

**Town of St. Albans
Selectboard 'Special' Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 25th, 2021
5:30 p.m.**

On Monday, October 25th, 2021 at 5:30 p.m., at Town Hall the Town of St. Albans Selectboard met.

Officials and staff present: Chair Brendan Deso, Erin Creley, Jonathan Giroux, Bryan DesLauriers, Town Manager Carrie Johnson, Director of Public Works Alan Mashtare, Town Clerk Anna Bourdon, and Facilities Manager John Montagne. Absent was Vice Chair Jessica Frost.

Public participation available via Zoom: St. Albans Messenger reporter Josh Ellerbrock.

Chair B. Deso opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m. The purpose of the special meeting was to begin work on the fiscal year 2023 budget.

Budget Work Session

Department of Public Works (DPW) Budget

C. Johnson explained that due to the labor crunch and pressures on the budget, she set a salary increase for each salary line at 5%. The COLA and Social Security Administration is looking at 5.9% or 6% as a possible living increase. A. Mashtare provided a list of local companies and what they are paying their employees. C. Johnson explained that she did go a little higher on some of the DPW salaries in an attempt to stay ahead of competing salaries in the area.

C. Johnson stated that line item #10-8-50-70.00, "Stormwater & MS4 Permit" will be renamed to "Stormwater Expense".

A. Mashtare went through the rest of his budget with the Board. B. Deso asked what items go under the "Director Miscellaneous" line. A. Mashtare explained when the drivers are plowing overnight, he will buy food or take them out to breakfast or lunch. He went on to say that he buys items for volunteers such as bottled water.

C. Johnson explained that a lot of the line items in the DPW budget are up due to inflation, 5% - 6%. A. Mashtare explained that most of the vendors sent him emails notifying of increases in costs, 8% - 10% and some are even up 20%. Most increases are already in effect.

B. Deso asked to have a separate line for overtime broken out from the regular salaries. A. Bourdon explained that that information may be included on the payroll reports, but she will double check.

B. Deso asked what gets charged to the "Building Maintenance" line. C. Johnson explained it's building maintenance for every building we own in Town. A. Mashtare explained that there are a lot of annual inspections that get paid out of that line item such as fire extinguishers and fire systems. Grit pits and grease traps at the DPW garage need to get pumped out. C. Johnson explained that we were on a plan to repoint the current Town Hall building and we did get three sides done, but we still have one side left to do. It will need to be done even if we sell the building. A. Mashtare stated that the new air filters that were purchased for Town Hall were also charged to "Building Maintenance".

A. Bourdon suggested zeroing out line item #10-8-50-70.05, "Stormwater Utility Expense" and put the proposed \$57,000 in line item #10-8-50-70.00 "Stormwater Expense".

B. Deso suggested cutting out #10-8-50-70.02 "DPW Grant Match" and ask the voters to approve \$50,000 from the Local Option Tax (LOT) to be used for grant matches on infrastructure grant projects.

B. Deso asked A. Mashtare if he was comfortable with cutting #10-8-50-58.02, "Paving" from \$500,000 to \$475,000. A. Mashtare stated that without knowing how much crude oil prices were going to increase or decrease, he felt more comfortable leaving the "Paving" line at \$500,000. A. Mashtare then went on to say that he had mentioned in previous years at budget time setting aside funds for Black Bridge. He explained that he had the bridge structural engineered this year. He needs to get another engineer to do the surface of the bridge. It'll more than likely need to be stripped down with a new

membrane added. This work would come off the "Paving" line. B. Deso suggested a sinking fund from the LOT to help pay for Black Bridge. A. Mashtare agreed to cut the paving line from \$500,000 to \$475,000.

The Board was in consensus to put a question to the voters for \$50,000 for grant matches.

DPW Equipment

A. Mashtare explained to the Board that the 2022 tandem trucks are sold out and that there is one 2023 available. The costs have jumped from \$195,000 to \$257,000. A. Bourdon explained that there is currently \$200,000 in the DPW Equipment Reserve account. If agreed upon to get this truck, it would not be here until fall, 2022. If we wait until Town Meeting Day, 2022, we wouldn't get a new truck until 2023 and the full set up until 2024. A. Bourdon explained that we have purchased equipment before without going to the voters, if we have the money. C. Johnson said that if the Board is OK with that at a policy level, we can proceed with the required equipment purchase.

A. Mashtare suggested the Stormwater Utility pay for a portion of the truck. It will be used on stormwater projects and will be billed according to use. We will pay for the initial use out of the general fund and then the Stormwater Utility will reimburse the general fund as DPW does work for the utility.

Revisiting the grant match discussion, the Board agreed to put a question on the ballot to fund grant matches \$50,000 from the LOT fund.

Parks & Recreation Budget

C. Johnson explained to the Board that by hiring John Montagne full time as the Facilities Manager allows the Town to have someone on the Parks staff year round. J. Giroux asked how the salaries were figured for the Parks staff. C. Johnson explained that it's based on experience. There are three position each year that are brand new and don't have the experience and they work a different amount of hours.

A 5% increase across the board for the Parks staff was an error and should not be taken into consideration for budget. The Parks salary line should be \$105,000.

A. Mashtare went through the other lines of the Parks budget.

Fire Department Budget

Fire Chief and Public Safety Administrator Bob Cross was not in attendance for the meeting, but C. Johnson briefly went over the Fire Department budget with the Board. C. Johnson pointed out that #10-7-42-45.01 "Professional Memberships" should have increased from \$575 to \$1,200, not \$125. Just a typo. This line item will pay for term life insurance both on the Vermont Fire Department Association and the National Fire Department Association. This includes life and AD&D for the entire volunteer fire department. There is close to \$500,000 benefit for Line of Duty Death (LODD) included in this policy.

C. Johnson pointed out a typo with #10-7-42-11.05, "Disability/Life". It should be \$319, not \$1,519.

Executive Session

MOTION: J. Giroux made a motion to go into executive session at 7:50 p.m. to discuss legal, contractual or personnel issues where premature general public knowledge of the subject matter would place the Town (or person involved) at a substantial disadvantage. Further moved to enter into executive session to discuss legal, contractual or personnel issues under the provisions of Title 1, section 313(a)(1) of Vermont Statutes and to invite Town Manager Carrie Johnson. Seconded by E. Creley. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

MOTION: E. Creley made a motion to come out of executive session at 8:30 p.m. Seconded by J. Giroux. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Adjournment

MOTION: B. DesLauriers made a motion to adjourn the Selectboard meeting at 8:31 p.m. Seconded by E. Creley. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Gray