

MINUTES
ST. JOHNSBURY SELECTBOARD
MONDAY, MARCH 24, 2008

The Members of the St. Johnsbury SelectBoard held their regular SelectBoard meeting on Monday, March 24, 2008 beginning at 7:00p.m. in the Board Room of the Municipal Building.

SelectBoard Members Present: Vice Chairperson Gary Reis, Daniel Kimbell, Jim Rust, and Jean Hall Wheeler.

SelectBoard Members Excused: Chairperson Bryon Quatrini.

Others Present: Richard Hall, Jeffrey Tucker, Dale Urie, Kevin Russell, Gary Lunderville, Jay Wood, Tina Wood, Matt Choate, Bernard Timson, Kathy Decker, Priscilla Messier, Erin Quatrini, Taylor Reed, Joel Schwartz, Will Rivers, Diane Beck, Linda Fogg, Robert South, Dr. Alan Giese, KATV, LSC-TV, and Mike Welch.

CALL TO ORDER: Vice-Chairperson Gary Reis called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Gary Reis asked for public comment on any items not on the agenda. Tina Wood asked if the SelectBoard discussed the split role of the Town Clerk position, since Sandy Grenier has been appointed to the Legislature. Tina said she was concerned about the financial aspects of it – where Mrs. Grenier is being paid a full-time salary by the Town but not working full-time. Tina said that legislative pay is only \$614 per week, and Mrs. Grenier’s salary is \$1,338 per week. Tina Wood said her concern is that the appointment happened after people elected Sandy Grenier to the full-time position. Tina said that she did not believe that the Town Clerk should be paid for those hours that she is not performing Town Clerk duties. Gary Reis said that Sandy Grenier did explain her plan to the SelectBoard when she was appointed. Gary said that Sandy Grenier is an elected official and she is accountable to the voters. Daniel Kimbell said that Sandy said that there would not be additional overtime costs in her office – and that she would be available by phone, e-mail, and daily contact in the office. Sandy is also working in the Town Office on Monday, when the legislature is not in session. Richard Hall said that he wants to make sure that the efficiency of the office continues. Richard Hall said that if Sandy does run in November, then she will not be able to oversee the election – some other provision will have to be made. Dale Urie said that he has been a party to many budget discussions and heard how overburdened the town office staff is. Dale asked about the addition burden on employees, and is there going to be additional overtime cost to make sure everything gets done. Matthew Choate said that when he ran for office – his employer was very supportive, but it was made clear to him that he would need to take his own vacation time – he would not get paid for doing both jobs. Matt said he is concerned as a taxpayer about funding the position fully. Bernie Timson said there

is a benefit to the Town in having Town Clerk Grenier at the legislature, and he supports it.

MINUTES – MARCH 10, 2008 – It was moved by Daniel Kimbell, seconded by Jim Rust, and voted (4-0) to approve the Minutes from the March 10, 2008 SelectBoard meeting as presented.

UPDATE – THREE RIVERS TRANSPORTATION PATH – Kevin Russell, Municipal Project Manager, and Jeffrey Tucker, Dubois & King Engineering, were present to provide the members of the Board with an update on the status of the Three Rivers Transportation Path. Jeff Tucker said that we have received most of the required permits. Right-of-way plans have been completed. Numerous discussions have been held directly with property owners. The Categorical Exclusion document has been approved. Kevin said that the Right-of-Way process will now begin, including appraisal and negotiation for Right-of-Way clearance. Kevin said he expects Right-of-Way to be completed by end of summer, early fall. Kevin said that there are still other steps to be completed including – final lease agreement with State on LVRT section of trail; Finance & Maintenance agreement with the current active rail operator (Washington County RR). Kevin said that the project is on track to bid in the Spring of 2009. Kevin said that the Town may need to work on the legislature to make certain that funding is available for the project – which is programmed for State FY 2010.

CALEX EMS UPDATE – DISCUSSION FIRST RESPONSE – REVENUE

SHARING – Matthew Choate and Erin Quatrini, St. Johnsbury Representatives to the CALEX EMS Board of Directors, were present to provide the members of the Board with an update on CALEX EMS. Matt Choate said that 2007 was a very busy year for CALEX with approximately 2,200 calls for service. Matt said that St. Johnsbury represents close to 50% of the calls. Matt said that the CALEX Board has been focused on strategic planning and on recruiting and retaining well-trained staff. Matt said that the Board has tried to promote opportunities for staff professional development, with an emphasis on quality. Matt said that the Board has focused time on fiscal responsibility and long-term financial planning for CALEX. Matt said that CALEX currently operates on a 2-5% margin. Matt said that the Calex Board made a decision to revise the community appropriations – and the St. Johnsbury appropriation was reduced by approximately \$11,000. Matt said that at \$4.00 per capita – CALEX is a bargain for the community. Erin added that the Board also acquired another ambulance. Erin said that St. Johnsbury is the only community on the Board with two representatives.

