

**MINUTES
ST. JOHNSBURY SELECTBOARD
MONDAY, JUNE 23, 2008**

The St. Johnsbury SelectBoard held their regular SelectBoard meeting on Monday, June 23, 2008. The SelectBoard held a Joint Workshop with the Planning Commission and Development Review Board beginning at 6:00p.m.

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

Development Review Board Members Present: Chairperson Alan Ruggles, Jim Rust, Bob Mayhew, Larry Sharer, Ray LaBounty, Jr., Will Rivers, and Richard Lyon.

Planning Commission Members Present: Chairperson William Merrow, Stan Wilkins, Tim Angell, Pam Smart, and Martha Hanson.

Others Present: Sandy Grenier, Priscilla Messier, Taylor Reed, Alan Robertson, Bruce Corrette, Sgt. Clem Houde, Jeannette Farmer, Bernie Timson, Larry Bona, Peter Whitney, KATV, and Mike Welch.

6p.m. – JOINT WORKSHOP - PLANNING COMMISSION/DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD/SELECTBOARD – Chairperson Bryon Quatrini called the meeting to order with the Pledge at approximately 6:00p.m.

Will Rivers stated that the Town needed to aggressively seek more housing. Will Rivers said that the Town needs to support the Bay Street Development Plan. There needs to be a 3-5 year plan for making this a reality.

Rich Lyon asked if priorities have been established within all of the recommendations made in the Town Plan. Daniel Kimbell said that some priorities were established in terms of where projects were scheduled on the draft Capital Improvement Plan.

Bryon suggested that the Boards should really focus on 2-4 Action items. Stan Wilkins suggested that there could be opportunity for the development of a good mobilehome park. Gary Reis asked about zoning. Priscilla Messier said parks are allowed in Residential-Town and Rural Lands. Gary Reis suggested that the school property in the Center should be reviewed for housing.

Larry Sharer recommended that the developers of the St. Johnsbury House be contacted to see if they would be interested in other types of housing development in St. Johnsbury. Rich Lyon asked about 75% grant funding from USDA for sewer. The Manager stated that voters did not approve the bond request for Breezy Hill – and at the time that would have been 75% grant funds. The Water projects have recently been funded at 60% grant funds through USDA.

Daniel Kimbell said that there are also issues relative to the Community Center and Recreation facilities – a review of all of the alternatives for Recreation.

DRB/Planning Commission Boards – Stan Wilkins said that he did not believe that applications are moving any faster than they did before. Ray LaBounty said it really depends on the preparedness level of the applicants.

Jim Rust suggested that it would be good to have a face-to-face meeting with the Planning Commission about the zoning by-laws, and specific issues that should be considered.

Pam Smart said that there is a big need for collaboration. Pam gave the example of the St. Johnsbury Center Village Center designation – that was approved by the Planning Commission, but has not been followed through at the SelectBoard level.

Stan Wilkins said that this is one of the first times that the Town Plan is actually being used.

Jim Rust requested that Planning Commission agendas be provided to the SelectBoard. Alan Ruggles said that he does not believe that applications are being processed any quicker – the only benefit is the applicant having to present to just one board.

Attendance – Priscilla Messier said that in all of the years that she has scheduled Boards for review there has only been about 3 times when a meeting had to be postponed due to lack of a quorum. Stan Wilkins said that it is important to receive input from all of the members of a particular Board. Larry Sharer said that he felt that it is up to each Board to address specific attendance problems on their own.

Jim Rust said that he felt that the individual Boards needed to review attendance from time-to-time. Jim said that applicants deserve the full attention of the entire Board. Jim said that individual Boards should address attendance on their own.

Stan Wilkins said the Town should be looking at where it may be possible to add apartment units to existing dwellings – to provide additional housing opportunities.

Gary Reis said that Montpelier was awarded a planning grant to look at empty nesters living in big homes to determine feasibility of additional housing. St. Johnsbury should consider something like this.

Will Rivers said that Bay Street has to be a priority. People have shown interest, we need to determine the Town's role in making it happen.

William Merrow said that the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the Capital Improvement Plan that only 4 people came to. Mr. Merrow suggested that if people wanted to be involved in the discussions and the process, then they needed to participate.

Mr. Merrow said that there are opportunities for the SelectBoard and the DRB to attend Planning Commission meetings, and help work on action items included in the Town Plan.

Larry Sharer said that one of the recommendations from the Business Assistance Group was the coordination of Focus Groups of businesses to find out what is important to them. Larry suggested reaching out to existing businesses and finding out what their needs are.

Rich Lyon said it comes down to Business, People and Resources. Rich said that there should be an active effort on identifying a location for the next Industrial Park in the near future.

