

**Town of St. Albans  
Selectboard Meeting Minutes  
Monday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
6:30 p.m.**

On Monday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 6:30 p.m., the Town of St. Albans Selectboard met at Town Hall.

**Officials and Staff:** Chair Bryan DesLauriers, Vice Chair Jack Brigham, Jonathan Giroux, Town Manager Sean Adkins, Director of Operations Al Voegelé (arrived 6:40 p.m.), and Administrative Assistant Kimberly Kissinger.

**Absent:** Jeff Sanders, Brendan Deso.

**Staff Participation via Zoom:** None.

**Public in Attendance:** Johna Grim, Beverly Mason, City of St. Albans Police Department, Chief Lamothe, Lieutenant Wetherby, Lieutenant Couture and Lieutenant Talley.

**Public Participation via Zoom:** Northwest Access TV and Nikki Talcott.

B. DesLauriers called the Selectboard meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Public Informational Meeting**

**MOTION: B. DesLauriers made a motion to open the public informational meeting at 6:32 p.m. Seconded by J. Brigham. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.**

B. DesLauriers read the official Town Meeting Day warning:

*“The legal voters of the Town of St. Albans are hereby warned and notified to meet in the Port Washington Room at the St. Albans Town Hall, located at 398 Georgia Shore Road, St. Albans, VT, on Monday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. to conduct an informational meeting on the fiscal year 2025 budget and articles to be voted by Australian ballot. Remote participation is available via Zoom. Voting will take place on Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at the **Collins Perley Sports Complex** located at 890 Fairfax Road from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.”*

**Town Fiscal Year 2025 Budget and Articles Review**

B. DesLauriers read through Articles 1 through 3. He continued to read the letter submitted to the Messenger by the Board outlining the Town’s budget and upcoming agreement with the City of St. Albans Police Department. B. DesLauriers welcomed St. Albans City Police Chief Lamothe, Lieutenant Wetherby, Lieutenant Couture and Lieutenant Talley to answer questions and discuss calls and crime related incidents over the past few years; including an overview of the new Street Crimes Unit.

Chief Lamothe stated his hiring approach will be to ensure all new hires share the same vision as the Police Department. The goal is to have a total of 16 level 3 uniformed officers; 4 Corporals, 4 Sergeants and 8 officers. Currently, there are 11 officers with 5 joining the department in the foreseeable future. Chief Lamothe stated there will be a new Street Crimes Unit in Fiscal Year 2025 and that unit will consist of 1 supervisor and 1 uniformed officer. The two positions will be posted prior to Fiscal Year 2025 for external candidates with a proposed starting date in July 2024.

J. Brigham asked what would be the hiring plan if a strong candidate should become available prior to the 2025 Fiscal Year budget. Chief Lamothe stated the payroll for the two positions will depend on work experience, training and years in law enforcement. J. Brigham asked if the Town of St. Albans would be able to support the payroll budget for the new street crimes unit officers should the Ballot Article pass, to allow the hiring of the two candidates prior to July 2024. S. Adkins answered yes, with the surplus on the law enforcement side.

B. DesLauriers asked what type of call volume had the Police Department been seeing. Lieutenant Talley stated there had been about a 50% increase over the prior year. B. DesLauriers asked if there had been any noticeable trends. Lieutenant Talley answered that drugs and retail theft have been prominent. Chief Lamothe stated that the population growth in both the City and Town have also increased the call volume. B. DesLauriers recalled the joint police board meeting where it was stated that crimes were approximately 85-90% drug-related and it confirmed the need for a Street Crimes Unit.

J. Giroux asked the police panel if they had a vision for the new Street Crimes Unit and what that might look like or if it will be similar to the prior street crimes unit. Lieutenant Couture stated the vision will be exactly the same as the previous street crimes unit, as it was extremely effective and proactive with a lot of drug cases stemming from that unit. The prior unit also assisted with a lot of violent crimes, vandalism and motor vehicle thefts. The new unit will continue to assist with investigations, overt and covert operations, issuance of warrants and arrests. B. DesLauriers

referred to information shared by the Police Department at the end of 2023 that with the street crimes unit in 2018 there were 104 arrests and in 2019 there were 118 arrests. With no street crimes unit in 2022 there were 8 arrests and in 2023 up through November of that year there were 19 arrests.

A. Voegele asked the police panel if there would be any bonus incentives for attracting candidates for the department. Chief Lamothe said the department is offering a \$10,000 sign-on bonus incentive to any experienced and trained candidate upon hire.

Resident J. Grim asked the police panel a few questions regarding current drugs on the streets, the hiring stipend and the department culture. Lieutenant Couture answered the questions and verified the hiring stipend/bonus incentive could be used to assist with relocation costs or be paid in one lump sum or over time upon a signed employment contract. He continued to say the department's culture is based on accountability and all potential candidates will go through a detailed hiring process.

