

**MINUTES
ST. JOHNSBURY SELECTBOARD
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2010**

The St. Johnsbury SelectBoard held their regular meeting and a public hearing on Monday, February 8, 2010 beginning with the public hearing at 6:00p.m. in the Board Room of the Municipal Building.

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

Others Present: Katrina Meigs, Jon Beck, Diane Beck, John Nutbrown, Scott Beck, Bob South, Bernie Timson, Mirko Ignjatovic, Brian Christman, Ray Labounty, Rod Lamotte, Taylor Reed, LSCTV, Nancy Cohen, Lynwood Smith, Gary Lunderville, Joel Schwartz, KATV, Sandra P. Grenier, and Mike Welch.

Call to Order – Chairperson Kimbell called the meeting to order with the Pledge at approximately 6:00p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING – 2010 GENERAL, HIGHWAY AND SPECIAL SERVICES

BUDGET – Chairperson Kimbell opened the public hearing. The Town Manager reviewed the 2010 General, Highway, and Special Services Budgets with those present. Brian Christman asked what funds budgeted for the Community Center would be used for. The Manager said to keep the power on; make sure snow is removed from the roof, and any other requirements to keep the building from deteriorating while vacated. The Manager stated that the underground storage tanks at the building should be removed. Brian Christman asked about revenue for rentals at the Welcome Center. The Manager stated that the rental income is budgeted as ‘Railroad Street Rental’ under General Fund Revenue. Brian Christman asked about the fee for renting space to store fire equipment on Portland Street, and where that money would come from. The Manager stated funds would have to come out of the fire department budget. Sandra Grenier explained about the availability of ballots for voting. Daniel Kimbell stated that there will still be a Town Meeting (informational meeting) on Monday, March 1, 2010 at 7:00p.m. in the Auditorium at the St. Johnsbury School. The budget public hearing ended at approximately 6:40p.m. Chairperson Kimbell declared a recess until 7:00p.m.

7:00p.m. – REGULAR SELECTBOARD MEETING – PUBLIC COMMENT:

Bernie Timson - asked when the Board was going to revisit the issue of limiting the check writing authority for Town Manager Mike Welch. The Manager stated that he is a signatory on town checks – but the checks are typically signed by the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. All checks that are written have to be approved by the SelectBoard. Jean Hall Wheeler suggested a review of the Minutes – she believed that the discussion was related to local spending limits related to a grant request.

Diane Beck – Asked about the authority of the SelectBoard to purchase land or equipment without a vote. The Manager stated that Vermont law does allow the Board to enter into lease-purchase agreements, without a vote – such as the purchase of the highway trucks. Sandy Grenier said she believed that there was an action taken by the Town to authorize the SelectBoard to sell or acquire land under certain circumstances. The Manager stated that without funds available to purchase property – voter approval would be required to bond or raise the funds.

MINUTES – Is was moved by Gary Reis, seconded by Bryon Quatrini, and unanimously voted to approve the Minutes from the Regular SelectBoard meeting held on January 25, 2010 as printed.

POLICE DEPARTMENT SCHEDULING – The Manager asked for clarification relative to the Police Department scheduling. The Manager stated that currently there have been no changes to the police department shifts – and that any proposed modifications to the current schedule would be presented to the Board for consideration before any changes are implemented. Chairperson Kimbell stated that it was the Board’s intention that the Chief of Police review the schedule in order to reduce overtime cost for 2010. Chairperson Kimbell said that the Board recognizes that there is a full-time officer and a part-time officer that have been called to active duty.

BUILDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION – The Manager informed the Board that the Building Committee has reviewed proposals for location of a Fire Station. At the meeting of the Building Committee held on Monday, February 1, 2010 – members of the Building Committee present at the meeting unanimously voted to recommend to the SelectBoard that the Town continue to investigate the former Tru-Temper site at the intersection of Concord Avenue and Portland Street by performing environmental work to determine if there are environmental issues associated with this location. SelectBoard member Jim Rust stated that the Fire Department has received an estimate from Twinstare Site Work and a significant amount of material will need to be removed, at the proposed building location, to prepare the site for construction. Jim Rust stated that he did not feel that this was the time for the Town to spend any more money on the siting of a Fire Station. Jim Rust stated that at one time this property was offered to the Town as a donation, and it was turned down, and now the Town is looking at paying a significant amount of money for it. Jim Rust stated that the Tru-Temper property is assessed at \$454,000 and currently contributes over \$10,000 in property taxes, within the Special Services District. Jim Rust said that the boring study that has been completed for this lot states that it is not to be used for environmental purposes. Gary Reis said that grant funds would be available for a Phase 1 environmental study. Gary Reis said that this parcel could address many of the needs of the Town for the future. John Nutbrown asked if the population of the Town is going up or down. Mr. Nutbrown said let somebody else buy it. Nancy Cohen said that we have heard about the K-9 issue, and energy issues, and people have been told we are going through a new Town Planning process. Nancy Cohen recommended that all of the information related to the Fire Station and Municipal

Building should be considered as part of the 2011 Town Planning process. Nancy Cohen said that there are many capable people coming forward to volunteer – maybe there should be a separate committee to consider major capital outlays. Diane Beck said that grant money is not free money – it comes with very costly strings attached. Brian Christman asked if the Board has given consideration as to how the railroad plans and right-of-way affects this lot. Jean Hall Wheeler said that it would make sense to try to get some feedback from the railroad about this lot, and potential railroad impacts before moving forward with any environmental work. Nancy Cohen suggested that the Town contact Larry Donna, as he is very knowledgeable about the Railroad Right-of-Ways and state plans for the Railroad. Jim Rust said that the state plans on updating the survey information along the railroad. Bryon Quatrini said that he agreed with Jim Rust, and that now is not the time to move this project forward. There appeared to be general consensus that the Town Manager should obtain information about the rail line as it relates to this property – but that no additional funds would be spent investigating this site at this time.

WELCOME CENTER DISCUSSION – Joel Schwartz stated that in considering the amount of money that the State of Vermont will need to reduce spending for 2011 – he felt the St. Johnsbury should position itself to offer State Welcome Center Services. Joel said that he reviewed the statistics associated with the Waterford Welcome Center on I-93 and the Lyndonville Rest Area on I-91 – and felt that there could possibly be an opportunity for the St. Johnsbury Welcome Center to provide the services offered by these two facilities. Joel said that he, and the Town Manager, met with Representative Bob South, Representative Gary Reis, and Commissioner of Buildings & Grounds Gerry Myers at the St. Johnsbury Welcome Center. Joel said that Commissioner Myers made it clear that at this point in time the administration is not recommending the closure of any of the State Welcome Centers or Rest Areas. Joel said that Commissioner Myers stated that there have been discussions about cooperating with New Hampshire to have one facility on I-93. Joel said that the St. Johnsbury Welcome Center could not accommodate truck traffic, or overnight parking for trucks, which is a service provided currently at these facilities. Joel said that the trucks could still park at these locations – as the facilities are closed at night now when trucks park there. Joel Schwartz said that there is no question that it is more convenient for motorists to have facilities on the interstates – but an important objective of the State of Vermont should be to entice vehicles off the interstate and into the communities. Gary Reis said that this is a very long shot. Gary Reis said that even if this type of proposal was not considered for 2011, it may come up again in 2012 as the state will be looking to cut even more money from the budget. Representative Bob South said that there had been some discussions about a New Hampshire/Vermont cooperative center. Joel said that he was contacted by the deputy commissioner about providing testimony relative to this concept at the Senate Institutions Committee on Tuesday, February 9th.

Darcie McCann, Executive Director of the Northeast Kingdom Chamber of Commerce, said that she felt any discussion about this concept was premature. She said that the Welcome Center Advisory Board has not had time to discuss this or make any recommendations. Darcie McCann said that there were over 132,000 visitors at the Waterford Welcome Center last year. Darcie said that if these facilities were not located

