

MINUTES
ST. JOHNSBURY SELECTBOARD
MONDAY, MARCH 22, 2010
ST. JOHNSBURY SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
7:00 P.M. MEETING

The St. Johnsbury SelectBoard held their regular Select Board Meeting on Wednesday, March 22, 2010 beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the St. Johnsbury School Auditorium.

Select Board Members Present: Chair Jim Rust, Daniel Kimbell, Rodney Lamotte, Bernard Timson, and Bryon Quatrini (via speaker-phone beginning with the discussion on the General Fund Budget)

Others Present: There were approximately 220 people in attendance including Town Manager Mike Welch, Town Clerk/Treasurer Sandy Grenier, Zoning Administrator Priscilla Messier, Police Chief Richard Leighton, Fire Chief Troy Ruggles, Public Works Director Danny Scott, Economic Development Coordinator Joel Schwartz, Recreation Director Joe Fox, Dispatch Manager Mark Gilleland, Executive Secretary Ida Rainville, many other employees, residents and local businesspeople, Taylor Reed of the Caledonian Record and News Channel 7.

EXPENDITURE WARRANTS – The Selectboard approved and signed the following warrants:

General Fund:	Check #63974 – 64023	\$ 62,791.81
	Check #64024 – 64056	\$567,288.68
Grant Fund:	Check #2239 -	\$2,367.06
	Check #2240 – 2241	\$2,279.00

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

PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no comment from the Public on matters that were not included on the Agenda.

MINUTES: In considering the Minutes from March 8, 10, and 16, 2010, Bernard Timson wanted to clarify in the minutes from March 16, in his second to the motion made by Rodney Lamotte to reduce the hours of the Zoning and Planning office to 24, he indicated that compensation and benefits should also be reduced to reflect the 24 hours vs. 40. On a motion by Bernard Timson, seconded by Rodney Lamotte, the minutes were unanimously approved with Mr. Timson’s amendment.

ST. JOHNSBURY WORLD MAPLEFEST – Downtown businessman Scott Beck requested a waiver of the \$25 vendor fee for those who would participate in the Maplefest on April 24, and to request permission to shut down Railroad Street from Eastern Ave. to Portland Street during the festival. On a motion by Daniel Kimbell, seconded by Bernard Timson, the Board voted unanimously to waive the fee and allow the street closing for the event.

THREE-RIVERS TRANSPORTATION PATH – Evan Detrick, Dubois & King Engineering, addressed the proposed reduced length of the transportation path, to run from South Main to Western Ave, via the High Street/Mt. Vernon Street corridor. The new plan would remove the old rail line bridge as part of the project, thereby eliminating future maintenance of the bridge, and

create a new trail head. Mr. Detrick projected that repairing that bridge, or at least replacing the deck, could amount to an additional \$100,000 or more. The existing bridge over Sleepers River will require new decking and railing. VAST will contribute some of the work to that area, and will provide the bulk of maintenance on this section of the rail trail. Mr. Detrick said Dubois & King Engineering will complete the design, put the project out to bid, review bids and oversee engineering during construction and include preparing the amendment, for the additional fee of \$110,000. In response to a question from Ray LaBounty, Mr. Detrick said State rules do not allow for the construction engineering firm to do the final inspection on the project. Mike Welch summarized that with the project in place as presented by Mr. Detrick, the total cost will be approximately \$3 Million, with the Town's share of \$300,000. Several people in the audience spoke in favor of the path. John Somers wanted to know where the \$300,000 was budgeted from, and Mr. Welch said it had yet to be determined, but at least some of the Town's share would probably be in-kind work. On a motion by Rodney Lamotte, seconded by Bernard Timson, the Board voted unanimously to accept the plan as proposed by Evan Detrick.