B. DesLauriers asked the police panel to explain the difference between a level 2 and level 3 police department. Lieutenant Couture confirmed the City of St. Albans Police Department is level 3. Level 3 requires additional, extended training and a larger scope of law enforcement capabilities compared to Level 2.

Both the Selectboard and the police panel officers expressed enthusiasm for working together with the new contract starting July 1<sup>st</sup>.

S. Adkins provided a brief overview of Article 2 and stated the proposed budget increase would be around \$10,000 without the law enforcement budget included. Efficient cost cutting and streamlining expenses has made this proposed budget possible.

B. DesLauriers read Article 3 stating in a nutshell that the Town proposes the general fund surplus of up to \$600,000 from Fiscal Year 2024 be rolled into the Fiscal Year 2025 budget. This will reduce taxes for the taxpayers.

There were no further questions or comments.

**MOTION: B. DesLauriers made a motion to close the public informational meeting at 7:08 p.m. Seconded by J. Brigham. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.**

#### **Payroll Warrant**

**MOTION: J. Brigham made a motion to approve the payroll warrants dated February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024 in the amount of \$48,250.92 and February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024 in the amount of \$23,941.29. Seconded by J. Giroux. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.**

#### **Stormwater Utility Warrant**

**MOTION: J. Giroux made a motion to approve the stormwater utility warrant dated March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024 in the amount of \$6,884.68. Seconded by J. Brigham. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.**

#### **Federal ARPA fund Warrant**

**MOTION: J. Giroux made a motion to approve the Federal ARPA fund warrant dated March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024 in the amount of \$6,789.69. Seconded by J. Brigham. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.**

#### **General Warrant**

**MOTION: J. Giroux made a motion to approve the general fund warrant dated March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 in the amount of \$51,639.49. Seconded by J. Brigham. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.**

#### **Minutes**

**MOTION: B. DesLauriers made a motion to approve the regular Selectboard meeting minutes for Tuesday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024 as presented. Seconded by J. Brigham. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.**

#### **Public Comment**

Resident J. Grim stated the Tanglewood development retention pond and its lack of maintenance over the years is mostly due to poor communications with the original developer.

## Liquor Control Board

**MOTION: B. DesLauriers made a motion to recess the Selectboard meeting and convene as Liquor Control Board. Seconded by J. Giroux. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.**

Two businesses were up for renewal; Colonial Mart for a Second-Class License and VFW Post 758 for a First-Class License, Third-Class license and an Outside Consumption Permit. B. DesLauriers confirmed there were no infractions on any of the four renewal requests.

**MOTION: B. DesLauriers made a motion to pass all four renewals as presented. Seconded by J. Brigham. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.**

**MOTION: B. DesLauriers made a motion to close the Liquor Control Board and to reconvene as Selectboard. Seconded by J. Giroux. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.**

## Town Manager's Report

### Project Updates

S. Adkins began with a brief project update on the old Town Hall. There is a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a commercial realtor out to bid on various media sites, including the Vermont Bidding website, with a closing deadline of March 15<sup>th</sup>. A commercial realtor will be chosen by the end of March.

S. Adkins provided a brief update on the Route 7 South sidewalk project stating the RFP will release on March 5<sup>th</sup> for the construction of the sidewalk. Route 7 North is currently out to bid for a project consultant.

S. Adkins provided a brief update on the former DPW site stating VHB will be presenting final project alternatives at the March 26<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting.

S. Adkins stated the Town's Master Plan for the St. Albans Bay Village District is also out to bid, including sidewalks and transportation. A decision will be made by the end of March.

S. Adkins provided a brief Health Path sidewalk project update. The path will begin at Collins Perley Sports Complex and end at the Rail Trail. The Town is waiting on a response from the City of St. Albans to see if the new path could be connected to Hard'ack. The Town is also working on a few outstanding residential easements. There has been some discussion for an Exit 19 pedestrian bridge. The Town plans on applying for grants to assist with the cost of the project.

S. Adkins mentioned the Director of Community Development, Megan Sherlund will be at the next Selectboard meeting to provide an eclipse update.

S. Adkins stated there will be a new EV charging station coming to Town Hall to replace the existing charging station due to lack of cell service in the parking lot. He is hopeful in finding a new location for the existing EV charger within the Town.

### Chair's Report

B. DesLauriers said thank you to everyone for his time on the Selectboard and mentioned how honored he has been in serving the community.

### Other Business

J. Giroux asked if there has been any follow-up on the Town taking over Route 36 from the State of Vermont. There was discussion prior to COVID but then everything was put on hold due to the epidemic. S. Adkins agreed to follow up on the conversation with the State.

### Schedule

The next regular Selectboard meetings are Monday, March 18<sup>th</sup> and Monday, April 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:30 p.m.

### Executive Session

None

### Adjournment

**MOTION: J. Giroux made a motion to adjourn the Selectboard meeting at 7:28 p.m. Seconded by J. Brigham. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Kimberly Kissinger, Administrative Assistant