

**Town of St. Albans
Selectboard Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 20th, 2021
5:30 p.m.
Via Zoom Teleconferencing**

On Wednesday, January 20th, 2021 at 5:30 p.m., the Town of St. Albans Selectboard met.

Officials and staff in attendance: Stan Dukas, Town Clerk Anna Bourdon, and Town Manager Carrie Johnson.

Officials and staff participating via Zoom Teleconferencing: Chair Brendan Deso, Vice Chair Jessica Frost, Erin Creley, Jonathan Giroux, Director of Operations Corey Parent, Director of Public Works Alan Mashtare, and Recording Secretary Jenn Gray.

Public Participation via Zoom Teleconferencing: Jackie Brown and St. Albans Messenger Reporter Kate Barcellos.

Chair B. Deso called the budget work session to order at 5:30 p.m.

The purpose for the earlier start to the Selectboard meeting was to finish up work on the fiscal year 2022 budget.

Budget

To begin the budget work session, the Board went over the articles for the Town Meeting Day ballot.

Article 1

J. Frost asked A. Bourdon who has submitted petitions to run. A. Bourdon explained that for the 3 year Selectboard seat, Brian DesLauriers is currently running unopposed, and for the 2 year Selectboard seat, Brendan Deso is currently running unopposed. A. Bourdon also explained that she is running unopposed for Town Clerk, Treasurer, and Delinquent Tax Collector.

Article 2

C. Johnson explained that the general expenses for fiscal year 2022 are \$5,195,068, of that amount \$4,422,592 are to be raised by taxes. The formula is expenses minus projected revenues.

Article 3

C. Johnson and A. Bourdon discussed prior to the meeting and agreed that we can apply the prior year general fund balance amount to reduce taxes of up to \$250,000.

Article 4

C. Johnson explained the design team is still working on the cost estimate for the construction of a new Town Hall, so we have a number for the warning. She stated that we are hoping to continue tonight's meeting to Friday afternoon. By then, we should have that final number.

B. Deso asked if we know for certain that the question is structured properly and had it been run by the Town Attorney? C. Johnson explained she doesn't do that unless asked by the Board. The Board agreed to have C. Johnson ask the Town Attorney to review Article 4 prior to Friday's meeting.

C. Johnson asked if the Board was in agreement to use the next four quarters of the Local Option Tax (LOT) to reduce the loan amount for the construction of a new Town Hall. She proposed that \$150,000 of admin impact fees, the current balance of LOT, and four payments of the LOT (around \$250,000 each) be used for the construction. There would also be a short Tax Anticipation Notice (TAN) loan at an interest rate of 3%.

E. Creley asked if we were to use the upcoming LOT quarterly payments, would that impact our ability to build sidewalks or meet the other things we wanted to meet in our Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). C. Johnson stated it will, but we really don't have any projects that are engineering or shovel ready now. Congress Street sidewalk is on hold; we did get engineering estimates for it. The City said they were including that in their pool project and then said they were not. Because of that, C. Johnson stated she didn't want to add confusion to what we are already asking the voters to approve. On the short term, yes, spending the LOT will effect that, but in the long term it won't because we still have the ability to get shovel ready for all future sidewalk projects and equipment replacements.

J. Frost asked if the City was putting Congress Street in their plan. B. Deso said that he met with Tim (Smith) and they are not putting it in, they want us to build it. He went on to say that he'd like a package of projects ready for 2022 for sidewalk and parks. J. Frost stated that she would like to keep park improvements and sidewalk improvements separate. In two years of being on the Board, she

hasn't seen any sidewalks built. She suggested that maybe we could work on the Collins Perley/Jolley crosswalk. We need to do something. People have been asking for it for a long time. E. Creley agreed with J. Frost on sidewalks. It would be great to come up with a plan to get moving on that too.

J. Frost asked if we could focus on just the Collins Perley/Jolley crosswalk. C. Johnson stated that was a good project, but the thing that slowed it down was that at least four different entities were involved. Unless you're proposing the Town pay for the whole thing, this project has been put on hold. J. Frost stated we need to do something. That project prioritizes children's safety. C. Johnson stated she liked the project too, but didn't know what number to put on the ballot.

C. Parent stated that at the last Planning Commission meeting, we decided for the next few months through April they will focus on doing the sidewalk plans. We should spend our resources over the next year getting 3 or 4 sidewalk projects ready with the understanding of what the priorities are for the community. Currently, VTrans is quoting that the costs for construction sidewalks is \$195/linear foot. He went on to say that the Planning Commission will be focusing on projects and should have full plans and construction cost estimates for the Selectboard to review and approve in November, 2021. C. Johnson stated we hope to do one large and a couple small projects next year. E. Creley asked if we will have to build up our LOT again to do these projects. C. Johnson stated the LOT payments that start to come after February, 2022 would build up the LOT balance again and we can use those funds to pay for sidewalk projects.