2010 MUNICIPAL GENERAL FUND – RATIFYING THE MARCH 16, 2010 VOTE.

Chairman Jim Rust apologized to the public, the Selectboard, and Town Employees, for any misunderstanding of the events of March 16. Mr. Rust stated that he felt the motion made during the special meeting was legal and cited several previous meetings in which other business was conducted at a special meeting. Mr. Rust also stated he had reviewed the procedure with Town Attorney Ed Zuccaro and the Secretary of State's office (after the fact), who confirmed that the matter should have been publicly warned. Chairman Rust also confirmed that he had researched the matter prior to the March 16 meeting, and assisted Rod Lamotte with the wording of the motion to be in compliance with Roberts Rules of Order.

Daniel Kimbell called for a point of order on re-opening the motion of March 16. Mr. Kimbell understood it would require a 2/3 majority of the voting members to re-open the motion. Town Agent Ed Zuccaro explained that, because the motion had been properly warned for this meeting, the 2/3 majority did not apply.

Daniel Kimbell moved to nullify the meeting of March 16, and bring the recommended budget as previously approved on March 10, back up for discussion. Having no second on the motion, the motion died.

Rodney Lamotte moved to "Accept the March 10, 2010 budget proposal by Mike Welch, with the following revisions: Elimination of the Economic & Community Development Office; Reduction of Planning Zoning Administrator from 40 hours to 24 hours per week; Salary reduction of 6% effective April 1, 2010 for the Town Manager, Town Clerk/Treasurer, and Department Heads within the General Fund Budget earning over \$50,000 per year." Bernard Timson seconded the motion, with the confirmation that the reduction of hours for the Zoning Administrator would also reflect reduced compensation and benefits. Chairman Rust asked for comments from the Board and the audience.

Town Manager Mike Welch reviewed the hand-out he had presented which reflected actual budgets and tax rates for the past three years, and the projected budget and tax rate for 2010, depending upon the scenario voted in. The breakdown indicated for a \$150,000 house, the original budget that was defeated on March 2 would have generated a reduction of about \$4.80 in taxes. Mr. Welch's suggested revised budget which was voted in by the SelectBoard on March 10 would have generated an approximate reduction of \$18.60, and the SelectBoard motion at the March 16 meeting, and repeated at the current meeting, would result in approximately \$36.75 reduction in taxes on a \$150,000 home.

Several people in the audience made comments and asked questions of the SelectBoard on the proposed cuts:

- Russ Hutchins stated that Joel Schwartz had generated (in Mr. Hutchins' estimation) approximately \$6 Million in grants and business assets during his employment, and Mr. Hutchins firmly supported keeping Mr. Schwartz in his position.
- Betty Keller reminded the Board that nearly 50% of the voters supported the original general budget, and she felt there would be a lack of trust in the general public if the Board cut as drastically as proposed.
- David McGregor spoke in support of the Economic Development office. He felt the decision to cut the department was short-sited and would adversely affect future development opportunities.
- Lauren Moye, spoke against the proposed cuts and reductions, citing the loss of skill and experience in Economic Development and Zoning.
- Darcy McCann, Director of the Northeast Chamber of Commerce, speaking on behalf of local business people, said that Mr. Schwartz works closely with local businesses and has a lot of experience in assisting the businesses.
- Steve Smith spoke against the cuts, simply on the basis of grant writing. He said Mr. Schwartz has proven himself as an excellent grant writer, which is hard to find.
- Peter Crosby, St. J. Development Fund president and Passumpsic Bank president, said he recognized that the Board felt the need to cut taxes, but he felt that two weeks on the job was not sufficient to make an educated decision on making such drastic cuts; Mr. Crosby urged the Board to take longer to review the whole budget and operations of the Town before making these cuts.
- Jim Impey, also concerned with rising taxes local, state, and nation-wide, would rather the Board take longer and review before making drastic department cuts.
- John Goodrich said he applauded the Board for trying to reduce taxes, but felt cutting the one person in the office dedicated to generating business was not the best way. Agreed NVDA does a good job, but St. Johnsbury has a "leg up" with Joel on board to work with his expertise. Mr. Goodrich urged the Board to reconsider. He said that his company (Weidmann Electronics) had generated approximately \$333 Million to the area in 30 years, and Joel had been a big part of it.
- Tim Persons spoke about the tax burden on citizens all over the country, and suggested that our own income taxes fund the grants Mr. Schwartz is responsible for gaining for the Town. Mr. Persons said all government needs to down-size.
- Steve Paterson from NVDA said the Country will not be in a recession forever, and the Town needs to be ready to go forward when the opportunity presents itself – need Joel in place to help that process.
- Lisa Viles said thank you to the SelectBoard for their efforts, but felt they were not addressing the right area.
- Matt Keifer said the Board needs to make cuts and supported their effort.
- Shilo Wilson said he felt the economy is crumbling and the Board needs to make the cuts they presented.
- Steve Berard supported the cuts the Board had made and said they need to go deeper.
- Robin Little was concerned about St. J's future. She would like to attract the kind of people who look at availabilities and the downtown, schools and recreational areas, that will help the area to develop and grow. Joel Schwartz is needed to assist the existing and new businesses to help make them thrive and attract new people.

