

**Minutes of the Town of Johnsbury
Regular Meeting
Tannery Pond Community Center
228 Main Street, North Creek
January 21, 2020 7:00PM**

Supervisor Hogan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and the pledge to the flag was led by Letitia Williams.

PRESENT: Andrea Hogan – Supervisor
Eugene Arsenault – Councilman
Arnold Stevens – Councilman
Laurie Arnheiter – Councilwoman
Justin Gonyo - Councilman
Kate Lorah -- Town Clerk

Approval of Minutes for the Organizational and Regular Meeting January 7, 2020

RESOLUTION #20-20

Mr. Gonyo presented the following resolution and moved its passage with a second from Mr. Arsenault to accept the minutes of the January 7, 2020 meeting. With 5 members voting in favor the resolution is declared carried. Ayes - (Hogan, Arsenault, Stevens, Arnheiter, Gonyo) Nays- 0

Correspondence:

Ms. Hogan presented a monthly report for solar usage at Town Hall. Mr. Arsenault asked if the Board could see a more comprehensive and comparative report. Ms. Hogan said she will get more information to bring back to the Board. The other correspondence was a letter from the Highway Superintendent regarding surplus materials.

New Business:

- **Town property tax assessment reval**

Assessor Letitia Williams gave an extensive presentation regarding the benefits of having a comprehensive reval in the Town. There have been two bids received and she also explained the advantage of accepting the bid from one company versus the other. There were many questions and lots of discussion regarding the reval.

Highlights of Ms. Williams presentation were:

Reasons for Re-assessment projects:

- Fairness in equity
- Fairness in values
- Once at 100% Market Level of Assessment, every 3-4 years values are updated based on market trends in the area. Therefore, keeping fairness in equity.
- Any properties that have *never* sold have not been re- evaluated.
- Once at 100% LOA slight increases in assessments to keep with market trends means taxes per \$1000 rate will decrease when more equity is discovered.
- Making sure utilities pay their fair share, which cannot happen without a town wide reassessment project.
- Assessors and data collectors will not ask to enter your homes, we only collect from the outside and only measure with your permission.
- *Every* 6 years minimum the state requires new photos of the outside of buildings to ensure they have been looked at by your assessor or datacollectors.
- New photos do not mean you are being reassessed. Simply that records are being kept up.

Once new values are created, a tentative roll is established and that is the time to grieve any value before the Final Roll. Once budgets are in place and tentative values are made, we can estimate the tax amounts, often homeowners will be surprised that the change from 1.9% to 100% equalization can decrease or hardly increase their taxes.

RESOLUTION #21-20

Mr. Arsenault presented the following resolution and moved its passage with a second from Mr. Stevens to approve the bid from Maxwell Appraisal Service for the reval project for \$135,000. With 5 members voting in favor the resolution is declared carried. Ayes - (Hogan, Arsenault, Stevens, Arnheiter, Gonyo) Nays- 0

- **Highway Truck discussion**

One of the Highway trucks is in need of repair and the estimate is \$6000. The truck has an estimated one year of use left. Mr. Comstock would prefer to purchase a new truck.

RESOLUTION #22-20

Mr. Gonyo presented the following resolution and moved its passage with a second from Mr. Stevens to approve putting out a bid for a new Highway truck. With 5 members voting in favor the resolution is declared carried. Ayes - (Hogan, Arsenault, Stevens, Arnheiter, Gonyo) Nays- 0

- **Tire Chains – surplus**

RESOLUTION #23-20

Mr. Arsenault presented the following resolution and moved its passage with a second from Mr. Gonyo to declare several sets of tire chains as surplus, allowing Mr. Comstock to dispose of them. With 5 members voting in favor the resolution is declared carried. Ayes - (Hogan, Arsenault, Stevens, Arnheiter, Gonyo) Nays- 0

- **Bookkeeping software**

Ms. Hogan spoke about problems with, and an upgrade needed, for the bookkeeping software which will cost \$3000. There is an alternative of purchasing new software from Williamson which would cost \$15,500 but is much more user-friendly and easily accessible to others in the office (not just the bookkeeper), so useful reports could be generated which have not been available to this point. Williamson has offered to spread the cost over two years.

RESOLUTION #24-20

Mr. Stevens presented the following resolution and moved its passage with a second from Mr. Gonyo to approve the purchase of new bookkeeping software from Williamson, paid over two years and not to exceed \$16,000. With 5 members voting in favor the resolution is declared carried. Ayes - (Hogan, Arsenault, Stevens, Arnheiter, Gonyo) Nays- 0

- **Contract for metal can recycling**

RESOLUTION #25-20

Mr. Arsenault presented the following resolution and moved its passage with a second from Ms. Arnheiter to approve the contract renewal with R. Cohen Recycling for metal cans. With 5 members voting in favor the resolution is declared carried. Ayes - (Hogan, Arsenault, Stevens, Arnheiter, Gonyo) Nays- 0

- **Resolution re: budget transfers**

RESOLUTION #26-20

Mr. Stevens presented the following resolution and moved its passage with a second from Mr. Arsenault to approve the following:

The Town of Johnsbury Board authorizes and directs the Town Supervisor to make inter-department budget transfers within the 2019 Town of Johnsbury Budget for the purpose of balancing the various accounts in said budget prior to the close of the 2019 budget, and be it further resolved that upon completion of the 2019 AUD, the Supervisor shall file with the Town Clerk, a complete list of all supplemented appropriations and transfers made pursuant to this resolution which shall include, but not be limited to specific account numbers and amounts.

