

**St. Albans City Council**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**January 12, 2015**  
**City Hall, Council Chambers**

A regular meeting of the St. Albans City Council was held on Monday, January 12, 2015, in council chambers at City Hall at 6:30 pm.

**Council Present:** Mayor Elizabeth Gamache; Aldermen: Ryan Doyle, Tim Hawkins, Chad Spooner & Alderwoman Tammi DiFranco.

**Council Absent:** Alderman Jim Pelkey.

**Staff Present:** Dominic Cloud, City Manager; Sue Krupp, City Clerk and Treasurer; Tom Leitz, Director of Administration; Kelly Viens, Recreation Director; Allen Robtoy, Director of Public Works; Gary Taylor, Police Chief; Marty Manahan, Director of Operations & Business Development & Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning & Development.

**Visitors:** See attached sign-in sheet.

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance.  
Mayor Gamache led the pledge of allegiance and called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.
2. Public Comment.  
No public comment was made.
3. Presentation and Discussion of Sidewalk Rehabilitation Plan.
  - a. Peter Cross will update the Council on the sidewalk rehabilitation plan as authorized by the voters in March, 2013.

Mr. Cross explained that the sidewalk rehabilitation design has been completed and will now need further direction from council in terms of timing and financing. He stated that he would be presenting several options to choose from. If council chose to rehabilitate all of the sidewalks categorized as being in "poor" and "fair" condition from the At Grade Infrastructure Assessment, the cost of the project would be roughly \$8.2 million. He added that staff directed him to break out the "poor" and "fair" sidewalks by ward. Mr. Cross reminded council of the design parameters set forth for the project (See attached design parameters) and proceeded to present the ward map outlining the sidewalks in "poor" and "fair" condition. (See attached ward map). Mr. Doyle clarified for the viewers at home that a street indicated on the ward map as being in "poor" or "fair" condition means that the sidewalk on at least one side of the street needs rehabilitation but does not necessarily mean that the sidewalk on both sides of the street needs to be replaced.

Mr. Cross explained that based on a 2 year timeline with a 2.5% inflation factor per year, the total estimate to replace sidewalks categorized as "poor" would cost \$3,795,370. He explained that the estimate includes a 10% contingency, tree removal, sealers for the concrete, and the bridges on Pearl and High Street and would cover 9.36 miles of sidewalk and 6.27 miles of curb. If council chose to bond the entire project including sidewalks in both "poor" and "fair" conditions, the timeframe would extend from a 2 year project to a 3 – 4 year project. He noted that it is less efficient to break the project into two parts.

Mr. Cross explained that based on a 2 year timeline with a 2.5% inflation factor per year, the total estimate to replace sidewalks categorized as "fair" would cost \$4,513,832 and would cover 10.77

miles of sidewalk and 9.73 miles of curb. Mr. Cross proceeded to display the design plans for Fairfield Street, Brown Avenue, Ferris Street and Maple Street to show council as an example of what the project would entail. Some features include ADA intersections, detectable warning strips, drainage, catch basins, storm drains, stairs and railings. Mr. Cross explained that in all cases but one, stairs would be replacing existing stairways and would be safer. Mr. Hawkins asked if there would be physical challenges to accessibility by replacing the current ramp near BFA with a stairway. Mr. Cross responded that the ramp is currently not in ADA compliance and although not under any obligation, the goal is to accommodate ADA wherever possible as established in the design criteria. He noted that there are alternative ways to access BFA from that side of the street for someone who is handicapped.

b. Council Discussion.