The Manger said that currently the St. Johnsbury Fire Department responds to approximately 500 EMS calls as first responders. The Manager said that the Town has discussed the possibility of sharing some portion of the ambulance run revenue with the Town. Matt said that 95% of the revenue to operate CALEX does come from private pay, Medicare, and Medicaid. Matt said that currently CALEX has a very good payer mix. Matt said that the CALEX Board has looked at reducing the direct costs to the Town (annual appropriation). Matt said that he was not completely opposed to looking at some

type of revenue sharing – but he said that he would be interested in seeing other models, examples, or ideas of what the Town expects.

Dale Urie asked what would happen if St. Johnsbury started its own EMS service. Dale said that if St. Johnsbury started its own rescue service, then a lot of the business would be taken from CALEX. Dale said that he would like to see CALEX and the Town work out a plan that can help the Town increase revenue or decrease costs.

Matt Choate said that his initial reaction is that it would cost the Town more than \$4.00 per capita to run an ambulance service.

Richard Hall asked what does it cost for the fire trucks to respond to a medical emergency. Bernie Timson asked if the Fire Department needs to respond to all the EMS calls. Jay Wood said he would be happy to work with the Fire Department on prioritizing calls – through dispatch protocol. Matt Choate said that can become difficult because you can't always tell what the situation is going to be by the call coming in to dispatch. Gary Lunderville said that a different vehicle could be used to respond to medical calls.

Jim Rust asked about the level of first response care, and response rate, provided by St. Johnsbury in comparison to other first response units in the CALEX service area. Gary Reis suggested that we need more information including the number of calls the Fire Department responds to, the type of calls, the cost of response, the vehicles involved in respond, are there ways to prioritize, are there other examples of run revenue being shared with first responders. Matt suggested having a team from CALEX and the Town work together to discuss these issues. Gary said that is a good idea – and recommended that we put together some of the information first and then get a team working on it with Fire Chief Troy Ruggles, Board members, and CALEX representatives.

TOWN FOREST STEWARDSHIP – BUCKTHORN – The Manager said that he had been contacted by Andy Fisher relative to his concern that the Tree Stewardship Committee was not going to allow LSC Professor Dr. Alan Giese to conduct research in the St. Johnsbury Town Forest or in Arlington Woods. The Manager said that Andy Fisher was unable to attend the SelectBoard meeting this evening – but, he was also concerned that he was not going to be allowed to follow-up with volunteers on the manual removal of buckthorn along the Town Forest Trails. Dale Urie and Kathy Decker from the Stewardship Committee were present. Dale said that buckthorn is a very fast-growing invasive. Dale said that the Stewardship Committee did receive a copy of Dr. Giese's proposal – but had some questions, and were not able to schedule a follow-up meeting with Dr. Giese to get them answered. Dale said that the Stewardship Committee is working with County Forester Matthew Langlais on the development of a Forest Management Plan. Dale said that an outline has been developed – but the plan will not be completed until sometime this summer. Dale said that it has been the position of the Stewardship Committee that before any removal plan is implemented – the Management Plan should be completed. Dale said that he believed that manual extraction will be a component of the Management Plan – but he said that manual removal may not be the

best forest management practice in some cases. Dale said that he is not an expert in this area – but he said that he has heard from a lot of experts that there can be problems associated with manual removal – such as creating a more fertile environment for the plants to take hold – by disturbing the soil. Kathy Decker said that there is plenty of pulling that can be done, particularly in the very small plants (under 1” caliper), but that work should be done in compliance with the guidelines of the Forest Management Plan.

Dale said that Andy Fisher has an incredible amount of energy. Dale said that he believes that we should completely develop the Forest Management Plan – before we send volunteer groups into the forest to pull up plants.

Jim Rust asked if Dr. Giese’s research would still be valuable, even if he has to stop at some point. Dr. Giese said that it definitely would be. Dr. Giese said his project is a research project, not an eradication project.

Following discussion, it was moved by Jim Rust, seconded by Jean Wheeler, and voted (4-0) to authorize the Tree Stewardship Committee to work together with Lyndon State College to allow a growth-related research project to move forward until such a time when the Management Plan for the forest is interrupted.

Following discussion, it was moved by Jean Hall, seconded by Daniel Kimbell, and voted (4-0) to wait until the Forestry Management Plan for the Town Forest is completed before allowing any eradication, outside of the research project.

