

**MINUTES
TOWN OF ST. ALBANS
SELECTMEN MEETING
MONDAY, AUGUST 10, 2020**

6:00 P.M.

Present: Hiram Weymouth, Chairman
Todd Brown, Vice Chairman
Peter Denbow, Selectman
Richard Fisher, Town Manager
Brady Snowman, Road Commissioner

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance was Recited

Minutes for Selectmen's Meeting for July 27, 2020

Motion by Todd Brown to approve the minutes of the Selectmen's meeting held on Monday, July 27, 2020. Seconded by Peter Denbow Vote:3-0

New Business

2020 Tax Commitment

Manager Fisher provided the Selectmen with the Tax Rate Calculation Sheet and proposed no change in the mill rate for 2020 with a \$40,000 overlay as a hedge against potential reduced earnings due to the economic uncertainty caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Manager Fisher also pointed out that he and the Assessor agreed to reduce the estimated State Revenue Sharing number by 40%, due to reduced revenues expected from the State due to the pandemic. There was a short discussion on the subject of taxation. *Motion by Peter Denbow to keep the millage rate at 16.75 for the 2020 fiscal year taxes. Seconded by Todd Brown. Vote : 3-0*

Treasurers Report

Treasurer's Report was provided to the Selectmen. Manager Fisher stated that the General Fund 5 month CD matured in July and was redeposited back into the General Fund and the interest earned was also deposited into the General Fund under the General Fund Interest line item. The two Public Works equipment CD's were allowed to mature and was transferred into the Public Works Equipment Reserve Account to be used to purchase the new truck approved by the Selectmen in July. The Report Summary is attached.

Request to Purchase Donated Framed Photograph

Manager Fisher received an offer from Mr. Patten of Palmyra Road to purchase a framed photograph of St. Albans that was recently donated to the town. The autumn scene appears to be taken from near Mr. Patten's driveway. He offered the town \$100.00 for the photograph. After a short discussion, the Selectmen decided by consensus that a donated item should be offered to the Historical Society before consideration of an offer to purchase. Manager Fisher was instructed to decline his offer.

Sauntering Meadows Road -Road Name Request

There was a short discussion on this matter. *Motion by Peter Denbow to approve the road name "Sauntering Meadows Road, a private road that will intersect with Webb Ridge Road. Seconded by Todd Brown. Vote: 3-0*

Central Maine Power Pole Permit Request

There was a short discussion on this matter. Three poles are proposed along the Town's Right of Way on Nye's Corner Road. Road Commissioner Snowman had no objection to the proposal as it does not interfere with the road. *Motion by Todd Brown, seconded by Peter Denbow to approve Central Maine Power's request. Vote: 3-0*

Domestic Partner Addition to Health Insurance

Manager Fisher explained: This item landed on the his desk without any indication who provided it- but it is a timely due to the fact two of the town employees are domestic partners. Health insurance will be more costly for these two employees. There was a healthy discussion on pros and cons of adding this to the policy. Ultimately, the governing body must decide whether to add this to the benefits package. This means placing the question on the Town Warrant for next year. *Motion by Todd Brown and seconded by Hiram Weymouth to table this until a later date.*

Perpetual Care Discussion

Manager Fisher reported that owners of certain number of cemetery plots have raised questions about the town records, the location of their deeds, and the yearly costs of perpetual care and how they are applied. In discussion with staff, additional questions were raised on the invoicing, the history, past record-keeping, and how the funds are applied in the budget. Manager Fisher stated he emailed the former Town Manager and gathered more facts about the history and the use of perpetual funds and the location of deeds.

Manager Fisher stated he feels the office does not have the latest information that was prepared a few years ago by a consultant. Records are not consistent and not always accurate, this resulted last year in the staff providing the wrong plot location to a grieving family, the deceased buried in the wrong location and having to be moved. While this matter was resolved, the family asked about perpetual care and what it provides to the individual plot owner.

The office researched the controlling Ordinance and found that it had been revised in 2014 and at that time the fees were not changed by Ordinance, rather the increase is referenced in the Cemetery Committee's meeting minutes indicating the Committee raised the rate.

Hiram Weymouth stated that the money issues fall under the Board of Selectmen's purview and the perpetual care and plot locations are a matter for the Cemetery Committee to review and advise on. The Selectmen suggested the Manager contact the consultant, Plisga and Day Surveyors for the latest updated information, contact Michael Weirs concerning the surveys, discuss the other matters with the Cemetery Committee and bring back some numbers for the Board to review on Perpetual Care costs.

