

MINUTES

St. Johnsbury Board of Selectmen
Monday, January 23, 2012
Municipal Board Room, 6:00 P.M.

The St. Johnsbury Selectboard met in the Municipal Board Room on Monday, January 23, 2012 at 600pm for a Budget Workshop followed by its Regular Select Board Meeting. Present were: Chairman Bryon Quatrini, Vice Chairman Alan Ruggles, Jim Rust, Rodney Lamotte, Bill Mellow, and Town Manager Ralph Nelson.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance at 600p.

2012 MUNICIPAL BUDGET – General Fund, Highway Fund, and Special Service Fund

Town Manager presented the latest Budget which had minor changes. He expressed an area of concern with respect to the new auditors. At a meeting with them, along with Board Members Mellow and Rust, it was decided that an expanded audit was in order; therefore, there will be an increase in cost. An expanded would review approximately 50% of all transactions (rather than the usual 10%) and the new estimated cost would be approximately 30k. A forensic audit, should it be deemed necessary, would cost approximately 66k plus administrative costs. Town Manager requested the Board for the budget amount of this new audit. After much discussion about the merits of budgeting for the forensic audit price, Ruggles made motion to appropriate 66,5k into 4 various funds. Board authorized 30k plus 6,600 for expanded audit. Additional funds was set aside under audit reserve. Audit reserve can only be used upon Board's approval. Any forensic audit would need approval and bid. Rust seconded the motion and the Board unanimously approved.

Town Manager reported that the summer maintenance on contracted services represented the town's local share of projects financed by grants.

Town Manager indicated that St. Johnsbury Chamber of Commerce, as it's our Designated Downtown organization, was allotted 12,5k for economic development. The Town, under advisement by Vermont Community Development, is encouraged to appropriate the funds so that the Town will be eligible for downtown grants and ensure that the Town does not lose its designation in 2 years. Quatrini requested a work plan for last year as well as a work plan for this year prior to funds being released.

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE

Also present: Special Assistant to Town Manager Dawn McPhee, Executive Assistant Jessi Hudson, Kyle Sipples, Clem Houde, Dan Scott, Brian Christman, Troy Ruggles, Cindy Robillard, Mike Fortier, Linda Briggs, Bernie Timson, Tim Persons, Kevin Oddy, Lisa Nelson, Al Dunn, Robin Drinkwater, Nancy Cohen, Tom Cole, Rob Hansen

PRESS ATTENDANCE

Adam Klein of KATV; Taylor Reed of Caledonian Record

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tom Cole indicated that the recent events in personnel provided the Town a great opportunity for personnel policy to develop norms and expectations.

MINUTES

On a motion by Ruggles, seconded by Merrow, the Board unanimously adopted the minutes of January 9th. On a motion by Rust, seconded by Lamotte, the Board unanimously adopted the minutes of January 19th.

WARRANTS

The following warrants were signed:

Check 68480 – 68481	570.75
Check 68482 – 68503	81,120.82

LIQUOR LICENSES

No licenses were presented.

2012 MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROVAL (Tentative)

On a motion by Ruggles, seconded by Rust, the Board moved this agenda item for discussion prior to the Manager's report.

TOWN CLERK AND TOWN TREASURER VACANCIES

Town Manager reported that, despite two vacancies, the office workers have been tremendous in their efforts to move the Town forward. Town Manager has allowed his staff members to help as well to ensure all tasks are done. VLCT stated that the Town could proceed to election without filling the vacancy of a Town Clerk as the Town has 2 assistant clerks who have full authority to do tasks. An Interim Town Treasurer is needed, by statute, for the continuation of the operations of town. Town Manager requested a check signer and as well as authority to draw upon the LOC for Bike Path. The Secretary of State along with BOCA Chair Kevin Oddy will help out with election day activities so that it moves smoothly and correctly.

Rust recommended the nomination of Diane Beck as Interim Town Treasurer (with her intent to appoint an interim assistant town treasurer) to help out until election day. Diane Beck will do the work for free. On a motion by Rust, seconded by Lamotte, the Board approved the appointment of Diane Beck as Interim Town Treasurer. Ruggles voted yes with Quatrini and Merrow voting no. Motion passed 3-2.

.GOV DOMAIN NAME REGISTRATION

Town Manager would like the town to retain new URL. On a motion by Ruggles, seconded by Rust, the Board unanimously approved the request.

