

MINUTES
SPECIAL SELECTBOARD MEETING
FRIDAY, JANUARY 14, 2011, 6:00
MUNICIPAL BOARD ROOM

ATTENDANCE: Chairman Jim Rust, Rodney Lamotte, Bernard Timson, Daniel Kimbell, and Town Manager Ralph Nelson. Excused absence – Bryon Quatrini

Also present: Tim Persons, Sean Jewell, Lisa Carrere, Jon Beck, Diane Beck, Rick Provan, Diane Coburn, Jerri Ryan, Bob Amos, Bob Swartz, Russ Hutchins, David Caplan, Bob Stuart, Denise Stuart, Sandra Beck, Brent Beck, Joel Stephens, Buffie Hegarty, Lauren Jarvi, Bill Merrow, Al Dunn, John Washburn, Jerry Aldredge, Jody Fried, Richard Wright, Gary Lunderville, Brian Christman, Lisa Briggs, Mike Fortier, Nancy Cohen, Maureen Lyon, Libbie Welch, Jerry Rowe, Katrina Meigs, Taylor Reed and the News 7 crew.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge at 6:00 pm.

On a motion by Bernie Timson, seconded by Rod Lamotte, the Board went into Executive Session to discuss contracts/personnel matters.

The Board returned to regular session at 6:15. On a motion by Bernie Timson, seconded by Rod Lamotte, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Public Works Union Contract for the period of one year.

On a motion by Rod Lamotte, seconded by Bernie Timson, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Police Union Contract for a period of three years.

Public Comment – Al Dunn expressed thanks to the Town for assisting to make First Night a very successful event. Mike Fortier commented on the Town website, and asked for more information to be posted.

Warrants – On a motion by Rod Lamotte, seconded by Bernie Timson, the warrants were approved and signed.

Minutes – On a motion by Rod Lamotte, seconded by Bernie Timson, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of December 8 and December 27, 2010.

Liquor Licenses – On a motion by Dan Kimbell, seconded by Bernie Timson, the Board voted unanimously to approve the 15 liquor licenses as presented. On a motion by Rod Lamotte, seconded by Bernie Timson, the Board voted (3-1) to approve the liquor license for Petty-Co Junction. Chairman Rust abstained.

Special Appropriations – Kiwanis – Sandy Beck, Dave Caplan and Bob Stuart presented information on the Kiwanis Pool, Tennis Courts, and Bocce Ball court, which have been available free to the public for as long as they have been in existence. From the more than \$45,000 expenses in 2010, the \$14,400 from the Town is a major factor in maintaining the facilities. Recent upgrades to the pool and tennis courts have been done by volunteers, and the courts serve people of all ages in the area. There were 685 children signed up for swimming lessons and more than 6,600 visitors to the pool over the summer.

Umbrella – Lauren Jarvi and Maureen Lyon spoke to the importance of Umbrella in the Caledonia and Southern Essex Counties to support victims of domestic violence – 29% of services to residents of St. Johnsbury. Dan Kimbell asked if Umbrella received any matching Federal funds to which Lauren said no, mostly from grants and fees for services used, and charged on a sliding scale. Requests for financial support go to all towns served by Umbrella and in 2010 St. Johnsbury was the first town to deny support. Tim Persons wanted to know the success rate, which is difficult to assess because all support is confidential. Lisa Briggs pointed out there is not “success rate” because this is support for people who are in need of immediate assistance in domestic violent crisis.

Catamount Arts – Jody Fried and Bob Ames expressed their thanks to the Town for the opportunity to address the Board, and Bob Ames read the Mission Statement. They pointed out the number of people who come to St. Johnsbury for the Catamount presentations and many free programs available to local residents and schools.

Their request for funding remains at \$4,000.

Caledonia Home Health – Buffy Hegarty and Joe Stevens – Explained some of the services available to residents. St. Johnsbury residents received 18,394 visits in 2010. The request for appropriation remains the same as last year.

