

**Town of St. Albans  
Selectboard Meeting Minutes  
Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
5:30 p.m.  
Via Zoom Teleconferencing**

On Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 5:30 p.m., the Town of St. Albans Selectboard met via Zoom Teleconferencing and at Town Hall.

**Officials and staff in attendance:** Chair Brendan Deso, Jonathan Giroux, Town Manager Carrie Johnson, Town Clerk Anna Bourdon, Recording Secretary Jenn Gray, and Town Hall Relocation Project Manager Matt Young with Ascent Consulting.

**Officials on video conference:** Vice Chair Jessica Frost and Erin Creley.

Absent was Stan Dukas.

**Public:** No public allowed in Town Hall for the meeting due to pandemic containment rules.

The reason for the early start to the Selectboard meeting was to hold a kickoff meeting for the Town Hall Relocation project.

**Town Hall Relocation Kickoff Meeting**

**Determine & Elect Working Committee Members (2 From Selectboard)**

Matt Young explained to the Board how he works best with a working committee. He starts by using an online project manager tool called Smart Sheet. As documents and information are generated, he will post those items on the Smart Sheet for the Board's review. C. Johnson asked if the Board would prefer the working committee meet and then report back to the Board once a month? We should have no more than 2 members of the Selectboard on this committee, so we are not required to warn a meeting with a quorum. J. Giroux volunteered to participate on the committee. J. Frost has work conflicts. E. Creley can stand in from time to time, but also has time constraints. The Board agreed to ask Stan Dukas if he would like to be on the committee. Anna, Carrie, Jonathan, Matt, and possibly Stan will make up the Town Hall working committee.

**Review Ascent Town Hall Report dated October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

Mr. Young did a quick summary of the report he provided the Board on Town Hall options back in October. He stated that the Board needs to decide on one of the options provided in his report.

**Option 1** is to remain in the current Town Hall creating a three level work space and an addition for an elevator and additional restrooms. 9,510 sq. ft. This option gives us about 8-10 years in this location. The cost is **\$1,609,953**.

**Option 2** is an existing single level building located at 64 Gricebrook Road. 13,600 sq. ft. Costs to retrofit for a Town Hall is **\$2,848,260**. This option was dismissed.

Prime location of new building to be determined.

Options 3a, 3b, and 3c can be built on any property.

**Option 3a** – New 1 level, 10,000 sq. ft. building on Smith property. Cost is **\$2,636,333**.

**Option 3b** – New 1 level, 20,000 sq. ft. building with full basement on Smith property. Cost is **\$3,513,731**.

**Option 3c** – New 1 level, 13,000 sq. ft., building on a slab on Smith property.

B. Deso asked the Board if anyone was interested in Option 1, renovating Town Hall. J. Frost stated if there was a way to make the vault space bigger, staying at Town Hall would be a preferred option for her. She expressed again her concerns with being stuck with an older building, not knowing what we could do with it. Mr. Young stated that if this building is vacated, the Town could do a development with a partner and keep Town Hall as a tax investment. A private developer gets a 33.3% tax write off for working on historical buildings.

E. Creley had concerns with holding onto an older building. She was also concerned with the septic system at Town Hall. It could be very expensive to expand. Renovating the current Town Hall wouldn't really provide for more space for community activities.

J. Giroux asked if a mound system was included in the estimates. Mr. Young explained that with Option 1, septic is there. Option 3a and 3b include a municipal septic. Option 3c would need to tie in, could go straight across the street.

B. Deso would like to stay in the Bay. E. Creley stated that if it's more expensive to stay in the Bay, maybe voters would agree to move out of the Bay. Question is; is it worth staying in the Bay? B. Deso explained that we need a clear shot as to what we want in order for this to pass.

B. Deso asked Mr. Young how much a mound system would be. Mr. Young said \$65,000, that's how much it was for the new Department of Public Works garage. B. Deso stated with a drilled well, that's another \$10,000.

