

**Town of St. Albans
Selectboard Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 2nd, 2020
6:00 p.m.**

On Monday, March 2nd, 2020 at 6:00 p.m., at Town Hall the Town of St. Albans Selectboard met.

Officials and staff present: Chair Brendan Deso, Stan Dukas, Jessica Frost, Al Voegele, and Town Manager Carrie Johnson.

Absent: Vice Chair, Bruce Cheeseman

The purpose for the early start to the Selectboard meeting was to hold an executive session to discuss a personnel issue.

Executive Session

MOTION: A. Voegele made a motion to go into executive session at 6:00 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 is further moved to enter into executive session to discuss legal, contractual, or personnel issued under the provisions of Tile 1, section 313(a)(1) of Vermont Statutes and to invite the Town Manager. Seconded by S. Dukas. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

MOTION: A. Voegele made a motion to come out of executive session at 6:15 p.m. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Officials and staff present: Chair Brendan Deso, Stan Dukas, Jessica Frost, Al Voegele, Town Manager Carrie Johnson, and Director of Public Works Alan Mashtare.

Absent: Vice Chair, Bruce Cheeseman

Public: Kelly Viens, Charlie Moore, Sheri Moore, Rae Laitres, Real Cyr, Tamira Martel, Bryan Smith, Emily Smith, Peter Charbonneau, Danielle Charbonneau, Nicole Paquette, David McWilliams, Erin Creley, Will Manahan, Holly Branon, Matt Branon, Roger Langevin, Jonathan Giroux, Barbara Tenney, Joe Montagne, Christie Montagne, Andrew (16 Marie Lane), Casey Tatro, Mike Adams, Hannah Rounds, Sally Sargent, Kevin Lawler, Rick Coon, Robert Bessette and Erick Johnson.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Informational Hearing

MOTION: J. Frost made a motion to open the public informational hearing and read the warning. Seconded by A. Voegele. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Proposed Municipal Pool Presentation – St. Albans City Recreation Director Kelly Viens and Town Manager Carrie Johnson

St. Albans City Recreational Director Kelly Viens and Town Manager C. Johnson gave a brief overview of the proposed Municipal Pool project.

C. Johnson explained the current pool located in St. Albans City is 15 years past its useful life. An evaluation proved that repairs to the pool would cost around two million dollars, but the pool can still only be available for around 10 weeks and will still face programmatic challenges.

The proposed pool project will not increase Municipal taxes and C. Johnson believes it can draw people county-wide. Although the property is located within the Town, the City currently owns Hard'Ack. If the voters approve the project, the town will become a joint owner of the property (as outlined in a letter of intent from the Selectboard). The St. Albans Recreation Commission will be formed equally of members from the Town and the City; once constructed the pool will be the responsibility of the City Recreation Department with input from the St. Albans Recreation Commission.

The Town's portion of construction costs would be deducted from funds generated by the Local Options Tax (LOT). The LOT is currently generating around \$850,000 per year and the bond payment would be at or slightly under \$200,000 per year. C. Johnson explained using the LOT

money does not mean additional LOT money cannot be used to renovate or replace Town Hall – it is not Town Hall vs. Pool.

K. Viens explained the existing pool is 40 years old and reiterated the pool is 15 years past its useful life. The last two swim seasons, the pool almost didn't open. The proposed pool looks much larger than the existing pool but there is not a huge difference in gallons of water. The current pool has a shallow end of 3.5'. The proposed pool will have a "zero entry" area, much like you would see on a beach, which will be useful for small children and those with limited mobility. The proposed pool also features a water slide, a diving board and a six lane competitive pool.

Of the proposed \$5.5 million dollar price tag roughly half of the cost is for infrastructure. The road and parking areas need to be upgraded to allow for safer entrance/exiting and more defined parking areas.

C. Johnson asked if there were any questions.

Barbara Tenney asked for clarification on the parking area upgrade. K. Viens explained the road and parking area will be finished using gravel. The original "road" was never constructed to standard whereas the proposed road will be. It is not proposed to be paved unless there is a future need.

Bryan Smith inquired about the finances of splitting ownership of Hard'Ack. What if the expenses of the pool are greater than the revenues from user fees, would the City and Town split the loss? K. Viens explained the City holds all the liability on running the pool and will be responsible for programming, costs, etc.

