

**MINUTES  
ST. JOHNSBURY SELECTBOARD  
MONDAY, JUNE 7, 2010  
MUNICIPAL BOARD ROOM  
7:00 P.M. MEETING**

The St. Johnsbury SelectBoard held their regular Select Board Meeting on Monday, June 7, 2010 beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the Municipal Board room.

**Select Board Members Present:** Chair Jim Rust, Daniel Kimbell, Rodney Lamotte, Bernard Timson, and Bryon Quatrini.

**Others Present:** Town Manager Jim Fitzgerald, Town Clerk/Treasurer Sandy Grenier, Zoning Administrator Priscilla Messier, Fire Chief Troy Ruggles, Public Works Director Danny Scott, Executive Secretary Ida Rainville, Nancy Cohen, Jackie Bennett, Howard Bennett, Chris Parker, Brian Christman, Leonard Hychalk, Al Dunn, Kevin Montminy, Mark Harpin, Randall Northrop, Jon and Diane Beck, Cindy Robillard, and Taylor Reed of the Caledonian Record.

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

General Fund:	Check #64403 – 64459	\$265,293.23
	Check #64460 – 64520	\$121,403.28
	Check #64521 – 64533	\$ 2,855.31
Grant Fund:	Check #2262 -	\$1,934.06

Daniel Kimbell pointed out that he would be out of town and not able to review and sign the invoices for two weeks. Jim Rust and Bryon Quatrini volunteered to fill in during the next few weeks to approve the warrants.

**ASSESSMENT GRIEVANCE** – Authorization from the Board to reimburse the W.H. and Natalie Rodd Trust \$10,625.85 + interest, as a result of suite brought by the Rodds.

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Nancy Cohen requested moving the American Flag to a new position with the Selectboard table. Leonard Hychalk presented a petition signed by 51 people requesting the Town upgrade and pave Breezy Hill Road. Cindy Robillard asked what action had been taken since the meeting with VLCT about contracting with a new Town Manager. Jim Rust said that would be covered during the Manager’s report.

Daniel Kimbell presented Town Clerk/Treasurer with a check in excess of \$1,000 for the Recreation Department, as a result of the recent “Rib Run” fund-raiser.

Al Dunn pointed out that there are, (or will be) 3 vacancies on the Recreation Board, and asked how and when will they be filled? Mr. Rust said the Rec. Board chairman should work with the Selectboard to fill the seats.

Leonard Hychalk asked who makes the decisions on road improvements, and Jim Rust said it was an on-going process, usually made in the fall of the year, to see which roads need the most attention. Nancy Cohen pointed out that Stark District Road from Bennett to Elliott is very rough.

Nancy Cohen asked how capital improvement, finance committee and budget committees are going to operate. She was of the opinion that they should all be separate entities and have specific functions.

**MINUTES** – On a motion by Bernard Timson, seconded by Rod Lamotte, the Board unanimously approved the minutes from May 10, 19, and 24, as presented.

**AUDIT** – Randall Northrop presented the audit report for review and approval. Randall reported that all seemed to be in order. Jim Rust asked questions on several points made in the audit, but found most would be resolved. Mr. Northrop pointed out “no payments” to some funds. He felt the Town should establish some fund flexibility and clarify collectibles to a realistic total, rather than leaving all collectibles on the books for full face value.

**EMERGENCY PLAN** – Chief Troy Ruggles reviewed the updated Emergency Operations Plan, as required by the State. Overall the plan is to identify whom to contact and how to handle a variety of situations. Daniel Kimbell suggested Troy keep a copy of the plan at home as well as in his office. Nancy Cohen had several questions for Chief Ruggles on the safety of hazardous materials storage and the complexity of the plan over-all. Chief Ruggles said the format of the plan is changed periodically by the State, and updated as new problems arise, but generally the changes made to the Plan are directed by changes in personnel.

**VOTER SURVEY** – Jim Rust reported that he personally had read and tallied every voter survey that was submitted at the last budget vote. He reviewed the number of responses to each question, and some of the comments. Of the 1326 votes on the budget, 614 filled out surveys. The majority voting in favor of the budget indicated they were in favor of the budget as presented, or wanted to see more cuts. Ninety-seven of the voters who voted against the budget indicated they wanted to see more cuts, with another 64 indicating they disagreed with the cuts proposed already.

