

**Town of St. Albans  
Selectboard Special Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022  
8:00 a.m.**

On Thursday, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 at 8:00 a.m., the Town of St. Albans Selectboard met at Town Hall for a special meeting.

**Officials and Staff:** Chair Jonathan Giroux, Brendan Deso, Jack Brigham, Jeff Sanders, Town Manager Carrie Johnson, Director of Stormwater Utility Emmalee Cherington, and Recording Secretary Jenn Gray.

**Public in Attendance:** Stan Dukas, Bob Fairbanks, Paul & Sarah Lerner, Paul Hance, Alan Mashtare, Randy Swan, Jeff King, Pat Vincent, and Jason Ellwood with DEW. Dave Chevalier arrived at 8:30 a.m.

**Staff participating via Zoom:** Vice Chair Bryan DesLauriers.

**Public Participation via Zoom:** Kathy Mashtare, Anne Pomeroy, Amanda Giroux, and St. Albans Messenger Reporter Josh Ellerbrock.

Chair J. Giroux called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

The purpose for the special meeting was to discuss the solution for a water system at the new Town Hall.

**Town Hall Water**

J. Giroux explained to the audience that we had decided to go with a neighboring homeowner's well for water at the new Town Hall. That well was tested by Chevalier Drilling and the results came back with a salinity level close to, but not exceeding the EPA's maximum limit. C. Johnson explained even though the salinity level did not exceed the EPA's maximum limit, with active use by both Town Hall and the well owner, over time, the water could become saltier. We now believe that the most cost effective and less risky solution to go with is to use the previously drilled well at the new Town Hall site and to purchase a Reverse Osmosis (RO) system.

B. Deso explained that the biggest issue with the RO system was deciding what to do with the affluent or waste water from treating the salty water. He wondered if it would be necessary to put in a second RO system as backup in case the first one fails. C. Johnson stated that wasn't one of the leading concerns and you'll always have that risk. We have two 300 gallon storage tanks. B. Deso explained that the cost to dispose of the affluent water is estimated at \$1,472 a year. E. Cherington stated that the Department of Public Works (DPW) will truck the affluent water hopefully to the City of St. Albans water treatment facility. J. Giroux stated there isn't a need for a backup system, but we should have replacement parts on hand in case of emergencies.

C. Johnson explained that other concerns with going with the neighboring well were getting power, getting a signal back, and not knowing exactly how much underground boring would cost or need to be done between the homeowner's house and the Town Hall. If we hit ledge during the boring, it would increase the costs.

B. Deso asked how soon can we move into Town Hall? C. Johnson stated it would be closer to 2 months. She explained that DEW would need to do their work getting the RO system installed. Jason Elwood with DEW explained they would need to get all the materials and approval.

J. Brigham suggested to pump the well shallower. J. Ellwood explained that at only 118 feet the water was still salty. E. Cherington explained that if the Town moves forward with the RO system, down the road, we could try capping it, and get out of the salt layer, then remove the RO system. At 118 feet we did have a higher yield of water. B. Deso stated we need to do what gets us in the new building as soon as possible.

B. DesLauriers explained when the Board discussed this in previous meetings, we wanted to make sure we weren't missing a less expensive option. Emmalee has done the due diligence we asked of her. The logical and less expensive option is to go with the RO system. Maybe in 5 years the water will cleaned up or we have our own water/wastewater system in the Bay.

B. Deso explained that Dave Chevalier used the RO system he ordered for the new Town Hall for another customer. Now, we need to ask Dave to order a new one. E. Cherington explained that an above onsite storage tank has a 5-6 week lead time. J. Brigham has a couple of tanks we can use in the meantime.

C. Johnson explained that we will need to coordinate moving into Town Hall with moving the vault and moving useful contents of the current Town Hall. We will need to close the building for 2-3 days.

B. Deso made a motion to move forward with option 2. J. Brigham seconded the motion. The topic was open for discussion.

Town resident Paul Lerner asked if a CO (Certificate of Occupancy) had been issued yet? C. Johnson said no, without water in the building, we can't be issued a CO. P. Lerner asked if there was an issue with wetlands on the Town Hall site. C. Johnson explained that we are working on the site plan amendment to include the gravel walkway that went from the former DPW property to the new Town Hall. We wanted to keep this walkway for overflow parking for Town Hall and it does go through a wetland. E. Cherington explained she is working on the enhancement planting for the wetland which is the last piece of the permit application. A wetland delineation was done for the Town Hall site. P. Lerner asked how soon the Town would have the wetland permit. E. Cherington explained she's finishing up what she needs to and is sending it out today and did state that the Town is not in any wetland violation.

Town resident Randy Swan asked if there was a well at the old DPW garage? E. Cherington explained that there is, but it doesn't meet the states isolation requirements. R. Swan asked if that well had been tested. E. Cherington said it was, but the water quality was poor.

Anne P. asked how much water goes through the RO system to give you a gallon and how much water will come out a well. E. Cherington explained 2 gallons to produce 1 gallon. A. Pomeroy asked how did we get to this point. Why didn't we test for water ahead of time? J. Giroux stated we did talk about that, have enough in the budget for sulfur and hardness. Salinity is the issue. C. Johnson explained we did do a lot of due diligence testing the soils. Our construction team and architect advised us to drill early and followed normal protocols. We can't go back and change it; we need to move forward. There isn't one person at fault. The building has been substantially done only a few weeks. COVID lead time for materials caused delays. We need to focus on moving forward, we are not hiding anything.

P. Lerner asked if we reviewed the ACT250 applications or discussions with NRPC for previous development? There were good reasons why development didn't happen. Who did the research; someone had to look at the property history. Look at Regional planning discussions on the property. B. Deso said it was permitted for a 2 lots subdivision, perk tested. P. Lerner wanted to know who bares responsibility for the extra costs.

**MOTION: B. Deso made a motion to move forward with the Reverse Osmosis option for the new Town Hall. Seconded by B. DesLauriers. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.**

Dave Chevalier arrived and was asked what was the lead time for the RO system? Mr. Chevalier explained that he sold the system he was holding on to for Town Hall to Bayside. Mr. Chevalier would like to get the same make system as previous purchased because he has a lot of parts on hand already. He will search other suppliers; needs to see what's in the inventory.

J. Sanders suggested getting the same brand, even if it takes an extra week or two. E. Cherington asked do you offer maintenance? Mr. Chevalier said yes. Once received, it will take a couple of days to install. Mr. Chevalier said there is a potential for the well to improve over years. The Town of Georgia's well improved and now has no salt. J. Giroux asked if a salt test needs to be done every year on a public building? Mr. Chevalier said he can do a test. E. Cherington stated we should do testing every year for other reasons, but this isn't considered a public water source.

Stan Dukas asked if we were going to plug the well. Mr. Chevalier didn't advise it and explained the salt from below or the old salt pile may have contributed to secondary contamination. When pumping down the well, we saw a vein, and that water was salty as well.

Pat Vincent asked how come somebody else isn't responsible for paying for this? J. Giroux stated they don't check the water quality that early in the commercial construction process.

#### **Public Comment**

J. Giroux advised there would be a 3 minute public comment limit.

Town resident Bob Fairbanks stated this should have been checked since the town hall was built next to the old DPW site before spending \$5 million on building a new building.

#### **Adjournment**

**MOTION: Jeff made a motion to adjourn the Selectboard meeting at 8:45 a.m. Seconded by B. Deso . All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Jenn Gray, Recording Secretary