

**MINUTES
ST. JOHNSBURY SELECTBOARD
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2008**

The St. Johnsbury SelectBoard held their Regularly Scheduled SelectBoard Meeting on Monday, November 10, 2008 beginning at 6:00p.m. with a site visit to the Community Justice Center and the Welcome Center second floor.

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

Others Present: Robert Ide, Larry Donna, Bernard Timson, Greg MacDonald, Denyse Daly, Catherine Thomas, Joe Fox, Dinah Yessne, Dale Goyet, Al Dunn, Jeff Tirey, Kevin Russell, Ande Deforge, Jon Beck, Diane Beck, Sandra Wayne, Lisa Viles, Mark Wheeler, Kim Blaisdell, Evan Detrick, Joel Schwartz, Sandy Grenier, Taylor Reed (Caledonian-Record), KATV-Channel 7, Secretary Ida Rainville and Town Manager Mike Welch.

CHECK WARRANTS:

The following check warrant reports were signed by the Board:

10/30/08	Check #60416 – 60479	\$77336.72
11/07/08	Check #60480 – 60520	\$47,542.80
10/30/08	Check #2139	\$ 544.46
11/06/08	Check #2140 – 2141	\$ 4,115.37

Liquor Licenses were approved and signed for the Wildflower Inn and Lilypad, LLC.

CALL TO ORDER – Chairperson Bryon Quatrini called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00p.m. with the Pledge.

PUBLIC COMMENT - Chairperson Quatrini asked for Public Comment on any items not appearing on the agenda. There were no public comments.

MINUTES – October 14 and October 29, 2008 – It was moved by Daniel Kimbell seconded by Gary Reis, and unanimously voted (5-0) to approve the Minutes as presented from October 14, and October 29, 2008.

THREE RIVERS TRANSPORTATION PATH UPDATE – KEVIN RUSSELL – Kevin Russell reviewed the progress made on the Transportation Path. Kevin updated his projection for completion of preliminary permitting and property valuation process before actual construction could commence. If the review of forms goes smoothly and filing can be completed with the Town and State, Kevin projected property appraisals could start the end of November 2008. The appraisals will be conducted by a private firm. Appraisals could be completed by May 2009 and Kevin hopes to have negotiations with

property owners completed by August 2009, with a projected date of March 2010 to put the job out to bid. Ande Deforge indicated he thought the dates Kevin projected were very optimistic. Dan Kimbell asked if the State budgets for the project in 2010, what would be required of the Town? Ande Deforge said the Town would need a valid environmental documentation and Right of Way (ROW) clearance from all land owners. The Federal government is very particular about having ROW clearance and protecting property owners' rights. Ande said the money for the project has been budgeted for 2010 but not obligated.

Jim Rust asked the question if the Town decided to scrap the Transportation Path now, would they be obligated to reimburse the State all monies the State has already spent? Ande Deforge answered that, even though that is the wording of the agreement, historically the State has not required towns to reimburse, but it would be up to the discretion of the Secretary of Transportation. It could go either way, but the Town may look into the possibility. Mike Welch said he would put out feelers and talk to Secretary David Dill.

Joe Fox asked about the environmental concerns along the river bank. Kevin Russell indicated that the riverbank area will become a buffer zone to be used by people for relaxing and walking. All has been reviewed by the Agency of Natural Resources concerning setbacks and wetlands. There is a mitigation plan in place for keeping wetlands and enhancing habitat.

Jim Rust asked what the projected cost of upkeep would be to the Transportation Path if and when it is completed. Ande Deforge said he had no hard figures, but did not have negative feedback from other towns. Lacking weight bearing loads, the pavement should stand up to traffic for a long time without repair, and there would be minimal work to control greenery along the path, whatever the Town is willing to do. Bernard Timson asked if the State would really be funding projects such as this when they appear to be cutting the transportation budget and reducing highway maintenance as it is. Larry Donna addressed the issue of the rail yards in connection with the transportation path. Two separate railroads are involved – the Washington County and Lamoille Valley. Larry reported that there is an issue with the drainage in the yard that needs to be addressed, and the distance of the path to the rails has been resolved. The State is concerned that VAST may petition for the use of the trail, and the State does not want snowmobiles in the rail yards. Larry also pointed out that Swanton has constructed a bike path at the other end of the Lamoille Valley Rails to Trails project, and completed with a lot of volunteer work. Perhaps the Town of St. Johnsbury should look at their project and see if that would be possible on this end.

