

**Town of St. Albans
Selectboard Special Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 26th, 2022
8:00 a.m.**

On Wednesday, October 26th, 2022 at 8:00 a.m., the Town of St. Albans Selectboard met at Town Hall for a special meeting to kick off the fiscal year 2024 budget process.

Officials and Staff: Chair Jonathan Giroux, Vice Chair Bryan DesLauriers, Jack Brigham, Jeff Sanders, Town Manager Carrie Johnson, Interim Director of Operations Al Voegelé, and Recording Secretary Jenn Gray. Public Safety Administrator and Fire Chief Bob Cross arrived at 8:25 a.m. Zoning Administrator Megan Sherlund arrived at 9:10 a.m. Director of Department of Public Works Dave Allerton and Facilities Manager John Montagne arrived at 10:17 p.m.

Absent was Brendan Deso.

Public in Attendance: MaryPat Larrabee, Library Director arrived at 11am.

Public Participation via Zoom: None.

Chair J. Giroux called the meeting to order at 8:09 a.m.

The purpose for the special meeting was to being the work on the fiscal year 2024 budget.

Town Clerk

A. Bourdon went over the financials for fiscal year 2022 with the Board. C. Johnson explained that we have \$19,368 left in our fund balance. The recommendation is to use some of the 5% retained fund balance to use \$100,000 to reduce taxes for fiscal year 2024. The proposed increase in the Town Clerk's salaries is estimated to be about 18%. During a conversation on the transferring of funds from the general fund to the Stormwater Utility, it was suggested that 20% be transferred from the general fund to the Stormwater Utility to cover the Director of Public Works salary for the work he will be doing as part of his responsibilities and to have A. Bourdon track time spent on stormwater to also fund with stormwater reserve.

C. Johnson explained the other salary lines proposed an 8% increase.

Assessor

C. Johnson explained the combining of three positions within the Assessor's office caused a slight increase.

Fire Department

C. Johnson explained that B. Cross and his officers worked on the salaries. B. Cross explained the firefighters receive \$18/hr. wage. From July 1st through June 22nd, 2022 the total was \$43,009. Officers receive stipends. Lieutenants receive \$1,500/quarter, Captains receive \$2,000/quarter, the Assistant Chief receives \$2,500/quarter, and the Fire Chief receives \$3,000/quarter. For fiscal year 2022 the salary total was \$197,887. B. Cross proposed increasing the hourly rate for firefighters to \$20/hr. and an increase of stipends of \$500 for all officers.

C. Johnson requested a separate salary line for the full time and part time staff from the volunteers.

B. DesLauriers asked B. Cross if the budget he's proposing for the Fire Department will keep him rolling in the right direction. B. Cross stated it will, but that in maybe 5-10 years, the Town should consider a full time fire department.

C. Johnson explained that regarding line item #10-7-42-62.01 "Firefighters Health & Safety", there will be a decrease due to the fire department's agreement with Ben and Jerry's. They have a fit testing machine. B. Cross explained that because the fire department fills their air bottles, the fire department gets requested use of the Ben and Jerry's fit testing machine. This reduces that budget line by \$1,500. Fit testing machines can cost around \$12,000.

B. Cross explained that currently \$125,000 from the general fund goes into the Fire Department Reserve Fund each year. He is proposing to increase that \$50,000 for the next 10 years, and then another \$25,000 after that.

Planning and Zoning

M. Sherlund came before the Board to discuss her department's budget. C. Johnson explained that the budget reflects the organizational changes that have already been discussed and approved. However, C. Johnson proposed a full time, mixed administrative person who would support both Planning and Zoning (P&Z) as well as the Department of Public Works (DPW). The salary budget would be \$26,000 from P&Z and \$26,000 from DPW. M. Sherlund explained that this proposed new employee would do data entry, know any and all permits the Town offers, and basic administrative duties as well as supporting DPW with Stormwater Utility work.

M. Sherlund suggested a budget for education to pay for certifications and maybe offering tuition reimbursement if a staff member wants to take some classes. C. Johnson stated that currently, there is \$1,000 in the training budget and asked M. Sherlund to provide some proposed numbers for the budget.

Director of Operations

C. Johnson explained that this department has been defunded for the most part. There is a small salary line item of \$5,000 for Interim Director of Operations, A. Voegele. A. Voegele explained that this department will need staff eventually. The new Town Manager will need to hire staff and there is currently no funds in the budget at this time. There needs to be someone who can step into the Town Manager's position if the Town Manager is out sick, on vacation, or out for a long period of time.

Parks

C. Johnson explained that she and J. Montagne discussed adding one more part time season person to the Parks budget and some funds to J. Montagne's salary to accommodate some new responsibilities. There is an increase of \$2,000 for building maintenance. Eventually, the stone house roof will need to be repaired/replaced. Funds would also be pulled from the Stone House Revitalization Fund as well. J. Montagne explained that he received two estimates for replacement of the roof; \$160,500 and \$138,500.

J. Montagne stated that the stone wall in the lake will need repairing. C. Johnson explained that we received an estimate from Island Excavating for Phase 1 of repairing the sea wall of \$146,000. This is the most expensive phase and involves the most work. C. Johnson stated this is a project that DPW should work on the next 12 months. The Selectboard encourage getting engineered plans since the last fix didn't last as long.