Mr. Spooner asked Mr. Cross what the age of the current “poor” sidewalks. Mr. Cross responded that there was a major sidewalk project done in the City sometime in the 1920’s, many of which have not been replaced. Mr. Spooner asked Mr. Robtoy how the state of the sidewalk equipment is being affected by the current condition of the sidewalks. Mr. Robtoy responded that there is some wear on the equipment due to the state of the sidewalks and added that maintenance to the newer sidewalks can be done in a more efficient manner. Mr. Spooner asked Mr. Robtoy to elaborate on the wear done to the sidewalk equipment due to the older sidewalk system. Mr. Robtoy responded that the City has a strong CIP which allows the Public Works Department to maintain and upgrade their equipment. Mr. Spooner noted that poor condition of some of the new sidewalks such as the one located on Lake Street in front of Mylan. Mr. Cross responded that there are a number of common problems that can arise with sidewalks and typically boil down to the weather, the contractor and how careful and attentive the contractor is. He added that other issues can arise due to the application of salt within the first year of the sidewalk being constructed. Mayor Gamache asked Mr. Cross how long he expects the new sidewalks to last if done correctly. Mr. Cross responded that there will be some heaving but the surface quality of the concrete should hold up for 40 – 50 years. Mr. Spooner noted that it will be imperative that the sidewalk project coincides with the timing of paving.

Mr. Hawkins commended the plan presented this evening. He explained that in some instances, he has an issue with strictly using the distinguishing factor between “poor” and “fair” condition because some sidewalks might be in worse condition in comparison with others but not receive as much foot traffic. Mr. Cross responded that his intent was to provide the City with a set of drawings to allow council to pick and choose from during each budget season and agreed that it may not be realistic to only choose sidewalks in “poor” condition for consideration. Mayor Gamache commented that the differential between “poor” and “fair” was helpful in terms of determining the overall price tag and believed it was a good framework to use as a starting point.

Mr. Doyle noted the stairs near Hometown Beverage and asked Mr. Cross if they could be widened. Mr. Cross responded affirmatively. Mr. Doyle asked if there was anything built into the estimate of the sidewalk project for oversight to ensure the quality of the job done by the contractor installing the sidewalks and curbing. Mr. Cross responded negatively but agreed it should be incorporated. Mr. Doyle commented that he wasn’t sure if that was something Public Works would do or whether another person should be designated. Mr. Doyle noted the section between Church Street and Lincoln Street on Fairfield Street where “no parking” is indicated Monday through Friday. He added that it seemed like that would be a reasonable area to add parking spaces and could potentially house an additional 17 spaces. Mr. Corrigan commented that he believes the reason there is not parking in that location is due to travel of emergency vehicles. Mr. Cross stated that he will further look into the possibility of safely creating parking in that area. Mayor Gamache noted

the combined total of “poor” and “fair” sidewalks and curbing and asked what is typical for Public Works to accomplish in an average construction season. Mr. Robtoy responded that 10 years ago, \$50,000 would result in one mile of repairs. Today’s budget of \$80,000 can accomplish roughly 4,000 feet of work.

Mr. Doyle noted that the Transportation Advisory Committee was discussing sidewalks at last week’s meeting. He stated that the 26 miles of sidewalk located in the City is an important asset in terms of the walk ability of the City and believes it is important to address the issue in a timely fashion. Mayor Gamache asked Mr. Cross if he had any comments on the subject of walk ability in an urban area. Mr. Cross agreed that the City’s sidewalks are heavily used and believes they would be used even more frequently if they were in better condition. Mayor Gamache stated that walk ability scores have become a more frequently used planning tool across the country and noted that it might be something to consider as planning and discussion progresses. Mr. Hawkins noted the scenario of repairing one sidewalk and eliminating the other sidewalk altogether on a roadway that has sidewalks on each side of the street in “poor” condition. He asked whether that scenario would reduce the overall mileage of sidewalks needing attention. Mr. Cross responded that it would depend on whether two sidewalks were included in the design and noted that there were very few places where sidewalks were eliminated completely.

c. Public Comment.

Mr. Young asked Mayor Gamache what the procedure will be in determining how to move forward. Mayor Gamache responded that council will be discussing sidewalks in context of the budget later in the meeting and will have future meetings to contemplate how to move forward. She explained that future discussions will entail exploring the plans further and discussing the cost and budgeting of the project. Mr. Young asked Mayor Gamache if that would be discussed during a Public Safety Committee meeting. Mayor Gamache responded that the discussions would unfold at public meetings. Mr. Young asked Mayor Gamache if she had a timeframe in mind. Mayor Gamache responded that she did not know specifically when the discussion would continue but stated that it would be some time this year. Mr. Young commented that he believes sidewalks are very important to residents who abut them and emphasized the importance of the public’s opinion. Mayor Gamache agreed and encouraged the public to reach out and share their thoughts. Mr. Spooner added that it has always been his intention to hold future discussions by ward.