COMMUNITY CENTER – Jeff Tirey is a structural engineer hired to examine the Community Center (former Armory) on Main Street. Jeff said after reviewing the building he found it to be in surprisingly good shape. It has combination steel and wood framing, and the exterior brick is generally in very good visual shape, as is the interior of the building. Some areas of the roof have a more limited load bearing capacity, and he feels that having the heat on the building has kept the snow melted off (from lack of

insulation) so the roof has been saved extra stress. Overall he sees this building as a definite salvage, but has not had the opportunity to examine the mechanicals or any hazardous material that may be present. He said they also need to look at the historical value and significance of the building.

Jeff recommended that the Town continue to heat the building to avoid part of the roof collapsing. He indicated he has no figures to present to the Board for cost of upgrades, but that, once a project is started on the building they will probably have to rehab the entire building and bring everything up to code. That will include electrical, heating system, asbestos removal, shoring up the frame and replacing areas that need it and insulation. Also sprinkler system and handicap access, minimum. Daniel Kimbell asked what the asbestos report meant. There are several small areas where asbestos has been revealed, so Mike Welch said they should move forward with the recommendations in the asbestos report and secure areas that are exposed to avoid any liability issues.

Jim Rust was assured that the building could not be occupied during rehabilitation. Jim indicated he did not feel there would be enough snow on the roof at any given time to jeopardize the structure because snow tends to melt off, get blown off, and evaporate so it doesn't accumulate. Jeff Tirey responded there were too many variables where the weather is concerned and there is no way to predict weight distribution; however the Town could install an alarm system to monitor the weight on the roof.

COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTER – Dinah Yessne addressed the Board about the needs of the Community Justice Center. As the different boards and mediators provide services, Dinah felt that they need at least three separate and private areas to work from, so the one large Boardroom at the Welcome Center would not work for the Justice Center. Dinah also indicated they have seen an increase in mediations recently, possibly because of the economy, and they are offering a legal clinic once a month. Dinah suggested they look at some other properties in town which have been mentioned to her including the basement of the Colonial Apartments on Main Street, and some space that may be available at the Unitarian Universalist Church on Cherry Street.

Discussion centered around keeping the building heated and the Community Justice Center staying in the building. Joe Fox asked if that happened, could he hold basketball practices in the gymnasium. He has only time enough for each team to practice one hour each week, which is not sufficient to teach the basketball skills and would put the teams at a disadvantage. Joe suggested if the thermostat was upgraded to control the heat in different parts of the building and work with a timer to turn the heat down when not needed, it would save some of the expense to heat the building all the time. Dinah indicated keeping the heat level at about 55° would result in a fairly comfortable atmosphere in the office. Her office is open Monday through Thursday, which Joe Fox said he could work with if they could use the gym during periods Dinah's office is open and then turn the heat down considerably at other times. Daniel Kimbell moved to keep the Community Justice Center in its present location and allow the use of the gymnasium on the same days the Justice Center will be open through the end of December, and re-

evaluate the heating situation at that time. The motion was seconded by Jean Hall Wheeler and approved by a vote of 4-1 (Jim Rust opposed).

Diane Beck asked Joe Fox for the breakdown of the number of St. Johnsbury children in the basketball program as opposed to out-of-town participants. Joe indicated in the 3-6 grade age group, 66 of 69 are St. Johnsbury students. In the pre-K to grade 2 age group, 16 of 23 students are St. Johnsbury residents. The non-resident students provide approximately \$500 in tuition to the Recreation program.

