

MINUTES
REGULAR SELECTBOARD MEETING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2011
7:00 PM – Municipal Boardroom

The Selectboard met for their regular meeting on Monday, February 14, 2011, at 7:00 pm in the Municipal Building boardroom. Present were: Chairman Jim Rust, Vice Chair Daniel Kimbell, Bernard Timson, Rod Lamotte, Bryon Quatrini, and Town Manager Ralph Nelson.

Also present were Town Clerk Sandy Grenier, Secretary Ida Rainville, Gary Lunderville, Mary Lunderville, Tim Angell, Erin Quatrini, Clem Houde, Alan Ruggles, Lisa Briggs, Bradley Reed, Brian Christman, Cindy Robillard, Lisa Carrere, Mike Fortier, Nancy Cohen, Stacy Perkins, Diane Beck, Al Dunn, Klari Hollos, Samantha Knight, Dan Nicoles, Richard Lyon, Taylor Reed from the Caledonian Record, and the News 7 TV team.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 by Chairman Rust with the Pledge.

Public Comment – Diane Beck read a statement concerning the recent tax cuts afforded the citizens of St. Johnsbury. Ms. Beck asked, “Who could think that \$100 deducted from property tax is not a big deal?” She went on to say that she appreciated responsible citizens making hard decisions in making cuts to the budget and letting people go. Diane questioned previous spending of \$80,000 on the Hastings Hill project to investigate a new location for the fire department, and the amount of money spent to decide the Concord Avenue project would be too costly to clean up of hazardous waste when the property was offered for free, and later to consider purchasing the property for \$500,000 and still have to deal with hazardous materials. Ms. Beck stated that she was concerned with the reduction in benefits available from the state and federal governments, and an increasing average age (above the national average) and Vermonters living below the poverty level (also above the national average), the trickle down effect will impact the lives of the local citizenry.

Larry Ruggles of Ruggco Inc. read a statement concerning the previous renovations to the Welcome Center. Ruggco was the lead construction firm that performed the original renovations. Mr. Ruggles answered many of the questions that have been circulating concerning the quality of construction in his statement (attached to these minutes).

Nancy Cohen started to say that Caledonia County was one of the counties in the State in which population declined in the last ten years. Mr. Rust corrected the information to state that Caledonia County grew second only to Chittenden County, which showed by far the greatest growth in the past ten years.

Warrants – On a motion by Rod Lamotte and seconded by Bernie Timson, the following warrants were unanimously approved and signed by the Board:

General Fund	Check #66035 – 66081	\$212,060.51
	#66082 – 66109	\$ 9,247.12
	#66110 – 66110	\$ 45,617.23
	#66111 – 66113	\$1,363,239.95

#66114 – 66117	\$ 3,091.37
#66118 – 66167	\$ 78,538.74
\$66168 – 66168	\$ 113.74

Ratify \$4.5 Million Bond for Westside Project – Ralph Nelson explained that, because the Westside Infrastructure project could not be completed in the past year, the bond that was approved for the project had to be renewed, in the amount of \$4.5 Million. The original bond was granted from TD Bank, but because the Town does not conduct the majority of its business with the bank, TD Bank was choosing not to renew the bond for the Town. Therefore, the bond had to be re-bid. The most cost effective option was to apply for a line of credit with Community National Bank at the rate of 1.7%. The motion passed unanimously, on a motion by Bryon Quatrini and seconded by Bernie Timson.

Ratify \$500,000 Budget Anticipation Loan – On a motion by Bryon Quatrini, seconded by Bernie Timson, the Board voted (4-1) in favor of approving and signing the \$500,000 loan from the Passumpsic Bank at the rate of 1.67%. Daniel Kimbell abstained.

Safe Routes to School – On a motion by Daniel Kimbell, seconded by Bryon Quatrini, the Board unanimously approved the addendum to the Safe Routes to school grant covering the Right of Way.

Health Care Deductible – Sandy Grenier informed the Board that a new checking account was opened to maintain the funds for the deductibles the Town will contribute to the employees’ insurance. In order to maintain a level fund in the account, Sandy indicated it would be convenient for her to be able to transfer funds on a weekly basis to maintain a certain level, because the Choice Care Card Company will be drawing down funds from the account on a daily basis. Sandy said this is a trial period because the Town has never had this type of account before and the problem is no one knows yet how much will be required, and how often it will need to be replenished. Sandy said she would try to start with \$30,000 and maintain that level. She would have copies of transfers of funds available to the Board at any time for inspection. The following motion was made by Bryon Quatrini, seconded by Bernie Timson:

The Town Treasurer shall keep an accurate and true account of all receipts and payments on behalf of the town. She shall, following an inter-fund transfer or loan payment, provide written notification to the Selectboard of such inter-fund transfer, loan, loan payments, at the regular meeting of the Selectboard. The Selectboard shall authorize a reserve account Threshold of \$30,000 for the Town and Employee portion of the deductible for health care. This reserve shall be maintained at this Threshold amount on a weekly basis.