- Mark Grenier asked if Priscilla Messier could do her job on 24 hours per week, and what her job entails.

Priscilla Messier responded to Mark Grenier’s question on her job responsibilities and time commitment. Priscilla stated that her average hours per week for the past year were 45. Ms. Messier reviewed her responsibilities to the Development Review Board and Planning Commission – scheduling meetings and site inspections, warn meetings, notify neighboring property owners, notify other board and departments if needed, clerk meetings, research materials and information pertinent to the applications, follow through to issuing a certificate of occupancy, and refer all permit information to the Assessor’s Office for review. The 106 permits issued in 2009 represented \$1,485,700 added assessment value to the town, including all Town infrastructure work or non-profits.

Priscilla is also responsible for maintaining zoning maps and floodplain maps and information; research requested zone changes and follow through with necessary meetings and hearings; work with FEMA and the State of Vermont on maintaining floodplain maps and to comply with floodplain regulations and special applications; keep the code of ordinance up to date; work with committee, organize and attend meetings for the Town Plan from 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006, and now in 2010; investigate and work to clean up trash violations (last three years varied from 14 to 28 violations in town); maintain highway mileage sheets, reporting yearly to the State, which supports information for highway funds assistance; keep track of and file information on weight limits for roads and bridges; conducted the Ancient Roads study; maintain other records on highway construction and permitting.

Also, worked on easements and ROW’s for CSO projects and others, assisting with Town Clerk’s office in elections and town report data, attend training seminars, keeping up to date with zoning laws, and attending night meetings.

- John Somers said he applauded the two new SelectBoard members for their cuts to the budget.
- Alan Ruggles has worked with Priscilla on Development Review Board and the Town Plan, and appreciates the amount of work involved. Mr. Ruggles questioned the Board about any analysis they have done to keep the Economic Development projects going, and for the zoning and planning to be covered.
- Ralph Darrah said he agreed with the Board’s cuts, indicating “. . . times are hard, something has to go. . . take a shot.”
- Scott Beck introduced himself as a new businessman in town in 2005, and said he would not be in that position without the assistance of the Zoning Administrator and Economic Development Director. He agreed that taxes are too high, but felt that the Board had not studied the over-all town government enough to make informed decisions on the cuts. He admonished the Board to go slower, be more thoughtful and take a long look at what they were doing. Scott Beck had a written proposal:
 1. The St. Johnsbury Selectboard should allow the voters of St. Johnsbury to vote on the General Fund Budget that was recommended by the Town Manager and Department Heads, and approved by a majority of the Selectboard at the properly warned special meeting on March 10, 2010.
 2. The St. Johnsbury Selectboard should form a special committee for three purposes.
 - a. Review all services currently being provided by the Town of St. Johnsbury and determine which are truly necessary.