Mr. Young shared his screen with the Board explaining the Smart Sheet and that he had started the timeline for the project. The timeline he went over was in anticipation of a vote on the November 3<sup>rd</sup> election. He'd like to get the space needs analysis Request for Proposal out next week. He explained that as a Town, we've spent a lot of money on studies that he is using all that information from to move this forward. B. Deso suggested taking the information from the 2015 report and freshening up the numbers, costs for today, if the space needs of each department square footage has changed. The information in Mr. Young's report from October, 2019, is good information to use today. Mr. Young explained that it's good to go. Maybe add another \$300,000 or \$400,000.

B. Deso asked Mr. Young what his proposal was for engaging the public on this project. Mr. Young explained he put in 3 public forums in his timeline. The third public forum could be all web based in case people don't want to come into a room full of people. However, meeting restriction may be loosening up in June.

B. Deso suggested informing the public sooner rather than later and plan for a November vote. Get the information out there. A. Bourdon pointed out that due to the Coronavirus, there may be a second wave in the fall and voting may be all absentee ballots by then. E. Creley explained that with November being a Presidential election, there should be more voter turnout. J. Frost agreed and noted there are successful ways people are adapting to getting their information electronically. Mr. Young stated that a March vote would increase the cost of this pre-development work.

Mr. Young explained that there is a window of opportunity right now, the market is very competitive because bidders don't know what's going to happen in the near future. The Town should have something shovel ready. If we wait for the March vote, bidding won't happen until spring 2022. Costs will go up. E. Creley explained that we should aim for November, we have the timeline that will enable us to do this. B. Deso stated he's not committed to voting on this in November. B. Deso would like to get a Purchase and Sales agreement, sale contingent on voter approval if we agree to vote on this in November.

J. Frost asked about the existing septic. Mr. Young explained the existing septic is grandfathered in, but if you were to hire additional staff or have larger meetings, we would not conform to current code. We can't upgrade the existing system, there isn't enough land. Mr. Young continued saying that there are modular systems that costs million dollars and you have to get others to share in the costs.

J. Giroux asked what if we left the Town Manager's office or Town Clerk's office here at the current Town Hall and move other departments to another building. The Fire Department has talked about a satellite department. We could possibly move the Town Manager and Zoning offices to a site to share with the Fire Department.

B. Deso asked what the Board members' thoughts were on the various proposals:

J. Frost stated she would like to see Town Hall stay in bay. E. Creley stated she would like to build in new location in bay. J. Giroux stated he likes the two separate places with a couple of offices sharing with the Fire Department. B. Deso would like to stay in the current Town Hall somehow, but if the price tag doesn't make sense, he'd go with a new building in the bay area to accommodate all administrative departments.

The Board agreed to meet on Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup> at 5:45 p.m. to make a decision as to how we move forward.

Mr. Young will upload reports for everyone to read on his Smart Sheet online tool. J. Gray will send Mr. Young Selectboard email contact information.

## Regular Meeting – 6:30 p.m.

**Officials and staff in attendance:** Chair Brendan Deso, Jonathan Giroux, Town Manager Carrie Johnson, Town Clerk Anna Bourdon, and Recording Secretary Jenn Gray.

**Officials and staff on video conference:** Vice Chair Jessica Frost, Erin Creley, Director of Public Works Alan Mashtare, and Director of Administration Ned Connell.

**Public:** No public allowed in Town Hall for the meeting due to pandemic containment rules.

Chair B. Deso called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

## Public Hearing – Town Plan Update

C. Johnson explained that due to not meeting warning requirements, the Board is unable to hold the public hearing on the Town Plan update. A new hearing will be warned for Monday, June 15<sup>th</sup>.

## General Warrant

**MOTION: J. Giroux made a motion to approve the general warrant dated May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020 in the amount of \$66,055.95. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.**

## Industrial Park Warrant

**MOTION: J. Giroux made a motion to approve the Industrial Park warrant in the amount of \$749.81. 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 in the amount of \$8,606.50. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.**

## Payroll

**MOTION: J. Giroux made a motion to approve the payroll warrants dated May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020 in the amount of \$18,757.02 and May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 in the amount of \$20,271.69. Seconded by E. Creley. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.**

## Minutes

**MOTION: J. Giroux made a motion to approve the Selectboard meeting minutes from Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and the minutes from the joint meeting with the Planning Commission on Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.**

## Public Comment

None

## Department of Public Works – Plow Truck

C. Johnson explained to the Board that Director of Public Works Alan Mashtare reports that the bids for a new plow truck are higher than the \$140,000 that was approved by the voters on Town Meeting Day. The costs are around \$165,000. C. Johnson requested making up the difference in cost with funds from the general fund balance. She stated that we don't need to touch our reserves to make up the difference. The Board was in consensus.