Next Meeting - Following discussion, it was agreed that the Boards would get together in a Joint Workshop Session again on **Monday, August 11th at 6:00p.m.**

LAMOILLE VALLEY RAIL TRAIL – Alan Robertson, PE representing VAST was present to ask that members of the SelectBoard review the plans and pictures of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail that has been sent to them – and provide VAST with any comments, good or bad, related to the trail, trailheads, and any other matter. Alan said that it is important that VAST get input from individual communities along the proposed trail. Alan said that it appears that the Western Avenue Park & Ride may be a location for a trailhead for snowmobiles. Alan said he was not certain how machines would enter the trail from this location. He said it may involve off-loading at another area and then parking in the Park & Ride. Gary Reis asked if engineers are considering this proposed use in the design of the new Park & Ride. Jim Rust said that times when snowmobilers would use the Park & Ride and when commuters do is very different. Someone suggested that Jim Impey’s land should be looked at as a possible trailhead. Alan said that the sooner that comments can be submitted, the better.

MINUTES – JUNE 9, 2008 - It was moved by Jim Rust, seconded by Gary Reis, and voted (5-0) to approve the Minutes from the June 9, 2008 SelectBoard Meeting as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT - Chairperson Bryon Quatrini asked if there was Public Comment on any items not appearing on the agenda. There was no public comment.

VITAL STATISTICS PRESENTATION – Jeannette Farmer was present to review the Vital Statistics restoration and preservation program. Jeannette outlined the procedures used by the Town Clerk’s Office to preserve public records – and highlighted the collaboration in record restoration between the Town, St. Johnsbury Academy, the Athenaeum, and Fairbanks Museum. Town Clerk & Treasurer Sandy P. Grenier informed the SelectBoard that Jeannette Farmer is retiring from her position in the Town Clerk’s Office on Friday, June 27th.

SELECTBOARD RESOLUTION RELATED TO JEANNETTE FARMER - It was moved by Jean Hall Wheeler, seconded by Gary Reis, and unanimously voted (5-0) to approve a Resolution Related to Jeannette Farmer, and that Town Clerk & Treasurer Sandy P. Grenier read the Resolution. Jeannette received a standing ovation from the members of the Board, staff, and citizens present at the meeting.

REFUND AND SMALL CREDIT BALANCE POLICY - Sandy P. Grenier, presented a draft policy to the SelectBoard relative to the refund or crediting of any balance \$5.00 or less. Sandy said that several communities have adopted a policy related to small balances. Following discussion it was moved by Gary Reis, seconded by Daniel Kimbell, and unanimously voted (5-0) to approve and sign the Refund and Small Credit Balance Policy as proposed by Town Clerk & Treasurer Sandy P. Grenier.

REQUEST FOR EXTENSION – GRAND LIST 2008 – PETER WHITNEY – Assessor Peter Whitney was present and informed the Board that the 2008 abstract of the Grand List is supposed to be lodged on June 24, 2008. Peter Whitney informed the Board that he had a few more inspections to complete, and would like the Board to request a 30-day extension on the lodging of the Grand List from Property Valuation and Review. Peter said it would not take 30 days for him to complete the work. Following discussion it was moved by Jim Rust, seconded by Daniel Kimbell and unanimously voted (5-0) to approve and sign a letter to Property Valuation and Review requesting a 30-day extension on the lodging of the Grand List for 2008.

REAPPRAISAL – The Manager informed the Board that discussions have continued with Caroline Lockyer about completion of the Reappraisal for 2009. The Manager advised the Board that Caroline has offered to forgo a portion of the remaining balance of the contract and allow the Town to complete the remaining inspections. Peter Whitney said that he still does not know how many inspections remain to be completed – and he should know in the next 30 days. Bryon Quatrini recommended that the Manager and Assessor provide the Board with a full review of the remaining work to be done on the reappraisal and the costs associated with completing this work as soon as possible, and that the Board be provided with an update on the status of the reappraisal on a regular basis.

WATER/SEWER RATES 2009- Finance Committee Chairperson Daniel Kimbell informed the Board that the Finance Committee reviewed the proposed rates, and the recommendation to consolidate blocks (as proposed by Robert Dufresne) at their last meeting. Daniel Kimbell said that the Finance Committee recommends that the SelectBoard adopt the rates as proposed effective January 1, 2009. Gary Reis asked about the impact on average homeowners, the manager provided a spreadsheet detailing estimated impacts for different volume levels. Daniel Kimbell said that he believes that this proposal is the best recommendation for moving forward with covering operational costs, and beginning to address future debt service.

