

**Board of Selectmen  
Town of St. Albans  
Meeting Minutes  
December 14, 2020**

Present: Hiram Weymouth, Chairman  
Todd Brown, Vice- Chairman  
Peter Denbow, Selectman  
Richard Fisher, Manager  
Gregory Crump, Town Clerk  
Brady Snowman, Road Commissioner  
Jamie Cooper, Fire Committee  
Jamie Crocker, Assistant Fire Chief  
Joyce Weymouth, Budget Committee

At 6:00 p.m. Chairman Hiram Weymouth called the meeting to order.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

*At 6:05 PM Vice-Chairman Todd Brown made a motion to go into executive session pursuant to MRSA 405 6 A for personnel matters. Seconded by Selectman Peter Denbow. All in Favor.*

*At 6:17 Pm. Selectman Peter Denbow made motion to end the executive session and return to the public meeting, seconded by Vice Chairman Todd Brown. All in Favor.*

1. Review and Approve the Minutes from November 9, 2020 and November 30, 2020.  
*Selectman Denbow made a motion to approve the minutes for November 9, 2020 and November 11, 2020. Seconded by Chairman Hiram Weymouth. All in Favor*

2. Fire Chief

Manager Fisher read the Resignation Letter from Fire Chief Timothy Kuespert's resignation letter. Jamie Cooper was recognized from the Chair and requested the Board consider Jamie Crocker for the position due to his years of service as Deputy Fire Chief to our community.

After discussion, the Board requested that the Manager file an advertisement with the Rolling Thunder for a New Fire Chief. The resignation Letter is attached to the minutes.

3. Tax Acquired Properties

Manager Fisher provided information on three properties that have been Tax Acquired:

1. Taft Family Maine Trust C/O Dennis Leigh, 21 Pine Grove Dr. Map/Lot 026-039 1.13ac
2. Towle, Leon & Michaud Towle 40 Orchard Dr. 0.43 acres Map/Lot 025-032
3. Morse, Nicole Oldham Rd Map 26-19 10 acres

Concerning the first two properties, there discussion on past precedent as approved by the citizens in the Town Warrant where the Selectmen traditionally offer to return the properties to the owners, provided the owners pay the full amount.

Concerning the third property, Nicole Morse was present and requested the property be returned to her, that she had erred in not paying timely but promised to pay in full by December 31, 2020.

*Chairman Weymouth made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to send a letter to the owners of the first two properties that they have sixty (60) days from the date of the letter to pay all their taxes owed. If they agree and comply, their properties will be returned to them. Seconded by Peter Denbow. All in Favor.*

*Selectman Peter Denbow made a motion to accept Nicole Morse's offer to pay her taxes in full by December 31, 2020. Upon receipt of full payment, the Selectmen will return her property to her. Seconded by Chairman Weymouth. All in favor.*

4. Quit Claim Deeds

The Board of Selectmen signed the Quit Claim Deeds. No motion required.

5. Assessor's Contract

After short discussion there was a consensus that the Town will seek estimates for this service for the 2022 fiscal year.

Selectman Peter Denbow made a motion to contract with RJD Appraisal, represented by Robert Duplisea Jr., Vice President to perform assessments for the Town of St. Albans, as per contract. Seconded by Chairman Weymouth. All in Favor.

6. 2021 Office Fee Schedule

There was a short discussion focusing on the addition of a new charge "Commercial Tax Information Requests \$2.00. Manager Fisher explained that the office receives property card requests from Realtors, on a daily basis, usually with incomplete information but always with a need to receive the information without delay. It takes an average of 15-30 minutes per request.

*Selectman Peter Denbow made a motion to approve the 2021 Office Fee Schedule. Seconded by Chairman Weymouth. All in favor.*

7. Request Office to be Closed on December 24, 2020 instead of at 1 pm.

*Motion by Selectman Peter Denbow to close the office on December 24, 2020. Seconded by Chairman Weymouth. All in Favor*

## 8. Minimum Road Standards

Manager Fisher discussed with the Board his conversations and emails with the Property Owners Association who won 3 miles of private road and would like the town to take the road over, but appears to want to set conditions on its maintenance and improvements.

The Board of Selectman were in consensus that there can be no conditions and directed the Manager to find Road standards, guides, and to check our own files. Selectman Denbow suggested reviewing files on Stage Road improvements.

### Old Business

#### Fire Department Billing Discussion - Palmyra

There was a lengthy discussion on this matter. According to Manager Fisher, Palmyra would like to negotiate for a flat fee per year for our services. Manager Fisher and Town Clerk Gregory Crump, who researched the past eleven years of our billing records, both confirmed that Palmyra was not billed in multiple years, that the average billing was approximately \$6,000 per year but there were some years where the billing costs exceeded \$9,000. According to Town Clerk Crump the total amount not billed to Palmyra the past eleven years exceeds Thirty-two thousand dollars (\$32,000).

Manager Fisher emphasized that this was not mutual aid, that we provide fire service to Palmyra per agreement, and their refusal to pay our invoices in full is troublesome, a contract violation and simply not acceptable. According to Manager Fisher, Palmyra owed the Town of St. Albans, \$7,832.00 for services rendered this year. Manager Fisher informed Priscilla at Palmyra that we could not pay our firefighters. Priscilla agreed to make a partial payment. Manager Fisher met her at the Palmyra Town Office and collected a check in the amount of \$3,000. Their outstanding balance is \$4,832.00.

