

**MINUTES**  
**ST. JOHNSBURY SELECTBOARD**  
**MONDAY, APRIL 12, 2010**  
**ST. JOHNSBURY SCHOOL AUDITORIUM**  
**7:00 P.M. MEETING**

The St. Johnsbury SelectBoard held their regular Select Board Meeting on Monday, April 12, 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.

**Others Present:** There were approximately 175 people in attendance including Town Manager Mike Welch, Town Clerk/Treasurer Sandy Grenier, Zoning Administrator Priscilla Messier, Fire Chief Troy Ruggles, Public Works Director Danny Scott, Economic Development Coordinator Joel Schwartz, Recreation Director Joe Fox, Executive Secretary Ida Rainville, many other employees, residents and local businesspeople, Taylor Reed of the Caledonian Record, WCAX News crew from Channel 3, and News Channel 7.

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

General Fund:	Check #64057 - 64114	\$ 360,519.29
	Check #64115 - 64143	\$ 22,034.75
	Check #64144	\$ 216.75
	Check #64145 – 64176	\$536, 329.05
	Check #64177	\$ 353.37
Grant Fund:	Check #2242	\$1,500.00
	Check #2243 – 2250	\$2,350.62
	Check #2251 – 2252	\$ 758.22
	Check #2253 – 2254	\$7,280.75

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Town Manager Mike Welch read a letter to the Board and to the Public, officially tendering his resignation from the position of Town Manager, effective May 7, 2010. Mr. Welch received a thank you from the Board and a standing ovation from the crowd.

Representative Bob South informed the Board on Bill H776 introduced to the House, which would require the towns to track rental units. Mr. South amended the Bill to read “as of December 1, 2010”, and encouraged the Town to apply for hardship grants from the State, money to be distributed in the spring of 2011, that would assist the Town in implementing H776. Mr. South asked the Board to contact their senators to support this bill.

Nancy Cohen brought up the Bill 485 on Current Use, which would require a one-time fee of \$127 from current use property owners, and encouraged support of the Bill.

Also, Ms. Cohen asked why the St. Johnsbury Maplefest was not represented on a map she had acquired during the maple weekend open house. The only thing listed for St. Johnsbury was the Comfort Inn.

Ms. Cohen referred to the one-page ad in the Caledonian Record from March 20 signed by “Friends of Responsible Local Government”, and reported that according to the Secretary of State’s office, there is no organization in the State officially recognized by that name. Nancy Cohen felt that anyone who wants to print a full page ad should have their names attached.

Scott Beck replied to the Maplefest map question. He said he and co-director Fred Little had tried to get St. Johnsbury onto the map, and they were not aware that St. Johnsbury was not represented. They would try harder next year. Scott Beck said he and Fred Little have been working on their own for this activity, and could really use some assistance.

Ben Luna read a portion of the California Open Meeting Law and suggested the Town should make a greater effort to let people know when and where meetings will occur. He also volunteered to assist with economic development, since he has previous experience in the area.

Tina Wood issued a personal thank you to Mike Welch for his years of service.

**MINUTES:** The meeting minutes of March 22 and April 7, 2010 were reviewed. On a motion by Rodney Lamotte, seconded by Daniel Kimbell, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Chairman Jim Rust reminded people in the audience that, if they wished to speak, please give names and place of residence. They would be allowed one minute to speak on each subject, with one follow-up statement/question.

**FURTHER RECONSIDERATION OF THE 2010 GENERAL FUND MUNICIPAL BUDGET RELATED TO:**

- **ELIMINATION OF ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICE;**
- **REDUCTION OF PLANNING/ZONING ADMINISTRATOR FROM 40 HOURS TO 24 HOURS PER WEEK.**
- **WHETHER OR NOT ALL OR A PORTION OF BUDGETS SHOULD BE INCLUDED AS SEPARATE ARTICLES.**

The following three articles were presented and tabled at the April 7 meeting:

*ARTICLE 01: Shall the voters of the Town of St. Johnsbury authorize a General Fund Budget of \$2,249,596 of which, an amount not to exceed \$1,649,186 is to be raised by local property taxes in 2010?*

*ARTICLE 02: Shall the voters of the Town of St. Johnsbury authorize, in addition to the amount of \$72,435 included in the General Fund Budget under Article 1, the expenditure of the further sum of \$22,345, to be raised in local property taxes, for the purpose of funding the position of Zoning & Planning Administrator on a full-time rather than a part-time basis for 2010?*

*ARTICLE 03: Shall the voters of the Town of St. Johnsbury authorize, in addition to the amount of \$57,905 included in the General Fund Budget under Article 1, the expenditure of the further sum of \$39,975, to be raised in local property taxes, for the purpose of continued funding of the Office of Economic Development for 2010?*

Daniel Kimbell moved to include all articles on the ballot for the revote of the general fund budget. The motion was seconded by Bryon Quatrini.