J. Frost stated that the public perception is that we put a lot of money into a DPW building for staff and equipment. Now, we're putting a lot of money into another building for staff. We've been promising so long to do a sidewalk.

E. Creley asked again if we are going to run into any issues drawing down the LOT when it comes to purchasing equipment for the Parks. A. Mashtare stated the trailers that were being considered for replacement have another 3 or 4 years. The plow truck that was supposed to be replaced this year has been postponed due to the proposed Town Hall. Regarding the Parks, he went on to say that we did buy some lights that will be installed at the Stone House and we also have \$86,000 for renovations.

Department of Public Works Capital Equipment

C. Parent explained that one of the first projects he undertook as Director of Operations was looking at a replacement schedule of vehicles. With the costs of vehicles provided to him by A. Mashtare, C. Parent built in an inflation rate of 1.5% a year. The recommended save amount for 2021 and 2022 is \$320,000 and goes down to \$242,500 the next ten years to meet our \$2.5 million. He went on to say that this does not include any growth and as we build sidewalks, we'll need to figure out what we need for equipment for those.

B. Deso asked the Board what their thoughts were on the warning. S. Dukas stated that he is good with just 4 articles. E. Creley agreed but, was hesitant at putting off DPW purchases. However, if we can make it another year, we should do just the 4 articles. She went on to ask if our LOT comes in lower, how do we cover the payments? C. Johnson stated we planned to spend the LOT funds conservatively and if some emergency comes up with construction, we could use some of the emergency funds.

The Board agreed to meeting on Friday at 2:30 p.m. to finish the warning after receiving the final construction cost number. A. Bourdon requested that all 5 Board members sign the warning. J. Frost and E. Creley agreed to come in Monday to sign the warning. S. Dukas, J. Giroux, and B. Deso will meet at 2:30 p.m. and approve and sign the article. If the number is way out of line, J. Frost and E. Creley will be contacted to join the meeting. Otherwise, they will come in on Monday to sign it.

B. Deso explained that the Town will be mailing ballots to everyone in Town. C. Parent explained there is a lot of talk in the legislature to have all elections move this way in the future, so the more times we do our elections this way, the better we'll be at it. A. Bourdon stated that we can include school ballots with the Town's ballot.

Regular Meeting – 6:30 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Agenda Amendment

Item for Town Meeting day confirmation to be added after Other Business

MOTION: J. Giroux made a motion to amend the agenda to add Town Meeting Day confirmation after Other Business. Seconded by E. Creley. All in favor, none

General Warrant

MOTION: S. Dukas made a motion to approve the general warrant dated January 20th, 2021 in the amount of \$80,259.95. Seconded by E. Creley. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Payroll

Fire Department payments were made for the pay period ending January 1st.

MOTION: S. Dukas made a motion to approve the payroll warrant for January 8th, 2021 in the amount of \$56,653.48 and January 15th, 2021 in the amount of \$18,371.64. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Impact Fee Warrant

MOTION: S. Dukas made a motion to approve the Impact Fee warrant dated January 20th, 2021 in the amount of \$140.00. Seconded by J. Giroux. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Infrastructure Development Warrant

MOTION: S. Dukas made a motion to approve the Infrastructure Development warrant dated January 20th, 2021 in the amount of \$7,456.80. Seconded by J. Giroux. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Industrial Park Warrant

MOTION: S. Dukas made a motion to approve the Industrial Park warrant in the amount of \$721.86. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Minutes

MOTION: J. Giroux made a motion to approve the Selectboard meeting minutes from Monday, January 4th, 2021 as presented. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Special Meeting Minutes

Minutes are required for meetings that are warned for Selectboard quorum participation in the Town Hall Relocation Committee meetings. Even though a quorum did not show up, because the meeting was warned, minutes must be generated. Minutes for November 30th need to be approved. However, meeting minutes for December 21st, December 28th, January 4th, and January 11th just need consensus as there was no quorum at these meetings.

MOTION: S. Dukas made a motion to approve the special meeting minutes for November 30th, 2020. Seconded by J. Giroux. Motion passes with 3-0 vote with J. Frost and E. Creley abstaining as they were not present.

Public Comment

None.

Certificate of Highway Mileage

Phase III, two small sections of Harbor View Drive were added to Town Highway Mileage in 2020.

