

**MINUTES
TOWN OF ST. ALBANS
SELECTMEN MEETING
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2019**

6:00 P.M.

Present: Todd Brown, Vice Chairman
Peter Denbow
Richard Fisher, Town Manager

Absent: Hiram Weymouth, Chairman

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance was Recited

Minutes for Selectmen's Joint Meeting with Budget Committee on Tuesday, November 11, 2019

Motion by Todd Brown to approve the minutes of the Selectmen's Joint Meeting meeting held on Tuesday, November 11, 2019. Seconded by Peter Denbow Vote:2-0

Public Forum – No response

New Business

- a. Assessor Proposal for Services for 2020

Peter Denbow asked Manager Fisher asked if he had spoken to the Assessor about his fees. Manager Fisher directed the Selectmen to the Other Services of the proposed budget which identifies his current rate and previous rate increases. Manager notes that over the two year period of 2019 and 2020 the Assessor has requested a 10% increase for his services. Prior to that in 2018 he requested a 1% increase but did not receive the increase at that time. Manager Fisher noted that his quarterly review that has begun again this year will cost \$11,000 for 2019. Manager Fisher was asked when was the last time this service was put out for bid. He replied that he would have to research that in order to provide an accurate answer.

Peter Denbow asked about the current quarterly review. Manager Fisher stated this quarter was reviewed and he recently received the results and will provide them at the next meeting. He recalled from memory that there was an increase in valuation of approximately \$248, 000 which translates to \$4,000 in additional tax revenue.

Manager Fisher also advised the Board that he did receive a complaint from a citizen about the Assessor's employees not having proper identification, only some property information and the homeowner was not pleased over this. Manager Fisher mentioned this to the Assessor's supervisor who seemed unconcerned. Manager Fisher suggested that the Board of Selectmen might want to impress upon our Assessor the need for photo ID for his employees.

Peter Denbow made a motion to table the Assessor's proposal until Hiram Weymouth has returned at the next meeting. Seconded by Todd Brown Vote 2-0

Old Business

Roundy Paving

Manager Fisher updated the Selectmen that he placed a warrant for the final payment for the paving project, less \$1508.00 (24.3 tons of material) that they could not document was used on the project. Dennis Smith asked what total cost amount to. Peter Denbow stated that the cost was less than the \$900,000 dollars that the citizens approved for the project. Manager Fisher stated that he would have to add up the culvert work and engineering to provide an answer but the number will fall somewhere in the \$750,000 range.

Road Commissioner Items

Manager Fisher advised the Board that our Road Commissioner had been working for several hours already salting and sanding the roadways and was now home resting.

Selectmen Items

Peter Denbow requested the Manager schedule a Fire Committee meeting as soon as possible.

Peter Denbow attended the ICC meeting. There was a discussion on finding a plowing service for the parking lot. There was a heating issue that required resolution and subsequently they had to iron out who to call in an emergency. There is a country music festival scheduled for next August and there was a request to use the facilities 24/7 and the answer was no, but they would consider renting porta johns for the vendors for the off-hours. They are excited about the event and expect it to draw a lot of people.

Todd Brown stated that he attended the First Park meeting. They discussed selling and leasing lots. Green Maine was at the meeting looking for sponsorships. The person in charge was a former newscaster who is now working with Green Maine- everything to do with solar energy- and First Park agreed to provide some financial support.

Manager's Items

- Manager Fisher stated that he attended the MMSWA meeting and they reviewed the budget. There is a proposed 10% increase in costs to St. Albans. Manager Fisher reported that MMSWA is losing money on recyclables- costs are double the revenues in that area. Peter Denbow asked about which items are not selling and Manager Fisher stated it appears it is mostly plastics. They may have to make hard decisions soon about this service and that would include employee layoffs.

Manager Fisher provided a memorandum on foreclosures (see attached).

1. Paul Shepherd and Christopher Anthony separately own properties that we foreclosed upon and both parties have offered to pay a large portion of the amount owed and 4 monthly payments so that all taxes are paid in full by April of 2020. Mr Anthony has already submitted a check equal to 1-1/2 years of taxes owed, less interest.

Peter Denbow asked how much Mr. Anthony paid. Manager Fisher stated Mr. Anthony submitted a check in the amount of eight hundred dollars (\$800.00). Selectman Denbow asked if interest would be added. Manager Fisher replied the numbers before the Board do not include the interest to date but that will be added to the amount they owe and must also be paid in full.. Peter Denbow asked if the second gentleman (Shepherd) has paid anything or has he just promised to pay by December 4th. Manager Fisher confirmed that was the arrangement discussed by telephone and no payment has been received.

Peter Denbow made a motion to accept a minimum payment of \$450.00 from Paul Shepherd with payments to be arranged on the remaining amount owed once we are in receipt of the original minimum amount by the end of the day on December 4th.

Todd Brown asked for clarification. He asked if the Board was going to require the remaining amount plus interest to be paid within thirty (30) days of the original payment. Peter Denbow replied that he would prefer we wait and see what or if Mr. Shepherd pays by December 4th. Manager Fisher stated he felt Mr. Shepherd could be persuaded to pay in full and was already considering full payment as an option.

Todd Brown seconded the motion. A short discussion followed. Vote 2-0

2. Mr. Fisher explained the following: The third foreclosure that requires consideration is a trailer that was moved from one property to another and is in serious disrepair and potentially uninhabitable. Manager Fisher explained that the town has foreclosed on the property and the trailer- In 2018, after the mobile home was moved to her father's property the Assessor increased the property valuation to include the mobile home. The office staff did not have knowledge that the mobile home had been added to the property when we sent foreclosure notices. Upon our request, the Town Assessor has agreed to separate the mobile home from the property.

