

**Town of St. Albans
Selectboard Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 20th, 2021
6:30 p.m.**

On Monday, September 20th, 2021 at 6:30 p.m., the Town of St. Albans Selectboard met at Town Hall.

Officials and Staff: Vice Chair Jessica Frost, Erin Creley, Jonathan Giroux, Bryan DesLauriers, Director of Public Works Alan Mashtare, Director of Operations Corey Parent, and Town Manager Carrie Johnson. Absent was Chair Brendan Deso.

Staff participating via Zoom: Stormwater Coordinator Emmalee Cherington, Town Clerk Anna Bourdon, Assessor Bill Hinman, Facilities Manager John Montagne, and Executive Assistant Jenn Gray.

Public Participation via Zoom: Steve Cushing.

J. Frost called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Moment of silence

J. Frost asked the Board to remain standing for a moment of silence for two community members who passed away; Town firefighter Tommy Arsenault and former Town Manager Jim Fitzgerald. Both died of complications from COVID-19.

J. Frost also announced that Selectboard Chair Brendan Deso and his wife Julie welcomed a baby boy this morning, September 20th.

Amendment to Agenda

MOTION: B. DesLauriers made a motion to amend the agenda to include an update on the new Town Hall. Seconded by J. Giroux. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Town Hall Update

Hunter Gomez with Peterson Consulting came before the Board to discuss the Town Hall construction budget. He reviewed the spreadsheet provided to the Board and pointed out that the \$86,615.14 amount was carry over from phase 2 of the project. He went on to say that the first payment to DEW Construction of \$139,501.99 has been reviewed and will be approved by the Board tonight.

E. Creley asked if there are any line items we need to be keeping an eye on. H. Gomez explained that DEW's contract is locked in and there shouldn't be any changes there. With other vendors J. Gray is sending invoices to H. Gomez for his review and approval and then to Jesse Robbins with Freeman French Freeman. After that, they are given to C. Johnson for final approval.

There was discussion about whether to keep track of expenses for the Town Hall project, for instance the top soil from the project being used at other areas and whether the general fund should be reimburse the LOT for the trucking expense. C. Johnson explained that getting keeping track of expenses in that much detail would require hiring one or two more financial people. We just don't have the staff for that now.

J. Giroux asked if there were going to be more things like the tree removal or the hauling of topsoil from the Town Hall site being paid for by the general fund. C. Johnson explained that like with the Department of Public Works (DPW) project, we did some of the work ourselves, like landscaping. If we are going to track that level of service, we're going to have to hire someone. We would be tracking in-kind work which is allowed for municipal work even in federal and state grants. J. Giroux stated that we told the voters we were paying for this project with LOT funds and when we spend money out of the general fund for this project.

H. Gomez explained that the culverts that were installed along Georgia Shore Road we got reimbursed for and the paving the Town will do on its own because as a municipality, the Town will get a better deal. J. Frost asked how we would pay for paving. C. Johnson explained it would come out of the general fund just like we did with DPW. A. Bourdon stated that if we know what the paving costs are, we can pay for it out of the LOT.

Payroll

MOTION: E. Creley made a motion to approve the payroll warrants dated September 10th, 2021 in the amount of \$23,805.66 and September 17th, 2021 in the amount of \$22,361.04. Seconded by J. Giroux. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

General Warrant

MOTION: J. Giroux made a motion to approve the general warrant dated September 20th, 2021 in the amount of \$363,103.89. Seconded by E. Creley. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Infrastructure Development Warrant

MOTION: J. Giroux made a motion to approve the Infrastructure Development warrant dated September 20th, 2021 in the amount of \$152,996.61. Seconded by B. DesLauriers. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Stormwater Utility Warrant

MOTION: J. Giroux made a motion to approve the Stormwater Utility warrant in the amount of \$7,637.20. Seconded by B. DesLauriers. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Industrial Park Warrant

MOTION: J. Giroux made a motion to approve the Industrial Park warrant dated September 20th, 2021 in the amount of \$758.89. Seconded by B. DesLauriers. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Fire Department Reserve Warrant

MOTION: J. Giroux made a motion to approve the Fire Department Reserve warrant dated September 20th, 2021 in the amount of \$52,330.00. Seconded by B. DesLauriers. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Minutes

MOTION: E. Creley made a motion to approve the Selectboard meeting minutes from Wednesday, September 8th, 2021 as presented. Seconded by B. DesLauriers. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Assessor Bill Hinman – Errors & Omissions

B. Hinman explained that most of the errors and omissions were brought to their attention after the filing of the Grand List.