**VACATION POLICY** – Town Clerk Sandra Grenier clarified some information that had appeared in the editorial of the Caledonia Record, indicating that a recently retired employee was receiving unused sick time and 46 weeks of vacation time following his retirement. Sandy corrected the information, stating that no employee would receive unused sick leave, and the person to whom the article referred only received 14 weeks of earned vacation at the time of his retirement, and was no longer receiving any compensation from the Town. Daniel Kimbell suggested the Board should implement a policy going forward for the non-union personnel, and to get a current listing of accrued vacations. Jim Rust said he does have a list and there are very few employees who actually carry over vacation time, and only one current employee with substantial accrued vacation through special circumstances. Jim Rust said this situation should be addressed, since without trained coverage for the water filter plant, Dan Gray has been unable to take substantial vacation for several years, and should not lose that time, but it is necessary to have someone in place to cover for him.

Nancy Cohen asked if it was a matter of Union employees can't carry over and non-union employees can? It was clarified that the Unions work from three separate contracts and it varies, but it is also specified in the contracts, whereas traditionally the non-union employees have loosely adopted the unions' policy.

**PURCHASING POLICY** – Jim Fitzgerald presented a draft of purchasing policy that he thought would provide more control over random purchasing and encourage the use of bids for large items. It also included a section on the disposition of town items. Nancy Cohen said she was “appalled” that the town does not currently use purchase orders, though when Dan Scott assured her he approved every purchase made in his department, Nancy still felt that the Town should have purchase orders in place. Jim

Fitzgerald said he would have the department heads take copies of the proposed policy and review at the Wednesday morning meeting. Daniel Kimbell asked if this included only physical items, or also services. Mr. Fitzgerald indicated there was a price cutoff.

Howard Bennett asked if it was true the Town had recently purchased a new loader in lieu of replacing the brakes on the old loader, only to have both loaders still in service. Dan Scott explained that during the winter months when one loader is used to plow some parking lots, the other is needed to load the trucks with sand or snow. That purchase was pre-approved by the Board.

**BOILER PURCHASE** – Jim Fitzgerald said that one of the boilers in the municipal building needed to be replaced because of a hole in the boiler, according to Dan Trombly. Mr. Trombly had submitted a quote of approximately \$7900, and Jim Fitzgerald said there was \$9776 in the Municipal Building Reserve fund, and a balance of \$6180 in the Municipal Building maintenance fund, with an unknown amount necessary to complete the year. General consensus was to get specifications on the proposed replacement and put out to bid to local contractors, including Trombly Plumbing & Heating, before making any decision. The question remains if the energy grant would be available to provide some or all of the expense for the boiler. On a motion by Daniel Kimbell, seconded by Bryon Quatrini, the Board voted unanimously to put together the bid process. Cindy Robillard asked if there might be other sources of funding that are being missed because of the absence of personnel, to which she was informed that is not the case.

**HEALTH AND DENTAL INSURANCE** – Ida Rainville presented information on Blue Cross Blue Shield changes that are resulting from the recent Health Care Reform bill. Insurance will be offered to dependents through the age of 26, whether or not they are in school, if they do not have insurance through employers. The law goes into effect on September 23 or the first enrollment date after September 23. BCBS is offering dependents to remain on their policies through the summer if they would have been taken off because of the end of the school year otherwise. Ida did not know how many, if any, employees might be affected by this new law. On a motion by Bryon Quatrini, seconded by Bernard Timson, the Board voted unanimously to allow people to stay on the policies throughout the summer, if this applies to any of the Town employees. Ida reported that VLCT is allowing members of VLCT to join the VLCT Delta Dental policy now, even if they are not on the health trust. Ida reported that joining the VLCT policy would save at least 10% over the cost of the dental policy if the Town remained independent. There would be no change in benefits. On a motion by Daniel Kimbell, seconded by Bryon Quatrini, the Board voted unanimously to authorize the change to the VLCT Delta Dental Plan.