4. Recess for Liquor Control.

**A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderman Hawkins to recess for liquor control. Vote was unanimous, 6-0.**

5. FY 16 General Fund Budget Presentation.

a. Overview of Process, Mayor Gamache.

Mayor Gamache explained that the budget process begins early in the year with council setting a list of priorities and then allowing staff to respond to those priorities. Staff proposals are presented to the Finance Committee which includes Councilor Hawkins, Corrigan and Pelkey and then presented to council. Mayor Gamache added that there will be opportunity for feedback and input from the public as well.

b. City Manager Budget Presentation.

Mr. Cloud explained that over the past couple of years, staff has been shifting its emphasis on infrastructure in the City. He added that while staff is certainly one of the City’s most important assets, some consideration needs go into how much of the budget is spent on projects vs. our people. Mr. Cloud stated that this year staff has made its most progress in reducing total personnel costs and our cost per FTE. In addition, health insurance is down by 11% and salaries are down by

3.5%. Mr. Cloud noted that there were three bullets that emerged in council's goals and objectives that have an impact on the budget; prepare a sidewalk rehabilitation plan for voter consideration, to build the City's bike and walk capacity and to increase the upkeep of the City's parks. Mr. Cloud noted that he has detected two themes; to spread the revitalization from the Downtown into the City's neighborhoods and address the increasing concern of property taxes. Mr. Cloud stated that staff has tried to respond to both of those concerns in preparing the budget.

Mr. Cloud explained that he proposes two alternatives. The first alternative maintains the current tax rate of .8117 and doubles the annual sidewalk appropriation from \$80,000 to \$160,000. Another option to consider is a sidewalk rehabilitation bond. A \$4 million dollar sidewalk bond would require a 2% increase in property taxes and could be accomplished by converting the base appropriation to debt and adding an additional \$80,000 for a total of \$240,000.

c. Council Discussion.

Beginning with the City Clerk's budget, expenses are down by .9% and revenues are up 13% but on track with this year's actual. Mr. Hawkins noted line 8 for Clerk Record Preservation and asked why staff expects increased revenue by \$9500 this year. Mr. Cloud responded that it was based off the 2015 actual which is \$8,938 as of December 31, 2014. Mr. Hawkins asked Ms. Krupp if she really believes there will be additional recordings to equal what's taken place in the first half of this year. Ms. Krupp responded that it's possible and depends on the real estate market. Mr. Hawkins wondered if it was wishful thinking to expect an additional \$9,000 in revenue. Ms. Krupp stated that there has been a high level of recordings with projects such as the State building and Mylan Technologies and is averaging 4 -5 property transfers per week. Mr. Cloud stated that staff will look further to see if there is a seasonal aspect to the revenue. Mr. Hawkins asked what the City Clerk fees include. Ms. Krupp responded that they include the \$7 out of the \$10 per page for recordings, death, birth and marriage certificates, research fees and vehicle registrations. Mr. Hawkins noted line 37 under expenses for Clerk Record Preservation and asked why it shows \$6,000 for 2015 and zero for 2014. Ms. Krupp responded that the expense is for the \$275 per month fee for the Cotts system and believes last year the expense came out of the Dues & Subscriptions noted on line 33. She added that the expense also includes upgrades to the land record books. Ms. Duffy explained that the \$6,000 on the expenditure line is earmarked as the Clerk Preservation reserve and bring in those fees as documents are recorded. During the year some of that money is spent and what is left over becomes reserve at the end of the year. Ms. Duffy added that the \$6,000 line item is to show that some of those fees are being set aside. Mr. Cloud stated that staff will look into those line items further and report back to council.