POMERLEAU BUILDING – CONSTRUCTION UPDATE, LEASE - Joel Schwartz was present to provide the Board with an update on the Pomerleau Building construction project. Joel said that construction is progressing. The Board had previously authorized the fit-up of approximately 40% of the second floor. Joel said that he had worked with the Chamber and RCT to try to develop a plan whereby they would borrow funds to complete the fit-up of the second floor, and lease the entire second floor. Joel said that RCT has decided that they are not prepared to enter into a rental agreement at this time. Joel said that he met with the Chamber Board, and they wanted a 10-year agreement. Joel said he had discussed this with the Manager and we are prepared to recommend a 5-year agreement, with a 5-year renewal, tied to an operating agreement, including an inflation factor, at \$1,725 per month (approx. \$12 sq. ft), with all operating costs to be reviewed at the end of 5 years. Joel said that we really do not know what the actual operating costs of the renovated building will be. Jim Rust asked about the Welcome Center operation, as RCT will have someone in the building during the day. Joel said that the Chamber has had the responsibility of coordinating volunteers, scheduling volunteers, training, and stocking brochures. Joel said that he has recommended that there be a Welcome Center Manager to really oversee responsibility for the operation of the Center. Joel said that Nat Tripp has volunteered to offer his service in this capacity. Following discussion, it was moved by Daniel Kimbell, seconded by Jean Hall, and voted (4-0) to authorize the Manager to move forward with a proposed lease agreement, under terms discussed, subject to final approval by the SelectBoard and review by the Town Attorney.

ANNUAL APPOINTMENTS – The Manager advised the Board that additional letters of interest for appointed positions were received this date. Daniel Kimbell recommended that all of the interested parties be invited to attend the next SelectBoard Meeting, Monday, April 14th, at 6:00p.m., so that members of the Board can meet the applicants. The Board will then consider annual appointments at their next regular meeting.

TAX ANTICIPATION NOTE RATIFICATION – It was moved by Daniel Kimbell, seconded by Jim Rust, and voted (4-0) to approve the Line of Credit of \$2,000,000 at BankNorth, annual interest rate of 2.59%, to be borrowed in anticipation of the collection of 2008 property taxes.

MANAGER’S REPORT:

SelectBoard Representative, Community Justice Center Advisory Board – Jean Hall Wheeler volunteered to serve as the SelectBoard Representative on the Community Justice Center Advisory Board.

Lamoille Valley Recreation Trail (LVRT) – The Manager stated that NVDA is looking for a new “municipal representative” for the LVRT Advisory Board. Members of the Board asked if the person had to be a “municipal official”, and how often, and where are meetings held. The Manager said he would get the information.

Dog Licenses – Reminder that all Dog Licenses are due by April 1, 2008.

Australian Ballot Voting – The Manager said he provided information in the packet about the Charter Amendment relative to Australian Ballot voting. Jim Rust asked when the Board should discuss this. If a vote were considered for November – then June/July. If a vote to be considered for March – then November/December.

Rules of Procedure – The Members of the Board present signed the SelectBoard Rules of Procedure as approved at the last Board meeting.

Expenditure Warrants - Members of the Board present reviewed, approved, and signed Expenditure Warrants as previously reviewed by SelectBoard Representative Daniel Kimbell as follows:

General Account	57317 – 57366	\$135,061.50
	57367	(Review Next Meeting)
	57368 – 57412	53,126.10
Grant Account	2033 – 2039	\$109,346.64

Liquor Licenses – Members of the Board present reviewed, approved, and signed Liquor Licenses for the following: A&C Belknap, Inc; CN Brown Co.; Cantore Ent., LLC; C S Enterprises, LLC; Elks, BPO St. Johnsbury Lodge; Horizon’s Deli & Convenience;

Irving Oil Corporation of Vermont; Kham's Thai Cuisine, Inc.; Moose, Loyal Order of Lodge 1779; Railroad Yard, LLC; Paul Ravel; St. Johnsbury Community Food Co-op; St. Johnsbury Country Club, Inc.; and Veteran's of Foreign Wars.

Special SelectBoard Meeting – The Manager reminded the Board that there is a Special SelectBoard meeting scheduled for Thursday, April 3rd beginning at 4:00p.m.at EHV for Town Manager Evaluation.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Caledonia Work Camp Proposal – Daniel Kimbell asked about the Work Camp proposal. The Manager provided the Board with a copy of an e-mail from David Peebles, received on 3/24/08, asking the Town's position on expanding the work camp by 20 beds. The Manager said that the State appears ready to approve a plan to close the Women's facility in Waterbury – move inmates from Windsor to St. Albans – and use the Windsor facility as a Work Camp. Priscilla Messier said that would involve permit review by the DRB. Daniel Kimbell said he felt that the proposed phased expansion was much different than what was presented to voters at Town Meeting. Jim Rust said having visited the facility, he felt adding 10 beds to each wing would make it very tight. Gary Reis said that he would like more information – Is a free work crew still being proposed? Is a Capital payment still being proposed? What is the plan for increasing the number of beds in the facility? Will there be additional staffing? What is the proposed increase in any PILOT payment? Gary Reis said it would be good for the Board to get answers to these questions before taking a position on the proposal.

April 17th – BCA Grievance Training – Gary Reis recommended that Town Office staff coordinate ride-sharing for those BCA members, and others, planning to participate in the April 17th BCA training in Montpelier.

Having no further business or requests, it was moved by Daniel Kimbell, seconded by Jim Rust, and voted (4-0) to adjourn at approximately 8:45p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Welch
Town Manager