Bryon Quatrini asked the other members of the SelectBoard to clarify their individual assessment of a negative vote on the General Fund Budget revote. Mr. Quatrini said he does not believe it

would mean the voters want more cuts, but that they are unhappy with cuts that have been made and dissatisfied with the budget as presented. This according to conversations Mr. Quatrini has had with various citizens of the Town. Daniel Kimbell indicated he would like to see the voters decide on these questions. Rod Lamotte said he felt that having the three questions on the ballot would be confusing to the voters and he recollected that Town Agent Ed Zuccaro had recommended just one question on the ballot, although Mr. Zuccaro had also drafted the three questions. Jim Rust indicated that a negative vote, in his opinion, would mean the Board needs to go back to the drawing board for re-working the budget. Bernie Timson said he was in favor of just one question on the ballot – Article 01. Bryon Quatrini repeated that he thought the voters were intelligent enough to be able to vote on the three articles without confusion.

Nancy Cohen asked what exactly had Ed Zuccaro recommended for the ballot? She was told that he had written the articles as presented.

Scott Beck said that if the articles could be crafted to satisfy a less-confusing question he would like to see all three articles on the ballot. At this point in time the town is divided – need to #1 pass the budget.

Chuck Bjorkland questioned the job description of the Economic Development Director. He felt the Board should know the answer to that and he trusted them to know what needs to be cut. Mr. Bjorkland wanted to see just one article.

David McGregor thought the decision to release the Economic Development department was ill-informed. The Board never discussed the job description with the Economic Development Director, and he (Mr. McGregor) thought the SelectBoard should have been better informed before making that decision.

Steve Smith was against the cuts originally, but now feels the whole situation has turned into a popularity contest. He was under the impression that the Economic Development Department and Zoning/Planning cuts were a done deal, and he did not feel comfortable voting for or against one person's job. Mr. Smith did not want the decision forced onto the public.

Jim Wurtele said that with Mr. Welch leaving the Town Manager position, things have changed and the Board should re-consider the Economic Development Office and Zoning and Planning. Mr. Wurtele suggested having an intermediate time that these department cuts could be phased out, not to dump it all onto shoulders of new manager and other employees not ready to handle it.

Linwood Smith said he would like to see just one article on the vote. He is not worried about Economic Development – there will be volunteers ready to step in to do the job. In his opinion, the Town has been run by people who make \$100,000 to over \$200,000 for too long. His opinion was that it was time for working people to get involved.

The SelectBoard voted on the motion to include the three articles on the ballot. Two were in favor (Quatrini and Kimbell) and two opposed (Lamotte and Timson). Jim Rust broke the tie with a nay vote, defeating the motion.

Bernard Timson moved to have only Article 01 (indicated above) on the ballot for revote of the General Fund Budget. Rod Lamotte seconded the motion. Bryon Quatrini again asked the other members of the Board their individual opinions on what a “no” vote would mean. Rod Lamotte said they should supply a questionnaire to the voters at the polls to get their opinions; Bernard Timson indicated he thought it would mean the voters want more cuts; Jim Rust said it would

reflect just a “no” vote. Both Daniel Kimbell and Bryon Quatrini agreed it would indicate to them dissatisfaction with the Board’s actions, not necessarily more cuts to the budget. Rod Lamotte said he had written down the phone calls he had received, and 67 callers were in favor of Article 01.

Chairman Rust called for the vote – Two in favor (Lamotte and Timson) two opposed (Kimbell and Quatrini); Chairman Rust broke the tie with a “yes” vote, and the motion was approved.

**SCHEDULE OF REVOTE:** Mike Welch reported that the Lively Center is available for May 18 or 25, and either date would accommodate the 30-day warning period. General agreement for the sooner the better. On a motion by Rod Lamotte, seconded by Bernie Timson, the Board voted in favor of holding the vote on May 18, with an informational meeting on May 17 at the school, and another informational meeting on April 26 at 6:00, in conjunction with the next regularly scheduled SelectBoard meeting.

David McGregor asked if the Board would consider a petition circulated by voters to allow Articles 02 and 03 to be added to the ballot. Mike Welch informed him that a vote from the petition would require a special town meeting, with another 30-day warning period, according to State Statute. There would not be enough time.

Nancy Cohen wondered if, since the revote is required to be held in the same location, should the count also be handled in the same way – by machine. Sandy Grenier said she had consulted with the Secretary of State and that is not an issue. Using the machine to vote would require more time and money for the revote. Nancy Cohen indicated she thought the machine vote would be much more accurate.

Bob South wanted to know if there would be enough time to send ballots to Military personnel. After some discussion it was decided to extend the vote time one more week. On a motion by Bryon Quatrini, seconded by Daniel Kimbell, the Board voted to hold the revote on May 25, with informational meetings on April 26 and May 24, and to use a hand-counted paper ballot. Russ Hutchins also wanted to make sure that people who received their absentee ballots at their winter residents would be able to receive ballots here. Sandy Grenier assured him that will be addressed.

**PRO-RATION OF BENEFITS – REGULAR PART-TIME EMPLOYEES –**

The following policy was discussed briefly. On a motion by Bernard Timson, seconded by Rodney Lamotte, the Board voted to adopt and sign the policy on benefits for regular part-time municipal employees as presented.