GILMAN HOUSING TRUST GRANT REQUEST

Robin Drinkwater, Director of Real Estate Development of the Gilman Housing Trust, made a request to the Town to aid in its application for a VCDP Grant as it restructures and renovates Hilltop Family Housing. The Town Manager, after speaking with Beth Boutin, indicated the Board can support Gilman's application, with contingency that its application would be moved should the Town's application be stayed during the Jan. 26th Board meeting. Mr. Nelson reported that Gilman should move forward with its public hearing and application procedure. Upon clarification that the Board was giving only its verbal support, Ruggles made a motion to support Gilman's application to VCDP, pending the outcome of the Town's current application, Merrow seconded. The Board unanimously gave its verbal support.

REVISED COUNTY BUDGET APPROVAL

The Town Manager reported that Caledonia County's 2012/2013 budget updated their expenses. Last budget only reported through October. Otherwise, there were no changes. On a motion by Ruggles, seconded by Merrow, the Board unanimously approved the revised Caledonia County Budget.

SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS PRESENTATIONS

Vermont Conservation withdrew its application and request for a special appropriation.

Michelle Fay of Umbrella made presentation of its services. Under the three programs which include childcare, family room, and advocacy program (victims of domestic and sexual abuse), Umbrella services a large portion of St. Johnsbury. Currently, it's approximately 41% of Umbrella's services. Umbrella's increase in its special appropriations request is to balance the people served to the Town's contribution to Umbrella.

Carol Boucher presented NEK Human Services as a local agency providing medical, health, and mental health serving over 900 people in St. Johnsbury. In its work force, 50 people are from St. Johnsbury. NEK provides community based services for children & adults (within homes, schools, nursing homes). Their request for increased funds will offer mobile services to ensure that they work closely with emergency services as well as to work broadly and respond more quickly within community.

2012 MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROVAL (Tentative)

Chairman Quatrini requested a rate increase for Diane Perkins and Patty Wakeham of the Town Clerk's office. Rust indicated that OT should and can be given but a raise should be in the control and responsibility of the new clerk and new treasurer once elected. After much discussion, Ruggles made a motion to add line item for 1k as merit bonus to be used at Town Manager's discretion for town clerk/treasurer staff and reflected in policy statement to be written. Merrow seconded. Rust/Lamotte opposed. Chairman Quatrini voted yes; therefore, motion passed.

Town Manager requested approval of overall budget document. Brian Christman expressed his rejection of the budget. Merrow made motion to approve the budget pending amendments discussed. Ruggles seconded. Rust recommended that the Board be provided a revised budget prior to approval. Town Manager indicated that should another meeting be scheduled, he will be able to make the revisions as discussed as well as input revenues. A meeting was set for Friday, January 27th at 4pm to meet for budget approval. Merrow, therefore, tabled motion until next meeting.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Town Manager indicated that he hoped to complete budget regarding the Pomerleau Building at the next regular Select Board meeting. He also reported that he has meetings with NCIC.

Under the partnership of the Planning Commission and the Development Review Board, the zoning ordinances and bylaw review has begun. Jon Anderson from Montpelier has been hired to help during this process. Town Manager alerted the Board that it will receive the proposed changes for its approval as the Commission completes its review.

Sample light on Railroad Street is up, should the Board and public wish to view.

Town Manager will attend the Community Board of VCDP with respect to its Roof Grant on Thursday. He invited any Board member to attend, should they wish.

Town Manager reported that Bruce Cate will remove the Arnold Park Fountain on Tuesday to begin his restoration work.

Lastly, the Town Manager reported the submission of 100k grant request to the Downtown Transportation Fund which would help to renovate all the sidewalks on both sides of Railroad Street.

OTHER BUSINESS

Al Dunn requested that the light at Armory be turned off.

Alan Ruggles invited the audience to the open house to be hosted by the St. Johnsbury Chamber of Commerce. This will be held at the Pomerleau Building on Thursday from 4-6. On the same night, at 6p, Jim Wuertele will lead an energy seminar at Black Box Theatre at Academy.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a.** Legal
- b.** Contract
- c.** Personnel

Town Manager requested to table executive session until the Special Select Board Meeting scheduled for Friday, January 27th 2012 at 4pm.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:14p pm, on a motion by Lamotte, seconded by Ruggles, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the budget workshop and Special Meeting.