five years.

Question on assistance to Lyndonville Fire Department – Chief Ruggles has spearheaded a drive to help replace equipment lost in the fire by Lyndonville Fire Department, and the St. Johnsbury Fire Department has become a drop-off point.

Dale asked Joel to update the Board on any new retail business looking at the area. Joel indicated the Chamber of Commerce had recently received an inquiry from a store similar to JC Penney. The governor has recently met with Wal-Mart to discuss replacing Ames stores in Vermont. Other options being discussed include re-building the Green Mountain Mall area to accommodate a larger store if desired, and some businesses looking at the downtown mall area. There has also been a long-term real estate broker looking around the area.

Bryon asked if there was sufficient money in the budget to support beautification projects for the summer. Kim Allen suggested some should be used to make sure the flower barrels do not pose a hazard to pedestrians.

Voted to adjourn at 7:45.

Respectfully submitted _____, Ida W. Rainville, Executive Secretary

**Correction to Minutes of 3/24/03 made at meeting of 4/14/03 – The person who resigned from the Planning Commission is Rick Cameron, not Rich Lyons.