- b. Review current staffing to determine if St. Johnsbury has the correct number of Town Employees.
 - c. Review current compensation of Town Employees to determine if St. Johnsbury is compensating its Town Employees in a manner which is fair to the Town Employees and Citizens.
 - 3. The special committee should report to the Selectboard no later than October 1, 2010 so that their input can be reviewed by the Selectboard and the Public, and used in developing the 2011 General Fund Budget.
- Linwood Smith has not seen new jobs in the area; he has worked out of town for 20 years, and his opinion was that 15 years ago there were probably 14,000 people in the town, and in the last census only 7,500. He also had the opinion that the average income in St. Johnsbury is \$15,000, and he felt that Joel had done nothing to improve things.
 - Howard Bennett is a farmer in St. Johnsbury Center and has seen his income cut by close to 50%; he compared the culling of non-producing livestock to the cuts the SelectBoard proposed to make in the Town. His opinion was that the Economic Development Office had done nothing for him.
 - Mary Smith wanted to know why Priscilla and Joel were being targeted.
 - Dale Urie, a former SelectBoard member, agreed it's not easy to cut taxes, but when he was on the Board he listened, learned, and became aware of the added value of experience from Joel and Priscilla. Mr. Urie asked if anyone on the Board had run a cost benefit analysis.
 - Bill Thurston, also a former SelectBoard member, applauded the Board for their proposed cuts. He said he is self-employed, his work and income have been cut and he has to pay employees too, as well as 100% of his own health insurance. Making cuts is difficult and he respected the Board's plan. He felt they needed to cut taxes to help people stay in the area.
 - Tabatha O'Connor asked Priscilla if her job could be done in 24 hours, and Priscilla said, "No, it can't, not and include all of the projects she is involved with." Ms. O'Connor said she thought the two Departments earned more than they were paid, and suggested there be more equitable cuts "across the board".
 - Linda Fogg, St. Johnsbury Chamber (formerly ST.J.WORKS) suggested that it was not the SelectBoard's role to determine who should be cut, but rather give direction to the Town Manager and Department Heads, and let them make the decisions. Ms. Fogg said as a business person she was under the impression that in the Town, as in any business, the Board of Directors (in this case the SelectBoard) has the job of giving goals to the managers and directing them to make the cuts, and leave it up to the managers to know where the cuts could be made most effectively. Linda continued to say that the St. J. Chamber depends upon the Economic Development office a lot, and she felt it would be difficult to say to potential newcomers, "We don't have Economic Development".
 - Jim Flynn wanted to know if the Board had met on March 10 and approved the budget then, how can it be amended again.
 - Don Fogg said he felt that the Board needs to consider cuts carefully, not slash and burn – there could be too many unintended consequences.
 - Frank Landry asked if the Board just decided they needed some kind of tax cut and didn't care where they took it? Mr. Landry supported Linda Fogg's opinion of how business usually works.
 - Martin Fortin agreed that the Country is in bad economic times and the SelectBoard has a duty to try to cut the budget, but felt that the "other" budget never gets cut, it just

keeps going up. Mr. Fortin said cuts like this take away experience from the Town government.

- Kevin Oddy was of the opinion that the Town needs to keep taxes lower by increasing the tax base, not by cutting the people from the budget that work to bring in business.
- David Brown added his voice to the opinion that the Board should take the time to study the current positions before taking drastic cuts. Remember, the budget only failed by 5 votes (or less than 10). Mr. Brown recommended the Board take Mike Welch's proposal for now, and then follow Scott Beck's suggested proposal.
- Chairman Rust reminded Mr. Brown that more than half voted against the budget.
- Ray LaBounty suggested the Board should not "vote in passion". He said that he believed one special appropriation had been voted down because the voters did not understand the verbiage and did not know what they were voting for (or against). So again he said, "Don't vote in passion – take your time to study the situation."