on the interstate that we could actually find that fewer people would be visiting the St. Johnsbury Welcome Center. Darcie said that the Waterford Welcome Center is located on the State Border. Darcie McCann said that any proposal related to closing facilities has a regional impact, and many more partners need to be brought into the discussion. Darcie said that when the state made an agreement with the Welcome Center in White River Junction – they did not close the rest areas along the interstates. Darcie McCann presented the SelectBoard with a letter from Steve Nichols, President of the Lyndon Area Chamber of Commerce, opposing any effort to close any of the interstate Welcome Centers or Rest Areas (copy of letter included with these Minutes per request). Gary Lunderville said that you need to bring a lot more people in to discuss this. Gary Lunderville said he contacted Senator Phil Scott, Chairperson of the Senate Institutions Committee. Gary Lunderville said that he did not see why you would want to bring trucks into the downtown after the effort to keep them on the interstate. Jim Rust said that the state may offer money for the Town now – but there would be no guarantee going forward that there would be funds available to pay for services at the St. Johnsbury Welcome Center. Jim Rust said that there is no place to park large vehicles – not only trucks, but large RV’s with cars towed behind, or pick-ups with large trailers. Jim Rust said that could be a lot more improvements with the signage at Route 18 now – if people get off that exit – they do not know where downtown St. Johnsbury is. Gary Reis said that all of the discussion related to this is very preliminary. The Town Manager said that he wanted to make sure that the Board was aware of this issue, as Joel and he would be visiting with Senate Institutions on February 9th. Joel Schwartz and the Manager will report back to the SelectBoard following that meeting.

CERTIFICATE OF HIGHWAY MILEAGE – The members of the Board reviewed the Certificate of Highway Mileage, as prepared by Priscilla Messier. It was moved by Bryon Quatrini, seconded by Jim Rust, and unanimously voted to approve and sign the Certificate of Highway Mileage.

BOND ANTICIPATION NOTE – WEST SIDE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT – The Manager stated that Sandra Grenier had solicited bids for \$4,469,000 for short term borrowing in anticipation of the \$4,469,000 USDA Loan for the West Side Improvement project. The lower bidder for the short-term note is TD Bank at 1.29%. Bond Counsel J. Paul Giuliani prepared the documentation. The Manager said once the Town reached \$4,469,000 in total spending on the West Side project – then the USDA Loan will be closed, the short-term note repaid, and the Town can begin to drawdown on the \$10,531,000 USDA Grant for this project. It was moved by Bryon Quatrini, seconded by Jim Rust, and unanimously voted to approve and sign the Resolution and Bond Anticipation Note with TD Bank in the amount of \$4,469,000 at 1.29%.

EXPENDITURE WARRANTS – Members of the Board reviewed, approved, and signed Expenditure Warrants as follows:

General Fund	63716 – 63784	\$556,308.33
	63785 – 63813	\$853,495.07

	63814 – 63814	\$ 3,000.00
Grant Fund	2236 – 2236	\$ 8,620.28
	Homeland Security Communications	

MANAGER’S REPORT – *Liquor Control*- The Manager stated that that following discussion with the state liquor control investigator – he would recommend postponing any board discussion on recent concerns associated with a licensed establishment – until the completion of the liquor control officer investigation.

Letter to the Editor - The Board considered a “letter to the editor” relative to the 2010 Municipal General, Highway and Special Service Budget. Jim Rust said that he did not think the “Letters to the Editor” was the way the Board should present information to the voters. Jim Rust recommended an “opinion” piece, or an advertisement. Chairperson Daniel Kimbell said that he wanted to revise the draft, and he would circulate to other Board members for their review and comment.

Portland Street Bridge – The Manager informed the Board that additional right-of-way clearances were required for the construction work on the Portland Street Bridge. The Manager stated that thanks to the efforts of Town Attorney Edward Zuccaro, and Larry Donna, clearance had been obtained from the Washington County Railroad. The Manager stated that the Town had to send a check in the amount of \$3,000 to Pan Am Railroad (Springfield Terminal) in order to have them begin review of the plans. The Town needs to close on all right-of-ways and or licensing agreements by February 16, 2010 or risk the loss of funding.

OTHER BUSINESS - *AARP Correspondence* – Jim Rust referenced the correspondence from AARP relative to the Three River Transportation Path. Jim Rust recommended that the Board invite representatives from AARP to attend a SelectBoard meeting to discuss how AARP can use their members and influence to help St. Johnsbury provide healthy aging opportunities, including physical infrastructure, for the residents of St. Johnsbury.

Having no further business or requests, it was moved by Gary Reis, seconded by Bryon Quatrini, and voted to adjourn at approximately 8:05p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Welch
Town Manager