In the Finance budget, staff has combined financing and assessing with administration. Overall expenses are down 8%. Mayor Gamache noted that expenses for Other Professional Services are down and asked for an explanation. Mr. Leitz responded that he cannot speak to the history but the current expense is for software license fees.

In the Assessing budget, the only revenues are the State per-parcel fee which is flat. Expenses are down 4.7% primarily due to reductions in healthcare and the reappraisal consulting fees on line 21.

In the Planning & Development budget, Mr. Cloud explained that there is a slight increase in revenues based on some of the anticipated projects in the City and a 16.6% reduction in salaries. Mr. Cloud noted line 30 for Holiday Decorations and stated that the reason for expenditures in the amount of \$26,149 2015 was due to start up costs that will not be replicated in FY 16. He added that \$20,000 has been set for this item in FY 16. In the capital portion of this budget under line 51, \$40,000 has been budgeted for the Federal Street project. In place of a grant anticipation note, staff is converting this debt to a cash match based on some updates from the Agency of

Transportation. Mr. Cloud noted a new term, “net operations” which is the amount earned by tax payers after subtracting all other revenues. He added that net operations for Planning & Development are down by 6.7%. Mr. Hawkins asked Mr. Cloud if he is anticipating an increase in zoning revenue due to projects that staff is aware of. Mr. Sawyer responded that typically applications will start coming in during the early spring months for summertime construction and anticipates an increase in applications this fiscal year. Mayor Gamache asked if it’s correct that the number is based on projections that staff believes will come into fruition. Mr. Cloud responded affirmatively.

Mr. Hawkins asked Mr. Cloud to explain the leave buyback on line 24 and asked who has the capability of using it. Mr. Cloud responded that it is a union benefit where staff is able to buy back a certain percentage of unused sick time. Mr. Hawkins asked Mr. Cloud how staff can budget that since it is such an unknown. Mr. Cloud responded that staff can look at the potential amount of time allowed to be bought back as well as analyze an employee’s sick time and what they have typically done in the past. Mr. Hawkins stated that the prediction is 357% below what the actual was. Mr. Hawkins noted line 27 for Other Professional Services (OPS). He stated that half way through the year, the actual is \$15,477 and for FY 16, the total budget is \$19,000 and asked for an explanation. Mr. Sawyer responded that this year, OPS are inflated by the Taylor Park fountain project.

Mr. Hawkins asked that staff provide a notation next to the line items that need further explanation. Mr. Hawkins noted the \$15,000 budgeted for stormwater in FY 15 and only \$10,000 budgeted in FY 16 on line 31. He asked if staff has made an affirmative policy decision to start reserving more toward stormwater and asked why staff is budgeting less for stormwater in FY 16. Mr. Sawyer responded that the planning and consulting and policy making piece of MS-4 is paid for from this line. Every year as staff learns more about what compliance is going to look like; it gets a better idea of annual costs.

Mr. Cloud proceeded to present the debt service. Line 5 is for the Renovation Bond and includes debt service of \$ 68, 184 estimated on a 30-year bond at 4.25%. Lines 6 – 9 cover various portions of debt service that will be coming off the books. These lines include the TAN Bond, Little League, Brickyard and Federal Street. Mr. Doyle stated that he believed the renovation bond was higher than shown. Mr. Cloud responded that these figures are updated numbers from the bond bank and includes a contribution from the Clerk preservation fees for the vault upgrade. Line 19 includes the estimated debt service of \$33,971 on a 20-year bond for a new pumper/tanker for the Fire Department. Overall, even with the renovation bond and debt service on the new pumper, debt service is down 8.6%.