J. Giroux discussed the recreational reimbursement line item. B. DesLauriers explained he had a conversation with City Manager Dominic Cloud. Mr. Cloud is now willing to put a cap on what the Town would reimburse. C. Johnson reminded the Board that the conversation last year was not to cover pool entry fees or memberships. After discussion, the Board agreed to change the Recreation Reimbursement line item to \$100,000 with the reminder that the Town only pays for what residents use.

C. Johnson explained that there is a proposal to include \$6,000 for a fireworks display for the Holly Jolly Jamboree in November and an increase of \$5,000 to the Trail Maintenance line item to improve the trails in the Town Forest. The Board agreed to leave the line at \$5,000 and use the \$6,500 that is currently in the Town Forest Account for any trail maintenance projects.

St. Albans Free Library

MaryPat Larrabee, Library Directory came before the Board to discuss the Library budget. The increase in their budget from last year is 2%. We paid part from the general fund and part from Impact Fees last year. The Board agreed to use Impact Fees to fund the Library. A. Bourdon stated the library impact fees balance will continue to grow for fiscal year 2024. C. Johnson explained that because we will be using impact fees to pay the library, she reduced the budget line from \$162,680 to \$146,680.

Town Manager

C. Johnson explained that the main increase was 8% to the salary line and no positions were being proposed.

Recess

MOTION: J. Brigham made a motion to recess the Selectboard for lunch at 12:00 p.m. Seconded by B. DesLauriers. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Reconvene

MOTION: J. Brigham made a motion to reconvene the Selectboard meeting at 12:35 p.m. Seconded by J. Sanders. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Solid Waste

C. Johnson explained that the budgeted number of \$8,316 is only an estimate at this time. A. Voegele, who sits on the Northwest Vermont Solid Waste Management board explained we may see a \$.10 cost per capita increase. Districts were created by the State to coordinate meeting all the State rules and regulations of disposal of waste. They also host several hazardous household waste collection days throughout the year.

Enforcement

C. Johnson explained that "Enforcement" includes Animal Control and Junk Ordinance complaints. The only change is a \$500 increase to "Miscellaneous".

Law Enforcement

The Police Advisory Committee is currently set to \$0, but it was agreed upon to leave funds in this budget in the amount of \$2,000.

Ambulance

C. Johnson explained the amount for fiscal year 2024 is the contracted amount. It is an increase of \$4,292.00. The Board requested that the Clem and Will Rosenberg from AmCare come to a future meeting.

Stormwater

This will be discussed at a future budget work session.

Parks

C. Johnson would like to see the net amount made from park events. A. Bourdon and J. Montagne to work on this.

C. Johnson explained that J. Montagne would like to request that instead of buying trucks for the parks staff, purchase a golf cart. Electric golf cart runs around \$6,000. It was proposed to sell a couple of the older mowers and purchase one new zero turn mower to replace them.

J. Giroux asked whether or not we will continue to maintain the walking path in the Bay park in the winter. C. Johnson explained that DPW had decided to take care of it last year. J. Giroux stated that if we are thinking of buying a golf cart, why not purchase something like a gator or ranger, something to be used year round. The Board requested some quotes.

Local/Regional/State Organizations

Deadline for non-profit requests is Friday, October 28th. A summary of the requests will be prepared for the next budget meeting.

Department of Public Works (DPW)

Newly hired Director of Public Works came before the Board to review the DPW budget. The salary line includes D. Allerton's salary, an 8% increase for other positions, and 50% salary for the floating administrative person.

J. Giroux asked for quotes from vendors for uniforms, garbage, etc. D. Allerton explained he's meeting with the uniform vendor next week to discuss contract terms. The uniform contract is with Cintas.

J. Brigham asked if a metal dumpster would be reinstalled at DPW. C. Johnson explained it was removed because people were misusing it, dumping items other than metal. D. Allerton suggested a "Recycle Your Metal" day and have the control over what people get rid of for a day or two.

D. Allerton suggested a separate line item for plow equipment to keep it separate from "Equipment parts & Repair". He said that a good estimate for the budget line would be between \$6,000 to \$10,000.

D. Allerton suggested that signs for events be removed from "Signs" in the budget and moved to "Bay Park Events".

Regarding training, Vermont Local Roads offer lots of training for DPW employees and it's free. D. Allerton stated that DPW will start getting their training through Vermont Local Roads.

Executive Session

MOTION: J. Brigham made a motion to go into executive session at 2:03 p.m. to discuss contractual matters where premature general public knowledge of the subject matter would place the Town (or person involved) at a substantial disadvantage. It was further moved to enter into executive session to discuss a personnel issue under the provisions of Title 1, section 313(a)(1) of Vermont Statutes and to invite in Town Manager Carrie Johnson and Interim Director of Operations Al Voegele. Seconded by J. Sanders. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

MOTION: J. Sanders made a motion to come out of executive session at 4:05 p.m. Seconded by B. DesLauriers. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Adjournment

MOTION: J. Brigham made a motion to adjourn the Selectboard meeting at 4:10 p.m. Seconded by B. DesLauriers. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenn Gray, Recording Secretary