

**MINUTES
ST. JOHNSBURY SELECTBOARD
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2008**

The St. Johnsbury SelectBoard held their Regularly Scheduled SelectBoard Meeting on Monday, November 24, 2008 beginning at 7:00p.m.

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

Others Present: Jon Beck, Diane Beck, Community Justice Director Dinah Yessne, Side Judge Roy Vance, Sgt. Stephen Bunnell, Bernie Timson, Gary Lunderville, Health Officer Tim Angell, Chuck Bjorklund, Susan Aiken, Fire Chief Troy Ruggles, Economic Development Director Joel Schwartz, Town Clerk 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:

General Fund	Check #60521 - 60562	\$18,644.09
General Fund	Check #60563 – 60615	\$168,747.97
Grant Fund	Check #2142	\$ 455.00

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 – November 10, 2008 – It was moved by Daniel Kimbell seconded by Jim Rust, and unanimously voted (5-0) to approve the Minutes as presented from November 10.

CALEDONIA COUNTY BUDGET – Side Judge Roy Vance presented the budget from the Caledonia County Court and Sheriff’s office. Mr. Vance indicated this year’s budget is up slightly from last year, mainly due to insurance rates. His department froze salaries rather than eliminating any positions, but health insurance continues to rise. Employees are paying 15% of the premiums. Also, there was an increase because of liability insurance. Liability insurance became a necessity when a suit was brought against some employees of the County a few years ago. Mr. Vance reviewed taxes received from towns last year and indicated that the County may be able to decrease the budget slightly because of an increase in small claims. Other revenues are down, partly because passports are available from the US Post Office and other sources.

HOMELESS AWARENESS – Dinah Yessne informed the Selectboard of Homeless Awareness Week, December 15 -December 21. The Housing Continuum Group requested the use of Arnold Park to set up for a physical demonstration of homeless living for a 24-hour period on December 21, to be peopled by volunteers and displayed as typical living conditions for the homeless. On a motion by Daniel Kimbell, seconded by Gary Reis, the Board voted (5-0) to approve the use of the Park for this purpose.

SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS – The Selectboard reviewed a draft of a letter prepared to be sent to organizations that have been approved for special appropriations in the past. At the Selectboard

meeting on November 10, the Board voted to request a 10% reduction from all organizations. Any request larger than that would require a petition signed by 5% of the voting public in order to get onto the March ballot. Some members of the Selectboard expressed their concerns over reducing monies that are used to directly benefit the elderly and low income families. A motion was made by Gary Reis and seconded by Jean Wheeler to exempt certain organizations from the need to reduce their appropriation request by 10%. After some considerable discussion about which organizations should be exempt, and which organizations should be required to furnish a petition to maintain their previously approved request amount, the Board concluded that the original vote on November 10 would stand, and all organizations would be required to furnish petitions if they do not agree to reduce their request by 10%. Gary Reis withdrew his motion.

BUDGET – FINANCE COMMITTEE – The question came from the Finance Committee, “if the agencies are being asked to decrease by 10%, how does this affect the Department Heads?” Mike Welch reported that he has asked all Department Heads to hold the line on expenses that they can control, understanding that union contracts and increased insurance rates will control much of the personnel expense. Jean Wheeler reported that she and Bryon Quatrini had met with the Department Heads and were overall very satisfied with their current path.

THREE RIVERS BIKE PATH - Mike Welch reported that he and Jim Rust met with Transportation Secretary David Dill to get a sense of the government’s position if the Town should abandon the bike path project, or change it in some way. Mr. Welch said that David Dill told them if the Town decided to discontinue the project, the Federal monies would probably have to be returned, amounting to \$600,000+. Mr. Dill felt the Town needs to go forward in some sense. The Town could consider a smaller project, especially in the event there is a problem getting rights of way over some private property. Once the appraisals are concluded on the right of way purchases, there will be a better sense of the cost of the properties and discussion with property owners will be initiated. Mr. Welch said that if they were forced to end the trail in the rail yard, it could still connect the Lamoille rail trail. Mr. Dill stated that the project is actually very close to being completed and encouraged the Town to go forward with the trail. Jim Rust concurred with Mr. Welch’s observations of the meeting, expressing concern at having to return the approximately \$600,000 in the event of shutting down the project. He also noted that, if the Town comes up against any problem beyond the control of the Town which would force the project to be abandoned, that could change the status and monies would not have to be paid back.

POMERLEAU BUILDING LEASE – Mike Welch reported that Joel Schwartz has been in negotiations with Senator Sanders’ office to lease the two office spaces in the Welcome Center. The one-year lease at \$720 per month has been approved by Senator Sanders’ office. Gary Reis asked about some provisions written into the lease agreement – the fact that the Town will have to bill the office; two air conditioners to be provided; janitorial duties daily, and security. Joel Schwartz replied that the building already has more security than Senator Sanders’ office in Burlington, and as to the other matters, he did not feel they would represent a problem. On a motion by Daniel Kimbell, seconded by Gary Reis, the Board voted (5-0) to approve the lease as presented. As Bryon Quatrini pointed out, it’s just for one year. See how it works out.

MUNICIPAL BUILDING/FIRE STATION UPDATE – Gary Reis reported there is a scheduled building committee on December 4, and they will be discussing Jim Rust’s proposal more fully.

HOUSING CONCERNS – The citizen who had expressed housing concerns at the Colonial Apartments was not present at the meeting. Bryon Quatrini suggested that Mike Welch should inform her that the points she had mentioned in her correspondence were not responsibilities of the Board of Selectmen. He suggested it should be referred to the Community Justice Center for resolution. Mike Welch pointed out that Dinah Yessne found in the Municipal Code of Ordinances there was a

provision for a Housing Board of Review and Housing Inspector. It seemed that this was added to the Code of Ordinance at some point when the Selectboard did not feel the State codes were sufficient. Since that time, the Town has followed State Statute and the Health Officer and Deputy Health Officer intervene when necessary. Gary Reis asked if the Colonial Apartments were up to code, and Tim Angell said he had not been in that building in some time so could not answer definitely.

MANAGER'S REPORT – Mike Welch said he had no new business, but requested that the Board go into Executive Session to discuss contract negotiations. On a motion by Daniel Kimbell, seconded by Gary Reis, the Board voted (5-0) to enter into executive session at 8:00p.m.

At 8:20p.m. Jean Wheeler moved, and Gary Reis seconded the motion to return to regular session. No further business was transacted. On a motion by Daniel Kimbell and seconded by Jim Rust, the Board voted to adjourn at 8:20p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ida W. Rainville
Executive Secretary