MOTION: J. Giroux made a motion to approve the Errors and Omissions as presented. Seconded by E. Creley. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

VLCT Annual Business Meeting Voting Delegate

C. Johnson will be able to attend the meetings virtually.

MOTION: E. Creley made a motion to send Carrie Johnson virtually as the Town's voting delegate to the VLCT annual meeting. Seconded by J. Giroux. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Public Comment

C. Johnson explained that there is a 5 minute time limit for public comments. Tonight is not supposed to be a debate about the weed harvester. Steve Cushing with the St. Albans Area Water Shed Association (SAAWA) wanted to speak to and educate the Board.

S. Cushing provided some history on weed harvesting, which began in 2005 with a contracted service by Aquatic Control Technologies out of Massachusetts. The annual costs at the time was \$30,000. A lot of that was paid for through a grant with the State of Vermont. Over the years, the State of Vermont reduced that grant amount. An opportunity arose for SAAWA to purchase a harvester out of West Virginia. That machine has a capacity of 420 bushels and made by Aquarius Systems. By operating their own harvester, SAAWA reduced their budget down to around \$22,000 annually. In 2015, SAAWA purchased another harvester from the Town of Franklin. SAAWA had it rehabbed for \$2,000. The annual budget right now is \$25,000, of which the Town of St. Albans contributes \$7,500, the City of St. Albans contributes \$10,000 and the Town of Georgia contributes \$2,500. SAAWA also receives an annual grant from the State of Vermont in the amount of about \$4,500. SAAWA operates with a Mechanical Harvesting permit which was obtained by the Town of St. Albans. S. Cushing continued by stating this is the 18th season operating the weed harvesters. He then reviewed statics with the Board.

S. Cushing explained that at the annual SAAWA meeting, someone asked Stormwater Coordinator Emmalee Cherington if any money from the Stormwater Utility fee would go towards weed harvesting. S. Cushing then stated that Ms. Cherington's comment was that maybe weed harvesting wasn't beneficial and that there are alternatives. One of those could be hand pulling of weeds. S. Cushing then explained that Lake George hires between 26 and 28 divers each year to pull weeds, harvesting

9,300 tons of weeds. That cost is \$508,000 annually. He also stated that he didn't feel that hand pulling would be very effective, productive, or cost effective in St. Albans Bay.

J. Frost stated that it will be interesting to see what the latest science is. C. Parent explained that what Lake George is finding out is that by hand pulling, the weeds are gone for multiple years. It's a different solution and more expensive up front, but might be cheaper in the long run.

Town Manager's Report Speed Limit Change

C. Johnson explained that this was informational. Often people express concerns about speeding and want to see a speed limit changed. C. Johnson stated that she received this information from Bethany at Northwest Regional Planning Commission. We have to follow a process in order to change a speed limit and we have to do it strategically. We are actively logging these complaints in Polimorphic.

Parks Ordinance and Policy Draft 1

At a previous meeting, the Board tasked the Parks and Recreation Committee to go through the current Parks Ordinance and review what information could be moved into a policy. A draft of that policy and a new draft of the ordinance were provided to the Board. C. Johnson stated that this is not ready for approval at this time, but asked for the Board to review both documents, provide comments to her and then place this topic on the next Selectboard meeting agenda. C. Johnson asked the Board to have their feedback by September 30th. There was a brief discussion about tobacco use in the Town parks. No decision was made at this time.