Joel Schwartz asked to speak to the Board and the audience. Mr. Schwartz expressed his thanks for all the support he had received at the meeting, and from all the employees, who do a great job. Joel continued that the question before the Board was "not about him, but about us – a partnership with businesses, chamber, SelectBoard, people. Nothing in the town is done alone." Mr. Schwartz said he is proud of the work he has done to bring grant money to the Town – he's not sure how much – and there will be more ahead to seek capital for projects. The Town needs to use discretionary funding. The Economic Development job is about the future and the Town's largest single asset is its people, its work force. With the Lydall building empty, anyone looking to move their business into this area will be looking for working capital and monetary assistance. Consider the empty places on Main Street – also will require grant money. Joel said he felt sure there would not be enough private money to rebuild, and that assisting with financing is just part of the job. Considering the Old Armory, or Community Center, Joel indicated the Town may have to pay someone to take that away sometime. It would require a huge capital expenditure to bring any part of it up to code. Joel said the Designated Downtown expires in July, 2010 and to lose the designation would be very expensive in terms of eligibility for federal funding and grants, so someone will have to make sure the Downtown can keep the designation, and continue work he has started on several grants he is currently working on.

- Tim Persons expressed the opinion that the labor rate discourages businesses from locating in this area. If the Town does not have public assistance for incoming business, then it is up to the residents to take the cut.
- John Goodrich informed the Board that Weidmann Electronics has paid back every cent it's received in grant funding. On the point of labor cost, he agreed for instance that the labor cost in China is 1/22 of the US labor, and the cost in Mexico 1/15.
- Nancy Cohen said she remembered Mike Welch saying at some point that the Town kept Ed Zuccaro very busy writing grants. If he writes the grants, what does Mr. Schwartz do? Mr. Welch responded that she had misunderstood something he said in the past, saying Mr. Zuccaro is busy with the legal agreements involved with the grants. Ms. Cohen continued on the matter of her farm land on the Old Center Road. She felt the Town had not assisted her in trying to develop that land because it became clear to her in the 2006 Town Plan that the Town would rather develop it into sport fields.
- Pastor Rick Menard said he is proud of St. Johnsbury and appreciates the work that both Priscilla and Joel do for the town. In response to Joel Schwartz's, "God Help Us All" quote, Pastor Menard said that was his department, and invited the Board and public to the Mustard Seed Soup Kitchen any Friday at noon for lunch and fellowship.

- Town Manager Mike Welch said he believed his proposal presented to the Board on March 10 was a good compromise. After listening to what the people were saying, he asked the Board not to adopt the motion as presented, but to vote for the budget as presented by him on March 10, and study the situation further, work it out with him and the Department Heads.
- Daniel Kimbell said that the salary information printed in the Caledonian Record was incorrect and that the Board had looked at the comparison of salaries for St. Johnsbury with other towns in Vermont of similar size and scope as provided by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns. For instance, Montpelier has a similar population, but 100 employees, as compared to 57 employees for St. Johnsbury. Mr. Kimbell pointed out that in the past two years the Department Heads had taken cuts in and level funded their own salaries, and increased contributions to insurance and the town pension plan, so that effectively the salaries will be 20% less in 2010 than they were in 2008. Mr. Kimbell continued to point out these are not 40 hour per week, 8 – 5 jobs, but entail more than 40 hours with nighttime and early morning meetings (all department heads were present at this SelectBoard meeting). Daniel Kimbell did not see how an entire department could be cut, along with reducing the zoning office hours to 24 hours. He equated the scenario to “It’s A Wonderful Life”, and advised the Board to think about what the world would be like without “George (Bailey) and Georgette”.
- Bernard Timson responded that his campaign for SelectBoard hinged on making certain cuts to the budget by request of the citizens. Mr. Timson believes communication from the Department Heads and understanding of performance is vital to the SelectBoard, and recommended a monthly report from each department on current projects and activities. Mr. Timson admitted he was unfamiliar with all the work that each department does, and would like to know job descriptions from employees.
- Bryon Quatrini felt that the Board had voted on a budget on March 10 that was presented by the Town Manager, and he did not believe the Board should make the drastic cuts as proposed in Mr. Lamotte’s motion. Bryon suggested re-examining the overall budget and employee situation to work on in the future.
- Rodney Lamotte said that the \$34,000 cut proposed by Mr. Welch on March 10 was a minor adjustment, and he did not feel it was sufficient compared to the original budget. Mr. Lamotte ran his campaign on the platform to cut taxes. He said he understood that many other towns in Vermont managed their economic development, citing Newport as an example of growth and building, without having a full time economic development director. Mr. Lamotte said that he received many phone calls after the March 16 meeting, and only two calls opposed the motion to make the cuts.
- Chairman Jim Rust praised the town employees, saying they always do a fantastic job, but sometimes cuts have to be made, even though they hurt. Mr. Rust said out of 255 municipalities in the State of Vermont, only 7 have an Economic Development Director, one of them being part time. Mr. Rust felt that if other towns can work without an Economic Development Director, St. Johnsbury can also. When asked if he had a plan, Mr. Rust indicated the Board would try to work with Mike Welch to develop one. Jim Rust continued to say he had talked to hundreds of citizens who supported the cuts as proposed. He also said he is always available as an elected official to talk to anyone in town, looking for suggestions and trying to follow the will of the people
- Bill Rodd asked if the Board had met with each Department Head to discuss their suggested cuts and reductions. Mr. Rodd suggested the Board should consult with Department Heads rather than making cuts just for the sake of making cuts.
- Linda Fogg asked the Board what they have developed for a plan to replace the Economic Development office. Ms. Fogg indicated she felt as a businessperson there should be