MOTION: J. Frost made a motion to accept the Certificate of Highway Mileage. Seconded by J. Giroux. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Town Manager's Report

Town Hall Relocation Project Update

Phase 1 & Phase 2 Environmental Site Assessment Reports

C. Johnson explained that we had an environmental assessment done on the Brown lot. Both reports came back clean.

Construction Manager form of Construction Management

C. Johnson explained we need to look forward to the next phase, creating the construction documents. Sam Ruggiano, Jesse Robbins (Freeman French Freeman), and C. Johnson are applying to the Development Review Board (DRB) for permits at their meeting on February 11th. Mr. Ruggiano and Mr. Robbins will attend the meeting to answer questions and hopefully get approval to move forward.

C. Johnson explained the Design Team has started talking about changing the construction delivery system moving forward. The team explained to C. Johnson and S. Dukas that if we considered doing a Construction Management delivery system, it would save us money and move a little faster. C. Johnson went on to say she spoke with Hunter Gomez (Peterson Consulting) about coming to the Selectboard to answer questions and explain the delivery system in more detail. We're looking to have him come to the 2nd meeting in February. A lot of the State contracts use this delivery method. S. Dukas explained that with a Construction Manager, you're all on the same side of the table. This

person goes out and hires the electrician, the HVAC company, the carpenters and gets the best prices.

C. Johnson asked the Board to waive the DRB fees for the Town Hall project. The Board agreed.

MOTION: S. Dukas made a motion to waive any applicable fees for the construction of the new Town Hall and anything else that goes through the DRB. Seconded by E. Creley. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

COVID-19 Update

C. Johnson explained Jenn Gray worked hard to get this reimbursement for the Town. The Town received FEMA funds in the amount of \$18,533.91.

FY '22 Draft Budget

E. Creley asked about the budget for the Stormwater Utility. C. Parent explained that we are going to have to borrow money from the general fund to get the stormwater up and running. At first estimate, that amount was \$53,000. However, if we lower the \$65/ERU (Equivalent Residential Unit) would be closer to \$80,000 with the current number of impervious surfaces counted. The rate will come down to mid to low \$40,000 after the impervious surface number comes in from Northwest Regional Planning Commission. We probably won't see money come in from residents for the utility until September. C. Johnson explained that A. Bourdon is meeting with the Town of Swanton to learn how to incorporate the Stormwater Utility into our chart of accounts.

C. Johnson explained that the draft number for Franklin County that was provided to the Selectboard in the fall is different from what they are proposing now. However, it is less than the previous year.

B. Deso stated that Restorative Justice is cutting funds and asked C. Johnson to look into it.

MOTION: E. Creley made a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2022 budget in the amount of \$5,195,068. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

C. Johnson explained that she will prepare a Budget Justification that explains changing in the budget.

Selectboard Meeting Minutes Update

C. Johnson explained that when a meeting is warned, minutes have to be done whether a quorum shows up to a meeting or not.

Messenger Print Schedule

The St. Albans Messenger is switching their print schedule to two days; Tuesday's and Friday's. C. Johnson stated that we may need to change where we post our warnings in the future. We do still post our warnings/agendas on our website and three places in Town. We will need to consider this in the next month.

Schedule

Friday, January 22nd at 2:30 p.m. the Selectboard will hold a special meeting to finalize the Town Meeting Day warning. The next regular Selectboard meetings are Monday February 1st, 2021 and Wednesday, February 17th at 6:30 p.m.

Chair's Report

B. Deso stated he met with the City Mayor and they are going to meet more regularly. The Congress Street sidewalk was discussed.

Other Business

J. Frost explained the Parks Committee is looking for a few more members.

J. Frost explained that with Martin Luther King Jr. Day, she found herself thinking about how we are still struggling with the same racial inequities Mr. King did. She went on to say that Xusana Davis is the state's first executive director of racial equity. She will work with state government agencies and departments to identify and address systemic racial disparities and support the state's efforts to expand and bring diversity to Vermont's overall population. J. Frost further said to move the needle, municipalities need to make equality more of a reality. How can the Town help with that? Vermont is the 2nd whitest state in the nation. Maybe have some trainings, larger community conversations. She has a municipal guide that she will provide to the Board. The Police Advisory Committee is a great start in the right direction with it's diversity.

Town Meeting Day

B. Deso explained we would like to make every registered voter a ballot. The State will reimburse us. The Selectboard plans only 4 articles on the ballot and is also going to mail a school ballot. J. Frost confirmed that there will still be in-person voting.

Executive Session

MOTION: J. Giroux made a motion to go into executive session at 7:23 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 and to invite the Town Manager and the Director of Operations. Seconded by S. Dukas. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

MOTION: E. Creley made a motion to come out of executive session at 7:49 p.m. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Continuance

The Board agreed to continue the Selectboard to Friday, January 22nd at 2:30 p.m. to finish up the Town Meeting Day Warning.

MOTION: S. Dukas made a motion to continue the Selectboard meeting at 7:51 p.m. to Friday, January 22nd, 2021 at 2:30 p.m. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Jenn Gray, Recording Secretary