Amanda Maddocks Violation

Manager Fisher reported that Amanda Maddocks has not yet fully complied with the agreement she signed and he provided a DRAFT letter that he felt may be too harsh, is not pleasant to read but is factual. Manager Fisher advised the Board the roof has been collapsed onto the frame and has not been removed. After much discussion all were agreed that the frame was not an issue and could be used for storage and didn't have to be removed, to inform Amanda Maddocks that she was not to burn any shingles in the removal of the roof.

Motion by Peter Denbow to direct the Assessor to separate the trailer from the house on the property, to direct Manager Fisher to notify Amanda Maddocks that she has an additional 30 days to remove the roof and that the Board is moving forward now to get her an adjusted tax amount towed on the house, and for the Manager to bring back to the Board the amount to be abated on the trailer. Seconded by Todd Brown . Vote:3-0

Covid-19 Awareness Grant

Manager Fisher reported that the town received a grant award for \$7,300 for Covid-Awareness. While this could be good, the restrictions and reporting requirements are off the charts and it may not be something our community would benefit from. He is considering withdrawing from the program unless the Board objects.

Fire Department – Proposed Hourly Wage Reduction

The discussion began focused on the line item for firefighters pay that most agreed was due to a combination of a large increase in firefighters this year, a larger number of call-outs for emergencies, and a healthy turn-out from the men- as well as the increase in salary approved by the citizens in March of 2020.

Fire Committee member Jamie Cooper questioned whether it matters about one line item as long as the budget approved by the citizens, which is a lump sum amount for the Department does not go over budget. Manager Fisher and Brady Snowman both agreed they had the same discussion earlier in the week and agreed with Mr. Cooper. The Selectmen are also of similar opinion that this is a standard practice and acceptable. While there was a motion made by Todd Brown to lower the hourly rate to minimum wage, seconded by Peter Denbow, no vote was taken and the motion did not carry.

Committee Reports

Road Commissioner

Brady Snowman reported on the condition of the trucks and suggested the poor condition of the 1-ton truck will force the town to replace it sooner than later. He is unsure whether it will survive the winter but is hopeful. Hiram Weymouth recommended that the Road Commissioner prepare a five year plan. Mr. Snowman discussed an earlier conversation the manager in which they considered whether to purchase a regular pick-up truck which would be less expensive but could be used for more uses. Peter Denbow stated that he would prefer to see a heavier truck that could be used to plow the parking lot and some roads. No action was taken or considered at this time.

There was a short discussion on road grading, dust, and the recent drought. Mr. Snowman stated that he will time his grading with the weather, but he discussed grading in the summer with former Road Commissioner Ronnie Finson and that Ronnie would not grade in the summer due to the amount of dust that results from grading.

Fire Department

Assistant Chief Dennis Smith reported that the contracted work has been completed on the building, they have received a lot of compliments, but more work has to be done on the cinderblock and a few holes in the rear of the building. There were a few calls since the last meeting, including one in Hartland on Saturday night when someone set a pile of pallets on fire. Mr. Smith stated the Fire Department has changed for the better this past year and he is very pleased with their progress.

Committee Reports

Manager Fisher reported the Lake Committee will meet this coming week. There was a short discussion on the Town Clerk's request to be the gatekeeper for the lake.

Selectmen Report

Chairman Weymouth updated the Board on the status of the waste processing plant in Hampden. They are in receivership and there are 4 companies reportedly interested in operating the facility. The amount of debt the facility owes will be difficult to overcome.

Manager Report

Manager Fisher handed out the email exchanges between Andrew Bowden as per Mr. Bowden's request. Manager Fisher met with Mr. Bowden concerning his request for the town to regulate, restrict, or prohibit blasting and Manager Fisher explained he was very clear with Mr. Bowden that there is very little the town can do due to State regulations taking precedent. A noise ordinance is subjective and if based upon sound engineering, requires expensive gear, training, and enforcement is very difficult, and zoning would still allow it as a pre-existing non-confirming use. Manager Fisher stated he is not qualified to write a blasting or sound ordinance and does not see a local remedy for Mr. Bowden. Hiram Weymouth suggested the Manager talk with the State inspector.

The MRC has their annual election. Manager Fisher asked if the Selectmen wanted to vote on the persons listed. Also Manager Fisher placed Char-Lin Williams in nomination for MMA Rookie of the Year.

Respectfully Submitted, Richard Fisher

Hiram Weymouth, Chairman

Todd Brown, Vice-Chairman

Peter Denbow, Selectman