something in place to replace the department before eliminating the position, and had the Board discussed other options or a new structure with Town Manager Mike Welch?

- Bryon Quatrini asked if the plan was going to be shared with the rest of the Board.
- Jim Rust indicated he had experienced a 4-1 voting policy since being elected to the SelectBoard.
- Priscilla Messier urged the Board, once again, to investigate how the offices work, visit the offices and talk to the staff, before making decisions on cuts to the staff. She felt there was no courtesy extended to her or to Joel Schwartz when the Board presented the motion and voted to eliminate and cut their positions. Ms. Messier said the Board should be aware of the fact that many Department Heads are currently working 50 – 60 hours per week, and Mike Welch works, who knows? how many hours. Priscilla urged the Board to try to work with the citizens and especially with the employees of the town. She indicated the action of March 16 may create a lack of trust between the Board and the employees and Department Heads, especially. Priscilla Messier urged the Board to table the proposed cuts and become more familiar with how the Town operates before making these cuts.
- Joe Fox, Recreation Director, said thank you to the taxpayers for their support of the Town and the Recreation Department. Since his salary is not over \$50,000, it will not be affected by the 6% cut, but he wanted to thank the Department Heads that will be affected for taking the “hit” on the cut and increased insurance contribution and pension expense. Mr. Fox expressed his opinion that the proposed cut, while it may be legal, was not done fairly.
- Several other people who had spoken before came to the microphone to again express their desire for the Board to take their time, re-examine the cuts they have proposed, and reconsider.
- Shilo Wilson spoke again in support of the proposed cuts, but expressed concern that if the Board cut much deeper, they could lose all of the current Department Heads.
- Jim Wuertele pointed out that, even if the Board passes the proposed cuts to the budget, it still needs to be approved by the voters, and he did not believe it was a sure thing. Jim Rust said he realized that.
- Scott Beck asked if the Board would take a non-binding voice vote from those present. Jim Rust said he didn’t think it would do any good – the only way to know for sure is by a town-wide vote.
- Dale Urie recapped the previous votes, and asked why the Board did not present the revised budget from Mike Welch to the people before taking such drastic cuts?

Several more people echoed the sentiments on both sides of the issue. Mike Welch said that with the split vote, the Board was sending mixed signals to the people and he strongly urged them to try to compromise and move on.

Jim Rust re-read the motion presented by Rodney Lamotte and seconded by Bernard Timson and called for a vote. Rodney Lamotte and Bernard Timson voted in favor; Daniel Kimbell and Bryon Quatrini were opposed. Jim Rust broke the tie and voted in favor of the motion.