Larry Bona said that declining block rates were in place in St. Johnsbury because it is business friendly. Mr. Bona said that if high volume users do not continue to pay for water service – then all the users will be forced to pay more. Larry suggested that the SelectBoard should be doing everything possible to encourage business – not to increase costs significantly. Larry Bona said the large volume users also help the water system by drawing large volume of water through the system. Daniel Kimbell said that St. Johnsbury definitely does not want to be anti-business, but the majority of costs associated with the Water/Sewer system have been borne by the lowest volume users for many years. Daniel said that the increases proposed in St. Johnsbury still represent Water/Sewer rates that are less than some Vermont communities.

Alan Ruggles suggested that the Town should be looking at spreading the burden among all of the taxpayers that receive a benefit from economic development. The Manager said that several large volume users are tax exempt – and would not participate in any costs passed onto the taxpayers. Bryon Quatrini suggested that a per parcel, or per building, cost be considered – whether the property is exempt or not – to cover some of the system costs. Daniel Kimbell stated that the Finance Committee will continue to review revenue and expenses on an annual basis – and will continue to investigate alternatives for revenue.

Following discussion, it was moved by Gary Reis, seconded by Jim Rust, and unanimously voted (5-0) to adopt Water & Sewer Rates effective with the bills beginning on January 1, 2009. (A copy of the approved rates is included with these Minutes).

FRONT ROW SPORTS TAVERN – REVIEW OF LIQUOR LICENSE

CONDITIONS - Police Sgt. Clem Houde provided the SelectBoard with a report on activity over the past 30 days at Front Row Sports Tavern. Sgt. Houde said that Front Row Sports has made improvements and there have been no significant calls for service, or incidents, since the Board meeting. Sgt. Houde recommended that the Board continue to monitor the activity of Front Row Sports, and the other Liquor establishment that stays open after 1:00a.m. - The Dawg House – on a sixty (60 day) basis. Members of the Board agreed and requested that Sgt. Houde continue to monitor progress and provide a report to the SelectBoard after 60 days.

ENERGY CONSERVATION DISCUSSION - The Manager reviewed fuel use from the 2006-2007 heating season with the Board. The Manager stated that he is very concerned about the cost of heating fuel given the amount of fuel used in facilities such as the Community Center. The Manager stated that at 10,000 gallons of fuel in a season – the total cost could be \$45,000 – \$50,000 to heat the community center alone. The Manager stated that he would like to work with some volunteers to review energy consumption to make some decisions about actions that can be taken before winter to reduce fuel costs. Jean Wheeler asked if the Manager had ideas about office space if the Community Center were not used in the winter months. The Welcome Center is the quick response – but that space would be more valuable with a paying tenant to help offset costs of the Welcome Center. Jim Rust asked about fuel consumption at the Welcome Center. The Manager stated the last full year of operation was about 5,000 gallons – Joel

has estimated that we should save some fuel volume due to improvements in the heating systems and efficiency efforts. Larry Sharer suggested that the Finance Committee be charged with reviewing alternatives. Bruce Corrette suggested that if the Town is looking at energy conservation, then we should look at Streetlights. Bruce said there is no consistency in how Streetlights are placed in St. Johnsbury. Daniel Kimbell stated that the Finance Committee is scheduled to meet at 5:00p.m. on Monday, June 30th.

VACANCY PLANNING COMMISSION – The Manager informed the Board that Ross Hart has resigned from the Planning Commission. The Manager said that he is contacting the three individuals who had expressed an interest in serving on the Commission, and would invite candidates to the next Board meeting on July 14th – as at least one person was not able to meet with the Board previously.

MANAGER’S REPORT:

Interstate Weight Limit Discussion – Scheduled for Monday, July 14, 2008 beginning at 6:00p.m. Several people have contacted the office with interest in this topic. US Representative Peter Welch said this issue should come back up again next session.

Water Service – The Manager informed the Board that a new meter and valves will be installed in the main line leaving the water filter plant tomorrow. Water service may be disrupted with pressure loss, or discoloration. Bryon Quatrini asked that EHV be notified when the water is restored.

Vacation – The Manager requested vacation between July 1st and July 11th. Troy Ruggles and Joel Schwartz will be available during this time period. There was no objection from members of the Board.

OTHER BUSINESS – None

EXECUTIVE SESSION - It was moved by Daniel Kimbell, seconded by Gary Reis, and unanimously voted (5-0) to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing Civil Actions. SelectBoard member Jim Rust participated in the first part of the discussion, and recused himself from part of the discussion. The Board entered Executive Session at approximately 8:00p.m.

It was moved by Gary Reis, seconded by Daniel Kimbell and unanimously voted (5-0) to return to regular session at approximately 8:13p.m.

It was moved by Daniel Kimbell seconded by Jean Wheeler, and unanimously voted (5-0) to adjourn at approximately 8:13p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael A. Welch
Town Manager