Rae Laitres wondered if anyone had looked into the projected monthly cost of chemicals, staffing, insurance etc. K. Viens explained the greatest expense will be to heat the dome with natural gas – around \$106,000 per year. The City has a good estimation of what chemicals and insurance will cost due to the current pool and does not foresee a great difference in costs for the new pool. It was reiterated that the Town is not responsible for funding these things. R. Laitres asked why the dome needs to come off and on, and wondered if it would be more cost effective to just leave the dome up. K. Viens explained summer is beautiful and people want to be outdoors and enjoy the weather. The City had initially looked into building an indoor pool but the dome option is less expensive and people have expressed excitement in having an outdoor pool for the summer. R. Laitres asked if there had been any consideration in pairing with Branon's Pool to offer a community pool. K. Viens stated on swim meet days up to 2,000 people can be in attendance and Branon's cannot accommodate that volume of people or the parking associated with it.

David McWilliams asked if the people in Eastview had a say over what would be in their back yard and if they were on board with the project. C. Johnson explained they have been a part of the planning process since the beginning. K. Viens has not heard any negative remarks from any homeowners in Eastview and homeowners anticipate a positive impact on their property values. D. McWilliams asked why the dome only showed the City logo if the Town is proposed to be a half owner. C. Johnson clarified the drawing is only a concept and the final design has not been decided.

K. Viens talked about the proposed "Aqua-Van" which would be driven by a City Recreation Employee around the City and Town. Children will be able to get a ride to and from their homes to the pool; a bike rack will also be on the Aqua-Van.

Danielle Charbonneau asked how long the dome will last and what the replacement looks like. The dome is predicted to last 15 years before replacement. The replacement cost of the dome will be cheaper than the initial set up. Some of the structure can be re-used and the fabric will be replaced. D. Charbonneau inquired who removes the structure and puts it up annually and what the associated costs are. K. Viens explained there are several methods to removing the structure and putting it back up. The company who will initially do the set up could return and do it, they can send a project manager and the Rec. Department can provide the "muscle", or they can hire the job out. The City will include dome replacement funds in their Capital Plan.

Bryan Smith wondered if the current rate structure would be too low to cover the expenses of the proposed pool. K. Viens stated the current pool takes a lot of man hours to initially set up.

The pool is open for 14 hours during the swim season to try to cram in as many lessons as possible to cover the current expenses. The proposed pool should see more users, have more programs available, and not have as many repairs to pay for each year. The current pool has a 2-inch hose that runs the entire season to keep the pool full.

Robert Bessette inquired how the pool will be heated and what chemicals will be used for sanitation. The pool will be heated using heat exchange and chlorine will be utilized for sanitation. R. Bessette asked if the Branon's Pool business will be thought of when purchasing chemicals or other pool necessities. K. Viens explained that businesses typically provide quotes and the Recreation Department chooses the business that has the best values.

Kevin Lawler questioned who pays into LOT and how much each business within the Town has paid into it. C. Johnson explained the information is confidential to protect business owners and the State handles the administration of the LOT program. For every dollar of LOT money, the Town gets .70 and the State keeps .30 for administration. K. Lawler asked if the Town would have the opportunity to run the LOT program and keep more of the funds. C. Johnson stated it was possible, but it would require staff time.

Joe Montagne expressed concern that there are not procedures in place to know who will pay for what. B. Deso explained there is a bullet point in the letter of intent that states the Town and City must reach a contract before any bond will be pulled. Residents will be able to view the contract as it progresses. J. Montagne asked what happens if the City does not pass their LOT ballot question. If the City does not pass the LOT the pool project is done.

There were no further questions. The Board requested a five-minute recess.

MOTION: A. Voegelé made a motion to recess the public hearing for five minutes. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Fiscal Year 2021 Budget and Town Meeting Day Articles

MOTION: A. Voegelé made a motion to reopen the public hearing. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

C. Johnson provided the Board and audience members with a summary of the fiscal year 2021 budget and Town Meeting Day articles.

Article 1 outlines the various positions open within the town and the people running.