Meals on Wheels – Diane Coburn explained the program that she manages with two part time people and 25 – 30 volunteers. They serve anywhere from 100 to 150 meals per day to people who are not able to get out to get their own meals – some of whom depend on the meals on wheels for their only decent meal of the day, and the person who delivers the meal is their only outside contact.

St. Johnsbury Chamber – Jim Rust reported that in June St. Johnsbury was able to renew the Downtown Designation. Ralph Nelson said he felt the economic re-development of the downtown should be a top priority in the second quarter of 2011. Katrina Meigs summarized the 2010 accomplishments of the St. Johnsbury Chamber including the launch of the Audio Podcast, the new Downtown brochure, Welcome Center, Summer Streetscape Beautification and Cleaning, snow removal, summerfest, Victorian Holiday, and other events. Several people offered suggestions on ways to advertise the downtown and get the word out to attract more people and business.

Budget – Ralph reported that meetings on the budget would start next week, and asked for direction from the Selectboard. Jim Rust presented a list of mandates he said was prepared by the Selectboard for Ralph to incorporate into the budget as it was being prepared. Daniel Kimbell stated that he was not comfortable with signing the list of mandates, as he had not seen the list before that moment and had not had the opportunity to review.

Several people asked questions about the feasibility of renovating the Welcome Center to accommodate the town offices, since a study had been done previously and rejected. Nancy Cohen asked for more transparency in spending miscellaneous funds, and Jim Rust said he intends to look into a better coding system to allocate expenditures.

On a motion by Rod Lamotte, seconded by Bernie Timson, the board voted (3-1) in favor of the list of mandates as presented. Daniel Kimbell voted no, citing no previous discussion of the items by the entire board.

Manager's Report – Ralph Nelson reported that he was pleased with the labor contracts and they are now set up on a rolling schedule to re-negotiate one per year. There were no salary increases, and the high deductible insurance with the choice care deductible funding would result in a substantial savings to insurance costs. The Manager asked the Board to sign a resolution to be presented to the senate requesting the State of Vermont allow the big tractor trailer trucks to travel the interstate highways and avoid traveling through the downtown areas of cities and towns in Vermont. On a motion by Rod Lamotte, seconded by Daniel Kimbell, the Board voted unanimously to approve and sign the resolution to send to the legislature.

The Board voted to adjourn at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ida W. Rainville
Executive Secretary

BUDGET DIRECTION FOR THE TOWN MANAGER

- \$300,000.00 off the overall budget (General, Highway and Special Service Fund)
- Budget for vacation and PLDs
- Budget each department for Legal expenses
- Budget \$1,800.00 for the 457 Plan paperwork
- Create two individual budgets for Town Clerk and Town Treasurer
- Make permanent the reduction in staff in the Town Clerk/Treasurer's Office
- Assessor's Office to be contracted out for 25 hours a week, to include mapping, effective 1/22
- Budget for Web Site upgrade
- Create a catastrophe overtime line for the Fire Department \$25,000.00
- Cut Fire Department overtime budget line to \$35,000
- Create reserve funds for Bridges, Roads, and Economic Development
- Ensure Transportation Path funds are in budget
- Ensure Westside Infrastructure funds are in budget
- Ensure Dispatch project funds are in budget
- Ensure Portland Street Bridge funds are in budget
- Ensure Railroad Street Enhancement funds are in budget
- Move Water Department out of bottom floor and over to Highway Garage effective 1/21
- Move Fire Department into bottom of Water Department effective 1/28
- Reduction of Force, one out of Water and one out of Highway effective 1/22
- Only one employee will remain in the Water Department budget (Dan Gray)
- No increase in Water and Sewer Rates
- Create Reserve fund for Town Offices
- Bond vote to the voters regarding moving Town Offices to Welcome Center
- Question to the voters about using reserve funds to pay off Parking Lot in order to eliminate the \$500.00 Common Area Tax
- Question to the voters to eliminating the Personal Property Tax