The motion passed unanimously.

Road Mileage – A certificate of road mileage was submitted by the State for approval by the Board for year ending 2/10/11. Gary Lunderville asked if the Interstate highway system was included in the mileage, and was told it was not – only town and state highways. Lisa Briggs asked if the transportation path would increase the total mileage. It was thought that it would, but Shawna Clifford will be consulted for clarification. On a motion by Bernie Timson, seconded by

Rod Lamotte, the Board voted unanimously to approve the mileage statement after the clarification.

Proclamation – National Education Association’s Read Across America – The Board unanimously approved and signed the NEA’s proclamation of March 2 – 4, 2011 as Read Across America days (Kimbell/Timson).

Canine Program – Deputy Chief Clem Houde updated the report on the canine project. Expenses for 2011 should be about \$6122, not including Justin’s coverage while at school. Currently \$7,200 is available in the fund, and many more businesses in town have said they will donate with Board approval. General agreement this was a great program and asset to the Town. Lisa Briggs asked if the police department is prepared to handle the increased activity that may be generated with the addition of the K-9 unit. Training will commence this summer for the dog (Scout) and handler, Jason Hoyt. Nancy Cohen asked where the dog would be housed when Jason is on duty, and Mr. Houde confirmed he would be welcomed in the Squad room and will be kennel trained. On a motion by Daniel Kimbell, seconded by Bryon Quatrini, the Board voted unanimously to approve the FSLA time for Justin and to go forward with the project.

Accounting/Surplus/Tax Collection – Ralph Nelson reported that after the accounting practices had been questioned, he met with Daniel Kimbell, Jim Rust, Town Auditor Randall Northrop, and the State Auditor Tom Salmon. Randall Northrop previously corrected a report of surplus in the General Fund. The original report was based upon uncollected taxes. The question arose as to whether there was an actual undesignated fund balance since no physical monies were put into a separate account. Ralph said the \$521,591 in tax receivables was not recognized for audit as an asset. Jim Rust indicated perhaps the Town could take a more aggressive approach to collecting delinquent taxes. Lisa Briggs asked if the delinquent taxes were higher than in the past and was told they are about the same percentage. General discussion tried to clarify the undesignated reserve.

Manager’s Report – Town Manager Ralph Nelson reported that the transportation path has been put out to bid for an inspection engineer and plans are available. He has also completed the RFP for assessor position. The Portland Street Bridge project is winding down, with only two sets of stairs remaining, and coming in under budget. Mr. Nelson pointed out that the tenancy agreement with the Chamber office and RCT expires on February 20, and renewal of the agreements may change, depending upon the outcome of the bond vote. He suggested extending the agreements to March 28. Budget presentations have been scheduled for the 4-Seasons Neighborhood, St. Johnsbury House, Summerville Neighborhood meeting, and three sessions at the Welcome Center. In answer to Cindy Robillard’s question, Mr. Nelson said that a comparative budget between the full time assessor vs. a contracted position is difficult to discern because Mr. Whitney’s salary and expenses were divided between two departments. After a few months it will be easier to see how the budget will compare. Sandy reminded voters of town meeting on February 28 at the St. J. School, and voting at the Father Lively Center March 1, 10am – 7pm. Lisa Briggs asked if the voting could be held someplace other than a Catholic school. Sandy said it was up to the Board of Civil Authority and has been addressed several times in the past.

Bernie Timson expressed appreciation to Jim Rust for his job as chairman of the Board for the past year.

Liquor License Applications – The following licenses were approved by the Board: Horizon’s Deli & Convenience, Inc.; Dylan’s Café LLC; St. Johnsbury Country Club; Rite Aid Store #10335; Coco Mart, Inc. On a motion by Daniel Kimbell, seconded by Bryon Quatrini, the licenses were approved 4-1, with Bernard Timson abstained because of conflict of interest on Horizon’s Deli.

Minutes – The minutes from January 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24 and 27, and the minutes of February 3 and 10 were reviewed. Daniel Kimbell and Jim Rust mentioned in the minutes of January 24, Sandy Grenier’s response to the question of 2.75 workers in the Lyndon town office was that there are (according to Town Clerk Lisa Barrett) 4.5 employees in her offices.

On a motion by Bernie Timson, seconded by Rod Lamotte, the Board voted (4-1) in favor of accepting the minutes with the one correction. Bryon Quatrini abstained from the vote because he was not present at several of the meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ida W. Rainville
Executive Secretary