## Town Manager's Report

### COVID-19 Update

C. Johnson explained that Town offices are open to the public by appointment only through this Friday. Selectboard continues to get COVID-19 updates weekly from C. Johnson. There will be another commodity pod distribution in Franklin County on May 28<sup>th</sup>. food event. Staffing has ramped up for Parks. We have not fully developed our sanitation plan for Parks bathrooms. The bathrooms are not open, but hopefully will be by Memorial Day weekend. Retail stores opened today at 25% capacity. The hospitality industry will open by this Friday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> under strict guidelines.

## Department of Public Works Truck Bids – Removal of Asset

Director of Public Works Alan Mashtare received 4 bids selling the 2011 Ford 550. A. Mashtare explained the engine went in it this winter and the truck has not been operational since. He will accept the high bid and release the truck.

## **Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Draft #2**

C. Johnson explained the difference in this draft from the previous draft was that the municipal pool was removed from the plan and funds are not being drawn out for it. B. Deso would like to invest more money in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), \$75,000 a year strictly out of the Local Option Tax (LOT) to support connectivity for bicycle and sidewalks. E. Creley explained based off the amount of sidewalks, we could build at least one a year. Most sidewalk projects have a large grant funding component, we should move the bike/pedestrian plan along, further expand sidewalks. Both J. Frost and E. Creley support adding funding from the LOT for sidewalks.

C. Johnson stated that our Local Option Tax revenues (LOT) are sufficient for the current planned expenditures in the CIP . If LOT revenues drop a lot, we'd have to reevaluate.

E. Creley recommended the Selectboard approve this copy of the CIP now. J. Frost was all for sidewalks and asked if we had enough money to do the sidewalks on Congress Street? Ned Connell explained Congress Street was in the \$100,000 range. E. Creley stated grants and LOT funds could pay for that.

B. Deso suggested asking City of St. Albans Manager Dominic Cloud how much to do the sidewalks on Congress Street. It was included in the pool price.

J. Giroux asked if the DPW equipment isn't in the CIP, how are we paying for them? C. Johnson explained that the CIP summarizes planned DPW and Fire Department equipment purchases from the general fund and lays out planned expenditures being paid for from LOT funds.

**MOTION: J. Frost made a motion to approve the Capital Improvement Program as presented. Seconded by E. Creley. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.**

## **Draft Criteria for Honor Roll Wall Recognition**

**MOTION: E. Creley made a motion to approve the Honor Wall Policy. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.**

## **Public Utility Commission – SolarSense VT XXV, LLC 45-Day Notice**

Informational only. No action required.

## **Schedule – All meetings will be via Zoom**

The next regular Selectboard meetings are Monday, June 1<sup>st</sup> and Monday, June 15<sup>th</sup>. Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup> at 5:45 p.m. the Board agreed to have a meeting to discuss the Town Hall Relocation project and to make a decision to move forward. The Board agreed to stick with Zoom meetings for the June 1<sup>st</sup> meeting.

## **Chair's Report**

B. Deso congratulated Chief Gary Taylor on his upcoming retirement at the end of the year. If there is a sendoff for the Chief, the Town would like to participate.

B. Deso asked if we can issue an RFP to do the electrical on the Stone House? A. Mashtare explained the current work being done. In the next 2-3 weeks the doors will be done at the Stone House. The copper has been added to the copula. A. Mashtare went on to say that the interior electrical will be a little easier to work with than exterior electrical. A. Mashtare and C. Johnson must review the electrical scope of work before issuing an RFP

## **Other Business**

None.

## **Adjournment**

**MOTION: J. Giroux made a motion to adjourn the Selectboard meeting at 7:15 p.m. Seconded by E. Creley. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Jenn Gray, Recording Secretary