**POLICY RELATED TO BENEFITS  
REGULAR PART-TIME MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES**

For the purposes of this policy a Regular Part-Time municipal employee is an employee who works fewer than 40 hours per week on a regular schedule on a continuing basis.

Regular Part-time employees who are regularly scheduled to work at least 20 hours per week on a continuing basis are eligible to receive municipal benefits on a prorated basis, subject to the eligibility requirements of the insurance carriers.

**APPOINTMENTS AND SELECTBOARD COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS** – There were three people who had expressed an interest in joining the Planning Commission, for

the three available positions. On a motion by Rodney Lamotte, seconded by Bernard Timson, the Board voted unanimously to appoint Tina Wood, Jay Wood, and David McGregor to the Planning Commission

For NVDA representation, Daniel Kimbell and Bryon Quatrini volunteered to serve on the committee.

Several other positions on town committees exist, but it was decided to hold off on appointments until the ad for these positions has appeared in the Caledonian Record.

Pension Committee – Adam Colburn was confirmed as the representative to replace Kurt Borgstrom for the Police Department on the Pension Committee. Daniel Kimbell agreed to stay on the committee as representative from the SelectBoard.

Labor Negotiations – Mike Welch explained the labor negotiating committee will require a lot of long hours for the rest of the year, and requires two SelectBoard members on the committee. Rodney Lamotte and Jim Rust volunteered to serve.

Water/Sewer Grievance Board – Bryon Quatrini and Bernard Timson volunteered to serve on this board.

Nancy Cohen wanted to know if the Town ever hired a professional negotiator, to which Mike Welch replied that yes, that has been done in the past to help develop proposals and come up with a final settlement.

**DOWNTOWN DESIGNATION RENEWAL** – Mike Welch reported that the St. Johnsbury Downtown Designation was one of the first three so designated in the state of Vermont, and now requires a re-designation every 5 years. Katrina Meigs, Executive Director of St. Johnsbury Chamber of Commerce, told the Board that the downtown businesses and property owners can benefit from this designation in the availability of grants and tax credits to assist in sprinkler systems, ADA compliance, and others. On a motion by Daniel Kimbell, seconded by Bernard Timson, the Board voted unanimously to pursue the re-designation of the Downtown.

**CONSTRUCTION SERVICE CONTRACT – PORTLAND ST. BRIDGE** – Mike Welch thanked Bernard Timson for his participation in the proposal selection. Dubois and King scored the highest of the engineering firms, and had a very competitive bid. Mike Welch said they had gone through reference checks, and it was necessary to have an engineer on board as soon as possible. Because it's part of an ARRA project, the local cost will be 5%. On a motion by Daniel Kimbell, seconded by Bernard Timson, the Board voted unanimously to accept the bid from Dubois and King, subject to the State of Vermont approval.

**GREEN-UP FINANCIAL COMMITMENT** – Mike Welch reviewed information from the SelectBoard packet showing Green-up expenses for 2009 of \$4600. Since there is not a budget written for this year, Mr. Welch suggested the \$4600 could be cut considerably by not offering the free bar-b-q, as in the past few years, and not having the dumpsters

delivered to Railroad Street for collection. The town trucks are already touring all roads to pick up roadside trash after the event. On a motion by Rod Lamotte, seconded by Bernard Timson, the Board voted to follow Mr. Welch's recommendation for Green-up.

**MANAGER'S REPORT** – Mike Welch asked the Board members to approve and sign a tax anticipation note for the Town Clerk. The winning bidder was Passumpsic Savings Bank at 1.84% for \$500,000. Bryon Quatrini moved, Rod Lamotte seconded a motion to sign the note. The vote was 3-0 in favor. Daniel Kimbell abstained.

Mike reported that the quote from Dana Calkins to remove the underground storage tanks at the Community Center on Main Street was very competitive, according to the Vermont State office. On a motion by Bryon Quatrini, seconded by Bernard Timson, the Board voted unanimously to reward the bid to Dana Calkins. Nancy Cohen asked the amount of the bid - \$4,065 for two tanks.

Priscilla Messier asked the Board to consider a \$15,000 planning grant through the State of Vermont that the Town usually gets to help fund the Town Plan and any by-laws review. On a motion by Bryon Quatrini, seconded by Daniel Kimbell, the Board voted unanimously to apply for the grant.

Bill Gilding asked the Board to consider not accepting Mike Welch's resignation, to hold it for 11 months until the make-up of the Board may change.

Mary Smith said she was for the cuts, but not in the way they occurred. She hoped the divisiveness in the Board could be put aside and all could work together in the future.

Daniel Kimbell addressed Mike Welch personally and thanked him for all his help and mentoring.

On a motion by Daniel Kimbell, seconded by Bernard Timson, the Board voted to go into executive session to discuss a personnel issue at 8:25p.m. The Board returned to regular session and voted to adjourn at approximately 8:35p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ida W. Rainville  
Executive Secretary