FY '23 Budget Schedule

C. Johnson and the Board agreed on October 11th and November 8th for the budget meetings.

Stormwater Revenues Report

E. Cherington and C. Parent went over the Stormwater budget with the Board and the current total of expenditures and revenues with explanations. E. Cherington explained that we have brought in \$395,000 to date. There is money coming in online and in NEMRC directly to the Town Clerk's office. Of those funds, not much has not gone out. The administrative transfer from the general fund covering E. Cherington's expenses up to now has not been repaid to the general fund yet. We have an engineer under contact for the Tanglewood project for \$26,900 for this fiscal year, but we have not received a bill yet.

C. Parent explained that larger accounts have been given the option to pay quarterly, and that money will trickle in. We are planning on sending late notices out in a few months. We have also hired engineers for the phosphorus plan and the IDDE programs. C. Parent also stated that we have applied for a grant to construct Tanglewood. These items have all been accounted for in this fiscal year.

B. DesLauriers asked what other projects commitments are in the works. E. Cherington explained that Tanglewood is actively in final design and we are proposing a construction start date of spring 2022. Ideally, this will go out to bid in January. She went on to explained that there is a Municipal Stormwater Mitigate grant available right now through VTrans where they provide 80% and the Town's match is 20%. In order to qualify for that grant, you have to go all the way through the design process and implementation. This is more like a 3 year timeframe to complete it. This grant is due October 1st and we will be applying for this for Clyde Allen for a gravel wetland. It would capture stormwater from Clyde Allen and cover their expired stormwater permit as well as add some adjacent properties to it. E. Cherington explained that this would design would occur in 2022 and implementation in 2023. It would cushion the budget, but we would secure the funds up front.

E. Cherington explained that another project we are actively working on is partnering with the City and VTrans for a gravel wetland that would treat water coming off of SASH, a part of Gricebrook and a little of SATEC. The City has designed the system already and would be willing to utilize the site that is located straight across from the SASH for a gravel wetland. The cost is \$480,000 just for implementing. C. Parent stated we own a certain percentage of the water which is technically our water. The City and State both pay their portions. We basically pick up Gricebrook. We wouldn't own that full \$480,000. E. Cherington stated that we have 48% of it.

A. Bourdon stated that to date, we billed out \$531,000 and received \$391,000. The folks that didn't get a bill, we can rebill them. The Board would like to know what percentage of accounts have paid. E. Cherington will provide this information to the Board later.

B. DesLauriers asked if the utility is sustaining itself. C. Parent said yes, the utility is sustaining itself. He went on to say that the State of Vermont will pay us \$87,000 and the railroad \$19,000 for their impervious surfaces.

Affiliation Fee Complaints From Residents

C. Johnson explained that we have received some complaints on the City's affiliation fees. B. Deso is spearheading this, so we can put this on the next agenda and discuss it then.

Financial Report – Bank Reconciliation

A. Bourdon explained the bank reconciliation is as of August 31st. There is LOT money that needs to be included in September. Stormwater funds are coming in every day. C. Johnson explained that many of these accounts are restricted funds, you must spend the funds on what the title indicates. A. Bourdon stated that she will have a reconciliation report for each cost center within impact fees for the next meeting for FY'21.

Schedule

The next regular Selectboard meetings are Monday, October 4th and Monday, October 18th at 6:30

Chair's Report

J. Frost thanked John Montagne for arranging for the artist to create the Champ sculpture in the Bay Park. She explained that she found someone to write the grant for us and we received a \$10,000 grant from the Vermont Arts Council.

Other Business

J. Giroux asked if any of the Infrastructure Development funds were slated to go towards the project (Town Hall)? C. Johnson stated that all of it through February, 2022.

Fall Festival

A. Mashtare stated that this Saturday, September 25th at noon is Harvest Fest. Nobby Reed will be providing music, there will be a chili competition, and all the farmers market vendors will be there.

Executive Session

MOTION: E. Creley made a motion to go into executive session at 8:07 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. It was 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. Seconded by J. Giroux. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

MOTION: E. Creley made a motion to come out of executive session at 8:35 p.m. Seconded by J. Giroux. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Adjournment

MOTION: J. Giroux made a motion to adjourn the Selectboard meeting at 8:36 p.m. Seconded by E. Creley. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Jenn Gray Recording Secretary