Article 2 asks if the voters approved the Selectboard to spend \$4,663,258 of which \$3,922,666 is to be raised by taxes. Tammy Martell questioned the amount of money paid to AmCare Ambulance Services. She shared a bill she received from AmCare after her son had a non-emergency transport. She asked for more transparency and a report such as the Police Department or Library. A. Voegelé explained it would be unlikely for a private business to agree to "open their books" to the public and AmCare is only required to negotiate with the insurance companies. B. Deso wondered if the Board thought it would be appropriate to ask C. Johnson to meet with AmCare and report back. The Board was in consensus.

Article 3 authorizes the Selectboard to spend up to \$100,000 of the prior year general fund to reduce taxes for 2021.

Article 4 addresses funding the construction of the community pool, addressed earlier in the meeting.

Article 5 asked if the voters supported Town Hall remaining in the Bay. C. Johnson noted that a "yes" vote does not obligate the Town Hall to remain in the current building.

Article 6 authorizes the Selectboard to spend up to \$65,000 of previously collected money to fund the pre-development phase of Town Hall.

Article 7 authorizes the Selectboard to fund \$125,000 to the Fire Department Reserve fund annually.

Article 8 authorizes the Selectboard to purchase a new medium duty plow truck for DPW not to exceed \$140,000 using previously collected DPW Reserve Funds. A. Mashtare gave a brief

overview of the challenges of ordering trucks and not having them available for use until months later.

S. Dukas asked for clarification on item 7. C. Johnson explained the ballot item would give the Selectboard authorization to make it a budget item under the general fund instead of requesting it from voters every 5 years. The budget item would still be reviewed annually.

MOTION: A. Voegele made a motion to close the public informational hearing. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Payroll

MOTION: J. Frost made a motion to approve the payroll warrants dated February 21st, 2020 in the amount of \$23,654.52 and February 28th, 2020 in the amount of \$29,108.33. Seconded by A. Voegele. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

General Warrant

MOTION: S. Dukas made a motion to approve the general warrant dated March 2nd, 2020 in the amount of \$38,759.58. Seconded by A. Voegele. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Minutes

MOTION: A. Voegele made a motion to approve the Selectboard meeting minutes from Tuesday, February 18th, and the joint meeting with the City of St. Albans on Monday, February 10th, 2020 as written. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Public Comment

None.

Liquor Control Board

MOTION: J. Frost made a motion to recess the Selectboard meeting and convene as the Liquor Control Board. Seconded by A. Voegele. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Liquor License Renewals

The St. Albans Diner submitted an application for a 1st class renewal.

MOTION: A. Voegele made a motion to approve the Liquor License renewal applications as presented. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

MOITON: J. Frost made a motion to adjourn the Liquor Control Board and reconvene the Selectboard meeting. Seconded by A. Voegele. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Town Manager's Report

Honor Wall Nominees

B. Deso stated some Board members believe the honor wall needs more structure on criteria for nominees. He advised the Board to discuss the potential criteria at another meeting.

There was no action taken on nominee J. Blouin.

B. Deso asked the Selectboard to approve adding Robert "Bob" Johnson to the wall. A. Voegele agreed it was necessary to recognize all the contributions R. Johnson has made in the town, and his nomination came before the request for additional criteria. S. Dukas had hoped the criteria would be discussed, but agreed to have the discussion at a later date.

MOTION: A. Voegele made a motion to recognize Robert "Bob" Johnson for the St. Albans Town Hall Honor Wall. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

B. Deso symbolically voted yes, and thanked C. Johnson and Erick Johnson for allowing the Selectboard to have the discussion prior to making the motion.

Act-250 – Nissan St. Albans

Informational only. No action required.

Schedule

The next Selectboard meetings are Monday, March 16th, and Monday, April 6th.

B. Deso wondered if it would be appropriate to move the meeting of April 6th to April 7th as he would be out of Town. A. Voegele asked B. Deso to request the schedule change to the new Selectboard at the first meeting after Town Meeting Day.

Chair's Report

B. Deso extended sincere "thanks" to A. Voegele for his time spent serving the community on the Selectboard. A. Voegele appreciated the thanks and explained his goal has always been to get younger people involved in the Town and he feels that goal has been met.

Other Business

None.

Adjournment

**MOTION: A. Voegele made a motion to adjourn the Selectboard meeting at 8:15 p.m.
Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,
AJ Johnson, Recording Secretary