

**TOWN OF ST. ALBANS
SELECTMEN'S MEETING
JOINT SESSION WITH BUDGET COMMITTEE
MONDAY NOVEMBER 9, 2020**

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

James O'Neil, Budget Committee Chairman
James Thorpe, Vice Chair, Budget Committee
Joyce Weymouth, Budget Committee
Seth Snowman, Budget Committee

Call to Order – Flag Salute

1. Review and Approve Minutes from October 13, 2020 and October 26, 2020
Motion by Todd Brown, Seconded by Peter Denbow to approve the minutes of October 13, 2020. All in Favor. Motion by Todd Brown, seconded by Peter Denbow to approve the minutes of October 26, 2020. All in Favor.
2. Planning Board Letter of Interest – Samantha Fencer
Samantha Fencer was present for the meeting and expressed her interest in being appointed to the Planning Board. *Motion by Hiram Weymouth, seconded by Todd Brown to appoint Samantha Fencer to the Planning Board to complete the term of James Burns. All in Favor.*
3. Joint Budget Committee/Selectmen Discussion – Manager Fisher opened the discussion and provided preliminary Administration budget figures. He noted that Health Insurance costs will remain at the 2020 rate, that the TRIO software costs are down slightly for 2021, that letters have gone out to non-profits, he has a meeting with the Fire Chief the next day to review the Fire Dept. budget and the potential impact from the large increase in fire department personnel.

Manager Fisher stated he was proposing interior improvements in the employee kitchen, currently employees use a bathroom vanity sink to wash dishes and the Janitors have no deep tub sink to clean mops, etc. He also wants to replace the flooring in the hallway where duct-tape covers the numerous holes in the floor and replace the pull-string light in the kitchen with a wall switch. These are not expensive repairs but are necessary in order to have a safer and more sanitary work environment.

Manager Fisher then spoke about where he saw the town's priorities: the handicapped ramp has structural deficiencies and will need to be either repaired or replaced. The most dangerous sections were repaired by contractor Dean Sides prior to the election, but much more work needs to be done.

Manager Fisher stated that Elections line items were much higher than his budget estimates. He expects trash removal to increase, MMA may increase, MMSWA is difficult to determine due to the issues with MRC currently, but Chairman Weymouth is leading that and will keep us updated.

Manager Fisher then referred to another document he had provided, a Preliminary 5-year Plan for Vehicle Replacement and Upgrades. He explained that the town road department vehicles have reached point where they have little value, have multiple breakdowns, and repairs do not guarantee reliability. The Five-Year Plan would replace 4 trucks in 5 years. The first truck has been ordered and will be delivered by 2021. Road Commissioner Snowman confirmed that the truck will be available by April of 2021, best case scenario.

Manager Fisher was asked about the cost of the first replacement truck. He responded that the truck cost is now estimated at \$156,00.00 complete with body and plow. There is \$81,0000 in the reserve with an additional \$65,000 to be transferred into that account as per citizen approval last March, leaving a shortfall of \$10,000. This will be addressed in the 2021 budget since full payment will not be due until 2021.

Mr. Fisher stated the next truck to be replaced is the 1-ton truck which has broken down repeatedly in 2020. The truck has left our road employees stranded five or six times and Manager Fisher had to pick them up in his car one of those times. There are safety issues with the truck and each repair results in no greater reliability. That size truck is a primary workhorse in every season except winter. It is used for tree and branch removal, for trash collection, and many other uses and is essential to our road operations, according to Manager Fisher.

Manager Fisher stated that it is an unfortunate reality that the road department vehicles have all reached a point at nearly the same time where repairs no longer guarantee reliability. Manager Fisher used a storm from 2019 as an example of unreliability not being an option. He stated that in the first storm, the only truck that did not break down and was not taken out of service was the L8000, the most recently purchased used truck. Road Commissioner Snowman confirmed this had happened.

Manager Fisher concluded his remarks with the meeting dates to be scheduled, requesting feedback from the Budget Committee and the Selectmen.

Budget Chairman O'Neil suggested that there should be enough money in the unassigned fund to buy all the trucks at once. Manager Fisher explained that the money may be there at the year's end but that there is a pinch in June through August where there isn't much tax revenue, and not enough operational revenue to cover expenses, the town uses a portion of those unclassified funds to pay the bills, rather than take out a tax anticipation note. We essentially borrow from our unassigned funds and then pay it back when the taxes are paid in September. Mr. Fisher said that this practice has been the standard operating procedure for a number of years. At the end of our fiscal year we meet our target numbers, he explained.

Mr. O'Neil suggested taking out a tax anticipation note and placing the unassigned funds into a Reserve Account. Manager Fisher agreed that a Capital Reserve Plan is a great idea for the town's future.

Road Commissioner Snowman noted that the budget includes \$40,000 to pave the Town Hall parking lot and that he agreed that is a ball park estimate. Manager Fisher expressed his desire to have the parking lot planned before paved and someone mentioned lighting is important. It was agreed that lighting should be a part of the plan.