Gary Lunderville asked about the condition of the boiler in the Community Center, to which Mike Welch responded that the Town puts thousands of dollars every year into keeping it running. Diane Beck asked if the Town has plans in place to upgrade these systems so they don't deteriorate all at once. Mike Welch answered that the Town does have a Capital Improvement Plan in place now and is trying to catch up with projects that have not been addressed in a long time. Gary Reis agreed, saying that the Capital Improvement Plan is relatively new – instituted 3 or 4 years ago – and now is scrambling to catch up.

Dinah Yessne also asked about the Al Anon group that uses her office to meet every Saturday morning. She was advised they should probably find a new meeting place, since the plan is not to heat the building on weekends. Al Dunn asked if Joe Fox had looked into gymnasium space in other towns. Joe said he had, but there does not seem to be any space available.

SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS – After some discussion involving the requirements for special appropriations to appear on the March, 2009 ballot, Jim Rust made the motion, and Daniel Kimbell seconded, to request that all organizations which have previously been approved by the voters, should reduce their previously approved amount by 10% for the March 2009 ballot unless they present a valid petition signed by 5% of the registered voters of St. Johnsbury before the deadline of January 22, 2009. The motion passed (5-0). On a request by Daniel Kimbell, Sandy Grenier agreed to look into the possibility of offering voters the option of voting for a 10% reduction, for the same amount as last year, or “no” to any appropriation for each individual organization.

ACTUARIAL SERVICES – Daniel Kimbell and Mike Welch reviewed the bids received from actuarial firms to replace David Ducham who has handled our pension fund for many years and retired in 2008. On a motion by Gary Reis, seconded by Jim Rust, the Board voted (5-0) to retain the services of National Pension Services in Burlington, VT.

INTERSTATE WEIGHT LIMITS - Mike Welch brought to the attention of the Board, VLCT's resolution to support the increased interstate weight limits, and requested the Board take action on this resolution. On a motion by Gary Reis, seconded by Daniel Kimbell, the Board voted (5-0) to sign the resolution.

SALE OF TIMBER – County Forester Matt Langlois reported to Mr. Welch that he had looked at the wooded area in Waterford owned by the Town of St. Johnsbury and surrounding part of Stiles Pond, and recommended some selective cutting to clean up the property. Mike reported that the Town had worked successfully with Dale Goyet in the past, and recommended, along with Mr. Langlois, that the Board go forward with the cleanup. Matt Langlois had also recommended that the money derived from the clean up be earmarked for helping to eradicate the Glossy Buckthorn invading the Town Forest. On a motion by Daniel Kimbell, seconded by Gary Reis, the Board voted (5-0) to sign a contract with Dale Goyet to proceed with the timber harvesting and use the proceeds to help the eradication of Glossy Buckthorn.

PARKING METERS – On a motion by Gary Reis and seconded by Jean Hall Wheeler, the board voted (5-0) to suspend the operation of parking meters from the day before Thanksgiving through January 2, 2009.

MANAGER’S REPORT – Mike Welch stated to the Board that if they decided to scrap the Bike Path project, it would be better to do it sooner rather than later. It might be best to put the question to the voters. Daniel Kimbell asked if VAST would want to take it over? This question seemed contrary to the opinion of Larry Donna that the State would not want snowmobiles traversing the railroad yard. Jim said he was concerned with the total dollars spent and to be spent – if the project is halted, what will the end expense be? Gary Reis said he saw the whole project as a bottomless pit and he has heard people tell him the Board should “cut our losses”. Mike Welch told the Board he would go to Transportation Secretary David Dill and try to get a feel for the State’s position.

Mike Welch reported that he had met with the department heads to look at their bare budgets, and asked them to come up with ideas to cut costs. Bryon Quatrini and Jean Hall Wheeler volunteered to meet with the department heads and Mike Welch to get some feedback. Mike reported a finance committee meeting scheduled for November 13. He also reminded the Board that the Development Review Board would meet on November 18 to discuss the BAART Corp’s request to raise the cap from 60 to 75 patients to be treated at the methadone clinic.

On a motion by Gary Reis, seconded by Daniel Kimbell, the Board voted to adjourn at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ida W. Rainville
Executive Secretary