**USDA** - A letter from the USDA requested the signature of the Selectboard guaranteeing the completion of the water system upgrades before September 30, 2015 because the grant funding is time sensitive. Randy Goodwin from Dufresne Group had confirmed that September 30, 2015 was a very comfortable date to see all of the projects completed. On a motion by Bryon Quatrini, seconded by Daniel Kimbell, the Board voted unanimously to authorize the Chairman to sign the documents.

**SUMMER MEETING SCHEDULE** – It was noted that June 14 was not a good date because of planned absence by Board members. Planning one meeting each month for July and August, it was decided to hold the meetings at 6:00p.m. rather than 7:00p.m. because there may be extra business to be transacted, and the meetings will be held on July 26 and August 9. The July 26 meeting was scheduled so that there would be sufficient time to warn a public hearing on proposed alteration and discontinuance of public highways, i.e. the alteration of the northerly right of way limit of Central Street at the intersection of Cliff Street.

**MANAGER'S REPORT** – Dan Scott updated the Board on the Hastings Hill project, indicating that water was up as far as Darby's Automotive, and then the sewer line and storm drain will be addressed; The meter pit at Weidmann Electronics is nearly done, awaiting CVPS connection; the Airport tank has

been filled and testing is proceeding; The clear well at the filter plant was finished on 6/6. When asked about the projected time line for Hastings Hill, Dan said it had to be finished by November 3.

Mr. Fitzgerald reported that there would be a Trailhead meeting on the Bike path at 9:15a.m. on June 8, and a pre-construction meeting at 10:00a.m. June 10 on the Portland Street Bridge. When questioned about the move of the water/sewer department from Western Ave. to the Highway department garage, Dan Scott indicated he was awaiting a quote on the building construction. Troy Ruggles said it cost the Fire Department approximately \$10,000 to house the apparatus at the Murphy building on Portland Street, and Jim Fitzgerald said that when the construction is done at the highway garage for the water/sewer department, there will be plenty of room to store fire equipment at the water garage off Western Ave.

Jim Rust addressed the issue of hiring a new Town Manager. One question Mr. Rust got an answer for was whether or not the Town Manager legally must reside in the town. The answer is, "no". Jim Rust has received job descriptions from five separate towns, similar in size and scope to St. Johnsbury. VLCT will submit a copy of their proposed contract for the Board to review. Rod Lamotte suggested that the Board stay local in their search and advertise for only two weeks. General discussion centered around period of time and putting together a search committee from a combination of citizens, the Board, and town employees, and the development of a job description.

A report on the Downtown Designation meeting revealed that there was not a representative there from St. Johnsbury. According to Jim Fitzgerald and Jim Rust, no one had received notification of the meeting, and St. Johnsbury Chamber of Commerce Director, Katrina Meigs had indicated it was her understanding that it was not necessary for anyone to attend from the Town, even though the meeting was to discuss the Town's request for extension on the Downtown Designation application.

Community Building – Jim Rust reported that the underground tanks at the Community Center on Main Street are scheduled to be removed sometime in June, and there have been contacts requesting the use of the building by various groups: gymnastics camp and historical museum to name two. General feeling was the use of the building has to be looked at realistically for the future.

Jim Rust reported that a meeting concerning a request for public records was scheduled for June 8; Mr. Rust also said that the meeting and events calendar will be revived at least for the Selectboard. On the question concerning possible early retirement packets, Mr. Fitzgerald indicated he had called Tracy Braun at People's Retirement Svcs. and has a call in to VMERS. All new hires are to be run by the SelectBoard before hiring.

Daniel Kimbell wanted to review the minutes where the Board had voted to increase the health insurance deduction for department heads from 18% to 20%, effective January 1, 2011. He was told a copy would be obtained for him to confirm one way or the other if the Board had voted on this matter.

At 9:10p.m. Bryon Quatrini moved and Daniel Kimbell seconded to go into executive session to discuss a legal matter and a union grievance.

The Board came out of executive session at 9:26 and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Ida W. Rainville  
Executive Secretary