We will then make adjustments necessary to move foreclosure on the trailer but not the property. Peter Denbow asked for the amount of taxes owed on the trailer as the Selectmen may want to consider waiving the tax as uncollected and handing the matter of the uninhabitable structure over to the code enforcement officer. Mr. Fisher replied that the property is only one year behind on taxes while the trailer is 3 years behind on taxes and the subject of foreclosure.

3. Manager Fisher brought to the Selectmen Road Commissioner Brady Snowman's request for a web booster antennae on the Town Garage. The cost of the web booster \$776.00. A staff member suggested that it should benefit all employees and not one employee. However, the Road Commissioner feels he really needs it to do his job better. Manager Fisher mentioned the budget being stretched too thin to be able to handle this cost and unless the Board of Selectmen agreed to the expenditure, Manager Fisher would not approve the purchase due to budget and other considerations. However, since the Road Commissioner wasn't present, Manager Fisher wanted to bring this to the Board's attention, but not to request a decision until the Road Commissioner was present.

Peter Denbow stated he recommended the antennae to the Road Commissioner and that it is only for the phone. Selectman Denbow pointed out we could save \$250.00 by installing it ourselves. There was a short discussion on cell service reception.

4. Manager Fisher stated that we now own 15 Water Street. The deed has been recorded. He now has to locate two more companies for asbestos removal estimates.
5. Peter Denbow asked about the school property sale. Manager Fisher explained that the purchasers were still doing their due diligence on confirming property boundaries but he expected the sale to close soon. Manager Fisher also explained that he wrote to Sue Bowman about moving the Zumba class to the old school facility due to a noise concern expressed by staff if it were held in the town hall. Manager Fisher subsequently met with Susan Bowman and she suggested involving the County's Economic Development Director in determining potential uses for the building that would benefit the community. Manager Fisher believed this was a positive development and if the Selectmen did not object, he would pursue a meeting with Skowhegan County Economic representatives.

Executive Session – Salaries

Manager Fisher stated he can wait until the next meeting to discuss salaries.

Todd Brown made a motion to table until the next meeting when Hiram returns. Seconded by Peter Denbow. Vote: 2-0

Budget Discussion

Vice Chair James Thorne joined the table discussion at this time.

Manager Fisher provided his revenue study. He explained the purpose of his study was to go back 10-12 years on revenues in order to gain a wider view and a better understanding of where the budgets for the School and County calendar year could fall within so that our fiscal year budget can be more accurately determined.

Manager Fisher directed the Selectmen to the Taxes Section of the study. He provided the following information: According to the study which was based upon the Audited Financial statements for the Town of St. Albans, 2008-2018 and our internal accounting system for 2019, the town's property tax revenues increased 22% since 2008 or 1.9% per year. Skowhegan County's tax revenues from St. Albans taxes increased 9.8% over 12 years or 0.8% per year. In contrast to that, RSU-10 tax revenues from St. Albans increased 91.2% or 7.6% per year. The study also highlights revenues from revenue sharing, Excise Taxes. Etc and provides a revenue budget number of the following:

2020 Revenues - Preliminary Budget	
PROPERTY TAXES	2,798,449.64
MOTOR VEHICLE EXCISE TAXES	389,593.00
HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION	125,000.00
STATE REVENUE SHARING	108,365.00
TREE GROWTH	11,848.27
VETERANS REIMBURSEMENT	1,420.00
UNRESTRICTED INVESTMENT EARNINGS	995.00
MISCELLANEOUS REVENUES	42,856.00
UNREALIZED GAIN/LOSS ON INVESTMENTS	8,400.00
OTHER STATE REVENUE	33,706.00
INTEREST ON TAXES AND LIENS	15,971.50
	3,536,604.41

Based upon his study and the trends shown in the study, Manager Fisher determined that the following chart represented the amount of tax revenue to be expected based upon past projections”

Revenue Budget for 2020

- **2020 Revenues (Proposed)**
- 2,798,449.64 Real Estate Taxes
- -1,780,803.00 school taxes
- -\$407,104.74 county taxes
- **\$610,541.90** Remainder for Town Budgeting
- **2020 Working Budget**
- \$3,536,604.41 Total Revenues
- -\$1,780,803.00 School Expense
- -\$407,104.74 County Expense
- **\$1,348,696.67** Revenues for Budgeting Expenses

Then Manager Fisher turned his attention to the charts he has prepared for the public meeting on revenues and expenses. After a short discussion on charts, Manager Fisher returned to the estimates for revenues and reviewed each line item in the above breakdown.

Manager Fisher asked if there were any questions and there were none. Manager Fisher discussed his trending analysis for each line item in expenses.

James Thorne stated that the smaller line items, the trending is not that important, it is more the big-ticket items that are important to identify.

Peter Denbow would like the charts at the town meeting on a screen or on whiteboards for the citizens to review.

There was a general discussion on the manager's desire to attend the County and School District budget and the school district's change of plans for the Nokomis school.

Treasurer's Warrants

Motion by Peter Denbow, seconded by Todd Brown to approve the Treasurer's warrants. Vote 2-0

Adjournment

Motion by Peter Denbow, seconded by Todd Brown to adjourn the meeting. Vote 2-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Richard D. Fisher
Manager
Town of St. Albans

Minutes approved and signed at the Regular Selectmen's Meeting Monday, December 9, 2019.

Hiram Weymouth, Chairman

Todd Brown, Vice-Chairman

Peter Denbow, Selectman