Manager Fisher stated that in two phone calls and at his recent visit to Palmyra, the same argument is made- they don't want to pay our firefighters to stand around at a fire call if they're not needed. My response each time is the same- we have to treat every call as potentially serious emergency and cannot limit how many firefighters respond.

Manager Fisher recommended a yearly Flat Fee of \$10,000. He stated that Palmyra wanted to have a meeting with all selectmen and the Fire Chiefs but that would require advertising a public meeting due to a quorum and he prefers to negotiate with a Selectman representative and Fire Chief to take back to the Board for review and approval.

Selectman Peter Denbow stated he felt a \$10,000 flat fee was acceptable. Chairman Weymouth stated there is no such thing as a free lunch, they must pay the freight either a flat fee or the agreed rate. Vice Chairman Todd Brown agreed with Selectman Denbow to charge a flat fee of \$10,000.

Selectman Peter Denbow made a motion that we bill Palmyra \$10,000.00 a year flat fee, billed quarterly, non-refundable. Seconded by Vice Chairman Todd Brown. All in Favor

#### Perpetual Care Billing Policy

Manager Fisher stated that our office completed their research of the perpetual care and he pointed out that while there was a change in 2014 requiring that perpetual care paid in full, but those prior to 2014 were permitted to continue to pay 10.00 a year.

Manager Fisher recommends we send out a final invoice to each person, that they are to pay the remaining amount owed to reach \$100.00 and then they will receive their certificate for perpetual care. Many are only a few dollars away from that number. A few are over that number and others haven't even started to pay.

Vice Chairman Todd Brown agreed that we should put an end to this yearly billing of small amounts. Chairman Weymouth suggested we end the program, issue certificates. He further expressed his deep upset over those who did not pay for several years.

The Selectmen review the amounts owed individually. Manager Fisher suggested those who over paid could get a refund. He noted two accounts. He further noted seven accounts that are \$.50 away from the lump sum charge of \$100.00 and should receive their deeds. Selectman Denbow sated he did not feel this was a large money issue. Chairman Weymouth stated if they haven't paid anything, they do not receive anything. Discussion on this continued for several minutes.

Motion by Selectman Peter Denbow to send out a final invoice to be paid by March 31, 2021 in which of paid in full, they will receive their perpetual care deeds. And then try to locate the serious delinquents and invoice them for the amount owed. If they do not pay they will not receive perpetual care. Seconded by Vice Chairman Todd Brown. The motion carried by a 2:1 margin; Selectman Denbow and Vice Chairman Todd Brown voting yes, and Chairman Weymouth voting no.

#### Road Commissioner Report

Brady Snowman reported that the new truck is sitting in Skowhegan on the lot and scheduled for March for the installation of the plow. The Road Crew is keeping the roads repaired and the trucks operational. Selectman Peter Denbow asked if all three trucks were running and Mr. Snowman replied that all three trucks are running and survived the storm.

### Fire Department Report

Communications Officer Gregory Crump spoke on behalf of the Fire Department. He informed the Board that the only change to the SOP is the addition of a job description for Communications Officer. Additionally, Mr. Crump has begun the process of applying for a grant for fire department gear.

### Treasurer's Report

Manager Fisher reported the following:

Opening General Ledger Balance – January 1, 2020 \$ 1,298,394.05

General Ledger Balance - November 30, 2020 \$1,606.731.15

General Ledger Balance – November 30, 2019 \$1,408.597.57

Manager Fisher reported on expenses:

Expenses Overall \$ 3, 156,309.93 (includes school County, KRDA) We are 11% under budget.

Two transfers were made in accordance with the Town Warrant into the Fire Hall Reserve Account and into the Public Works Equipment Account. The manager reviewed the Treasurer's Report. The report attached to these minutes.

Manager Fisher requested that vacation time be extended due to COVID-19 undermining the schedule requiring the staff to work shorthanded and unable to take vacation.

*Chairman Weymouth motioned to extend vacations to March 1, 2021. Seconded by Vice Chairman Todd Brown. All in Favor.*

### Budget Review

#### Article 21 – 5 year plan

Manager Fisher discussed the purchase of the trucks and the five year plan and how to accurately show these appropriations. Manager Fisher plans on using Unassigned funds and cash reserves and not from taxation.

Manager Fisher stated that USDA would be interested in financing the project, that \$400,000 is enough to borrow as similar amount and also a possible grant of \$40,000 to \$50,000 which would support an \$850,000 fire hall project.

Ultimately, the decision on transfers should come from the Board of Selectmen. He took \$40,000 out of the parking, he removed the new voting booths, the salaries show an increase but the actual numbers will be locked down soon. He pointed out that the Fire Company budget due to labor at 50% of the increase and the cost of gear at \$2,000.00 per person.

Chairman Weymouth expressed concern that the wage amount would, be adequate. Manager Fisher replied that the amount is more than doubled. There was further discussion and the general direction was to donate \$20,000 to the fire hall and \$85,000 for public Equipment for a total of \$105,000.

*At 8:25 pm Chairman Weymouth made a motion to go into executive session to discuss personnel under Section 403 (a)(6). Seconded by Vice Chairman Todd Brown. All in favor.*

*At 9:15 pm Selectman Peter Denbow made a motion to end the executive session and adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Vice Chairman Todd Brown. All in Favor.*

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Richard Fisher  
Town Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman Hiram Weymouth

\_\_\_\_\_  
Vice Chairman Todd Brown

\_\_\_\_\_  
Selectman Peter Denbow

Date: \_\_\_\_\_