CONSIDERATION OF SALARY REDUCTION OF 6% FOR DEPARTMENT HEADS EARNING OVER \$50,000 BUDGETED IN THE HIGHWAY FUND, SPECIAL SERVICES FUND, AND WATER/SEWER FUND.

Mike Welch reminded the Board that the budgets for Highway and Special Services passed at the March 2 Town Meeting. The Department Heads from these departments were not affected by the 6% pay cuts, and the 2% increased insurance contribution that was just voted on for the General Fund Budget Department Heads, because these employees are not in the General Fund. A separate action would need to be taken by the SelectBoard if they were of a mind to include those two Department Heads. This would include Police Chief Richard Leighton and Public Works Director

Danny Scott. Mike Welch said that, at the time he proposed the \$34,000 reduction on March 10, a voluntary 3% reduction by Rich Leighton and Danny Scott was agreed to, even though their budgets had been approved by the public, with a 2 ½ % raise. Bernard Timson asked if Danny Scott would still be willing to take the cut, to which Danny replied he wasn't sure what the Board wanted him to do anymore. Mr. Timson said he had not talked to the Department Heads before this meeting and he was not familiar with everyone's responsibilities. Jim Rust said he had talked to Danny Scott and Rich Leighton before the meeting. No action was made on this issue.

SCHEDULE & ADVERTISING OF REVOTE – The Board was looking at April 13 as a possible date, subject to the School Board being ready for a revote also. Sandy Grenier said that an election costs approximately \$2025 per meeting. Both Boards also need sufficient time to warn the vote. Lisa Rivers said the soonest the School Board could be ready with a proposal for vote would be Friday, March 26. Both Boards would need extra time to warn the vote, so April 6 would be too soon. Bob South questioned if there would be time to send out absentee ballots. Sandy Grenier said that all absentee ballots that were mailed for the Town Meeting would automatically get sent for the re-vote, but there may not be any extra time for people to send requests in. General concern was that there may not be enough time for military personnel serving overseas to get their ballots and return them. Town Attorney Ed Zuccaro commented that the state statutes on revoting do not address the time it would take to mail and return an absentee ballot.

Mike Welch summarized the effect of voting to reduce the General Fund Department Heads' wages 6% and leaving the 2 ½ % increase in place for the Public Works and Police Department created an 8 ½ % spread between the General Fund Department Heads and the Department Heads for Public Works and Police Departments. Plus, the insurance contributions required by the General Fund Department Heads was increased by 2%. Bryon Quatrini stated that this was very unfair.

Jim Rust re-capped the budget breakdown and suggested a questionnaire be put together for voters to fill in after the re-vote, confirming their reasons for voting yes or no. Several audience members spoke again on the perceived inequities of the bottom line for Department Heads.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT – Mike Welch reported that the Portland Street Bridge request for proposals are available in the Town office and on line, for construction inspection services. Bids to be open March 26 at 3:00p.m. The bids for the actual construction are due on April 14, 2010.

Mike Welch asked the Board to act on the 1.69%, \$1Million tax anticipation note which was awarded to Passumpsic Savings Bank. On a motion by Bernard Timson, seconded by Rodney Lamotte, the Board voted 3-0 to approve and sign the note. Daniel Kimbell abstained.

The Board signed the Town Appointment of Mike Welch as Service Officer for the Town.

Mike Welch reported that the Town of St. Johnsbury had been selected to receive an energy grant. Bids on the first phase of the West Side project on Hastings Hill have been advertised.

Bernard Timson said he would like to see a report from the Department Heads each month on projects and activities in each department so he can get a better handle on everyone's responsibilities. Mike Welch said he thought that could be arranged.

Mike Welch requested the Board consider an Executive Session to discuss labor agreements. On a motion by Rodney Lamotte, seconded by Daniel Kimbell, the Board went into executive session at

10:32p.m. Bryon Quatrini did not participate in the executive session. The Board returned to their regular meeting at 10:45p.m. and on a motion by Daniel Kimbell, seconded by Rodney Lamotte, voted to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Ida W. Rainville
Executive Secretary