With 5 members voting in favor, the resolution is declared carried. Ayes- 5 (Hogan, Arsenault, Stevens, Arnheiter, Gonyo) Nays- 0

Old Business:

- Town Highway garage potential relocation

Warren County DPW is interested in co-locating with the Johnsbury Highway Department, but neither Highway Superintendent Comstock nor Warren County DPW are in favor of the Goodman property for relocation. Ms. Hogan stated this changes the direction the Town will go in this process, and is asking the Board whether to proceed – looking for a new location. The Board responded yes – search for another site, in coordination with Warren County.

- Set date for public meeting on DPW/ Superintendent model for Highway management

After a discussion about setting a public meeting on the DPW/ Superintendent model for Highway management, the topic was tabled until a later date.

- **Engineering contracts for 2020**

RESOLUTION #27-20

Mr. Arsenault presented the following resolution and moved its passage with a second from Mr. Stevens to approve new contracts for Cedarwood Environmental and Cedarwood Engineering. With 5 members voting in favor, the resolution is declared carried. Ayes- 5 (Hogan, Arsenault, Stevens, Arnheiter, Gonyo) Nays- 0

- Streetscape / Road work updates

Ms. Hogan said the Streetscape project is slated to be completed this year. Sidewalks will be put in from Walgreens to Café Sarah, and across the road from that – back to the Phoenix. Electric will also be put in place.

- Census 2020

Ms. Hogan emphasized the importance of the Census and asked everyone to get the word out about Census jobs and the importance of completing the survey accurately and completely.

Committee Reports:

- Water - none
- Solid waste – Mr. Gonyo said he will send an email to the committee to set up a meeting to discuss scales at the Transfer Station
- Highway - none
- Marketing and Economic Development - none
- Personnel - none
- Planning and Zoning – none

- Buildings, Parks and Recreation – Mr. Gonyo and Ms. Arnheiter are meeting this week regarding updates at Riverfront Park and are speaking with Wayne LaMothe regarding Grant funding.
- Fire and EMS – Mr. Gonyo said a letter is coming to the Board

Supervisor's Monthly Report

The Supervisor's monthly report for December will be delayed, as bills for 2019 are still coming in.

Approval of Warrants

General Fund (Total \$40,334.84)
Highway Fund (Total \$45,861.59)
Fire Protection District (\$3051.27)
Water District (Total \$8168.88)
Public Library Fund (Total \$1483.11)
Total all warrants \$98,899.69

RESOLUTION #28-20

Mr. Arsenault presented the following resolution and moved its passage with a second from Mr. Gonyo to approve the warrants. With 5 members voting in favor, the resolution is declared carried. Ayes- 5 (Hogan, Arsenault, Stevens, Arnheiter, Gonyo) Nays- 0

Privilege of the Floor

Kelly Nettle asked if the sidewalks in North Creek are getting plowed. Ms. Hogan said Warren County is doing the plowing.

Ms. Nettle asked what rehab is planned for Scout Hall. Ms. Hogan said the kitchen is in need of an upgrade.

Bob Nettle suggested the name of Riverfront Park be changed to River Drive Park to acknowledge the past local logging industry.

Joel Beaudin asked if there are plans to update the Town website. Ms. Hogan said this will happen.

Jim Jones asked about the engine and train car leaving the Town. Ms. Hogan said there is a deadline in place for it to be removed.

Motion to enter Executive Session

RESOLUTION #29-20

At 8:50 pm Mr. Arsenault presented the following resolution and moved its passage with a second from Mr. Gonyo to enter executive session for the purpose of discussing proposed, pending or current litigation. With 5 members voting in favor, the resolution is declared carried. Ayes- 5 (Hogan, Arsenault, Stevens, Arnheiter, Gonyo) Nays- 0

Motion to leave Executive Session and reenter regular meeting

RESOLUTION #30-20

At 9:20 pm Mr. Arsenault presented the following resolution and moved its passage with a second from Mr. Stevens to leave executive session and reenter the regular meeting. With 5 members voting in favor, the resolution is declared carried. Ayes-5 (Hogan, Arsenault, Stevens, Arnheiter, Gonyo) Nays- 0

Motion to adjourn

RESOLUTION #31-20

At 9:21 pm Ms. Hogan presented the following resolution and moved its passage with a second from Mr. Arsenault to adjourn. With 5 members voting in favor, the resolution is declared carried. Ayes-5 (Hogan, Arsenault, Stevens, Arnheiter, Gonyo) Nays- 0

Next meeting Tuesday, February 4th, 7:00 pm
at Wevertown Community Center

Prepared by:

Kathleen C. Lorah, Town Clerk