As far as other big ticket items, Manager Fisher said the Fire Station requires some work, the Fire Department along with the Fire Committee are reviewing potential locations for the new fire hall location. With over \$400,000 in reserve for the fire hall, Mr Fisher noted that USDA would be interested in a loan to be paid back as a mortgage over 30 years as well as a possible grant that is between 40 and 50 thousand dollars. Additionally, our Fire Chief met with a grant specialist and there could be other grant monies available to us. While we will recommend more funding for the hall he won't be recommending the numbers that have been approved before., Manger Fisher said.

Mr. Fisher said that other big ticket item is the paving of Pond Road, which is .84 miles long with an estimate of \$100,000 to completion, of which we will use over 90 thousand dollars from the MaineDot reserve monies we receive each year. The idea is to use reserves and not to borrow additional monies to finish projects planned years ago.

Road Commissioner Snowman spoke on the issue of the trucks. The trucks have very little value, and we need to run them for as long as we can but at the same time have the funding available when a truck no longer runs or needs major repairs. The point of the plan is to use \$85,000 per year for trucks but to keep \$25,000 set aside for an emergency should a truck require immediate replacement. Mr. Snowman stated that the amount of repairs on the grader were substantial enough that replacement may not be needed in the near future.

Manager Fisher reminded the group that this is only one department and that the fire department has needs as well with their increase in manpower.

At this point the joint meeting concluded and the regular meeting continued.

4. Supplemental Tax Bill Tori Gifford not assessed or billed for FY2019 requesting approval *Motion by Peter Denbow, seconded by Todd Brown to assess a supplemental tax bill to Tori Gifford, for Map 18, Lot 22-1-ON in the amount of \$100.50. All in favor.*
5. Request for decision on with vendor to use for steel body and plow attachment for the new plow truck. Need to set up service order before truck delivery

Road Commissioner Snowman provided details on two quotes from HP Fairfield and Viking Cives (USA). There was a long discussion on the difference between the two quotes. Mr. Snowman recommended HP Fairfield despite their higher cost due to their closer proximity to the town, their bid being closer to his specifications, and their reputation for service. HP Fairfield quote is \$48,444 with the \$5,799 option for a total of \$54,243 and Viking Cives quote is \$47,595. All three Selectmen expressed concerns over the difference in costs, and also their concern over the distance to Viking having a detrimental impact on operations at a greater cost to the town, also concerns about the plow system for Viking.

Motion by Peter Denbow, seconded by Todd Brown to approve HP Fairfield for steel dump body, fully hydraulic wing system, Everest Steel Wing, including the option for the fully reversible 11" Trip Edge Plow for a total cost of \$54,243. All in Favor.

6. Reports

Road Commissioner Report

Commissioner Snowman reported that they are ready for the winter weather and the previous week they were grading roads. Peter Denbow asked how the grader is running and Mr. Snowman replied it is running very good now.

Fire Department Report

Manager Fisher reported the firefighters are in training at the elementary School. Special thanks to the Bowmans for providing the space free of charge

Committee Reports

None

Selectmen Report

none

Manager Report

The traffic light has been inspected and the wiring and the box will need to be replaced, That work should begin within the next week or two. Chairman Weymouth asked about the cost of full replacement, Manager Fisher replied that would require engineered plans to MAINEDOT standards, with ballpark estimates of \$7000-15,000. But with each small repair we bring the existing light closer to standards.

As Tax Collector, Manager Fisher reminded the Selectmen that foreclosure will be in November 17, 2020 and there are properties that will be tax acquired if not paid by that date. For 2018 taxes there are 11 properties that haven't yet paid. AS for personal property form 2018, we are owed from one property owner. For 2019, there are 66 outstanding accounts owing \$73, 7779.00. For 2020, there are 363 outstanding accounts for a total owed \$353,718.00.

Manager Fisher announced the open positions for 2021

Treasurers Report is attached. Manager Fisher reported the following as Treasurer:

As of 10/31/2020 General Ledger Balance \$1,743,699.28

As of 10/31/2019 General Ledger Balance \$1,576,221.49

This represents a positive fund balance difference of \$167,477.79

As of 10/31/2020 Capital Reserve Funds balance \$590,679.79

As of 10/31/2019 Capital Reserve Funds balance \$432,410.22

This represents a fund balance increase of \$158,269.57

As of 10/31/2020 our Trust Funds Balance is \$251,951.33

As of 10/31/2019 our Trust Funds Balance \$247,303.68

This represents a fund balance increase of \$4,647.65

As of 10/31/2020 our total operational expense is at 81.25% of budget

As of 10/31/2019 our total operational expense was at 86.89% of budget

Lastly, Manager Fisher brought the Board up to speed on the Code officer's decision to hold up permits based upon the electrical approval for CMP. This is when applicants are proposing to use a small camper as a permanent residence. Manager Fisher questioned whether the town assume liability for this type of decision. The Selectmen directed Manager Fisher to contact legal services at MMA to get a written opinion.

Having no further business, the Board of Selectmen adjourned the meeting at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Richard Fisher
Manager

Hiram Weymouth, Chair

Todd Brown, Vice Chair

Peter Denbow, Selectman

Date: December 14,2020