

ST. JOHNSBURY BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING
THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 2013

The St. Johnsbury Selectboard met in the Pomerleau Building, 1st floor on Thursday, March 18, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. for a Special Meeting of the Selectboard. Present were: Chairman Kevin Oddy, Vice Chairman Alan Ruggles, Jeff Moore, Tom Moore, Jim Rust and Interim Town Manager Merelise O'Connor.

PRESS

Taylor Reed, KATV and Channel 7

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE

Al Dunn, Brian Christman, Bernard Timson, Mike Fortier, Ray LaBounty, Jr., and others.

At 6:00 p.m., the meeting opened and all present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

At 6:03 p.m., Vice Chairman Alan Ruggles made a motion to go into Executive Session, seconded by Tom Moore. There was no vote at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Al Dunn asked if there was a time limit on choosing a Town Manager and if the Board had considered citizen input. Jim Rust stated that it concerned him that this started with the loss of the Town Manager. Rust continued that thirty-nine applications were received and a thorough process was followed, including the background check from the Vermont League. The candidate was interested and qualified. The reason he is not being selected is politics in this town. He's the only applicant in the pile that was currently working in VT. We lost him because of politics.

Chairman Oddy responded that the candidate hasn't been "lost". Chairman Oddy continued that he had a conversation with Mr. Shea the morning after the vote to rescind, and he understood and wished to keep his application in the pool. Oddy assured him it would remain and he would be considered. Shea offered to come up and meet with the board.

Al Dunn mentioned that the appointment was done illegally as it wasn't in the paper 24 hours in advance. Jim Rust replied that it was warned 24 hours in advance.

Mike Fortier said that the larger issue, more than it was that he was qualified, is that the Nelson lawsuit is still out there and the job may be only temporary in effect because it's still an injunction. Mike Fortier continued that he didn't look at the applicants and wouldn't be surprised if none were qualified. The town needs to move out of this tough situation and spend the time to get the best.

Brian Christman asked if the Board plans to get a group of citizens, and that from 1995-2000 John Hall was the Town Manager when the Jay-Lyn fund was being concealed.

Bernard Timson said that in 2000, WalMart came and looked, then pulled out due to politics. Mark "would have done good" (sic) for this town. Bernard Timson stated that politics drove him out, and that some people can't believe we are considering Hall.

Tom Moore said that he had nothing against the candidate, it was about process and the vote, and he continued to question the legality of the vote.

Jeff Moore said that he picked up the packet on Thursday afternoon and it is clearly marked confidential, and shouldn't be using names.

Jim Rust said that there were other options than to rescind the vote. Rust had consulted with those who had had their names put out. Shea was qualified. It wasn't a last minute thing. After the last interview, a records check was undertaken. It was delivered shortly before the meeting. The Town waited for the background check to come back to report.

Al Dunn asked why the attorney said it was illegal. Jim Rust replied that he didn't say it was illegal.

Bernard Timpson asked who was paying for Al Dunn to talk to the town attorney; they don't do anything for free. Timson doesn't think the town should be paying for it, and wants to make sure we are not being charged for this conversation.

Mike Fortier said that he hoped that we could rise above all of this.

Mike Fortier made the comment that this was not permanent and needs an out. The town has a manager now, and if she worked every day it would be \$140,000 and well worth the money. The town is not going to get anyone else with Nelson hanging out there. VLTC is coming to do a class so we can understand the proper roles, so please wait a little longer until the town knows the difference. Fortier continued that the board should put their energy into resolving the Nelson issue, and get the best of the best.

At 6:30 p.m., Jeff Moore made a motion to go into executive session, seconded by Tom Moore with a vote of 4-1 with Rust opposed.

At 8:30 p.m., Jeff Moore made a motion to come out of executive session, seconded by Tom Moore and unanimously passed.

Oddy reported that the board had tasked him to gather some information from both VLTC and MRI on possible opportunities available. Chairman Oddy declined further comment because it was too early in the process to provide details, and the board will discuss this again on Monday night.

Ray LaBounty, Jr. said that we need to resolve the Nelson case, so would encourage the board to put their energy there, as the disclaimer probably eliminates some good candidates.

At 8:45 p.m. Tom Moore made a motion to adjourn the special meeting, seconded by Jeff Moore and unanimously passed.

Approved 04/08/13