Moving on to Administration, Mr. Cloud explained that there has been some restructuring between Police and Administration over the management of parking. All parking is now handled out of Administration which increases revenues of \$18,000 in City Hall. With recent hires and promotions, salaries are up by 15.8%. Mr. Cloud noted line 47 for Working Capital Contingency which includes \$10,000 budgeted for FY 16 and \$30,000 that can be used elsewhere. Mr. Hawkins asked Mr. Cloud to define the Working Capital Contingency. Mr. Cloud responded that it is money that increases the likelihood of coming in on a balanced budget and addresses the council’s concerns over property taxes and neighborhoods. Mr. Hawkins asked Mr. Cloud if any of the \$40,000 has been spent this year. Ms. Duffy responded negatively. Mayor Gamache noted that the \$10,000 budgeted is consistent with 2013 and 2014 actuals. Mr. Doyle asked Mr. Cloud if the Working Capital Contingency is solely for things happening in Administration or for the entire budget. Mr. Cloud responded that it is for the entire organization. Staff feels that legal expenditures for FY 16 on line

60 can be reduced by \$10,000. The Franklin County tax is up 16.9%. Mr. Cloud addressed line 76 which is the petitioned article for Franklin County Home Heater for the amount of \$13,788. He added that this piece was embedded in the tax rate set last year and proposes to capture it in the general fund budget for FY 16 in an effort to present a zero percent increase. Total expenditures for Administration are down .5% and net operations are down 3.1%. Mr. Hawkins asked Mr. Cloud if all parking revenue is filtering into Administration. Mr. Cloud responded negatively. Mr. Hawkins asked if the parking lot behind City Hall is included in the City Hall renovation. Mr. Cloud responded affirmatively and explained that \$18,000 will be spent toward the Courthouse and City Hall lots. Mr. Hawkins asked Mr. Cloud if he expected parking revenue to increase with the upgrade to the City Hall parking lot. Mr. Cloud responded that he is surprised by how few people are parking in the City Hall lot and is unsure if it's due to the condition of the lot or the demand. Mr. Hawkins asked if revenue from the City Hall lot will go into Administration. Mr. Cloud responded affirmatively and added that it could be redirected to service debt.

Mr. Hawkins noted the \$125,000 allowance for property tax delinquencies on line 49 in FY 15 with no actuals year-to-date and \$125,000 budgeted in FY 16. He asked if that entry was a book entry. Mr. Leitz responded affirmatively. Mr. Hawkins noted that FY 13 actuals were \$29,053 and zero in FY 14 and asked how staff expected to recoup \$125,000. Mr. Cloud responded that the City has a very aggressive tax collection program. He noted line 4 in the General Fund budget for Payments on Prior Years' Taxes and explained that in FY 15, \$300,000 was budgeted and only budgeting \$150,000 in FY 16. Mr. Hawkins asked Mr. Cloud if it's correct that staff believes there is \$125,000 in delinquent taxes that can be collected and then on the revenue side, that number is offset by the tax collection procedure. Mr. Cloud responded affirmatively. Mr. Young, a representative of Regional Planning, noted line 65 for N.W. Regional Planning which shows the actual of FY 13 and FY 14 at only half of what the assessed rate was and asked why. Mr. Leitz responded that the General Fund is responsible for 50% of that expense and the Water & Wastewater Fund is responsible for 25% each. Mr. Spooner noted line 68 for AmCare and asked Mr. Cloud if staff ever received an explanation for why their expenses increased \$45,000 last year. Mr. Cloud responded that he was told their rates increased partly due to worker's compensation costs and unfortunately they are the only provider.

Mr. Cloud proceeded to present the Public Works budget. Revenues are down because staff planned to transfer reserves of \$20,000 in the FY 15 budget for sidewalks and/or paving. Line 41 for Streetscape Maintenance is budgeted at \$40,000 and includes both the masonry work on the bricks and the landscaping contract through the streetscape. Mr. Spooner asked if that also included the light poles and banners. Mr. Cloud responded that it covers more of the at-grade related costs. Mr. Spooner noted the great landscaping job done but stated that some of the tall vegetation placed in the bump-outs during the summertime reduces the line of sight of pedestrians crossing the street. Mr. Cloud noted line 77 for Salt & Sand Supplies which increased by \$10,000 due to a review of stabilized billing. Mr. Spooner asked if the City is saving any money by using brine. Mr. Robtoy responded that he does not use any brine at all and uses a by-product of the corn industry which has a lower freezing point. He explained that it is cheaper and more environmentally friendly compared to brine. Salt prices, however, are up 33% at \$17 per ton.

Moving on to Parks expenditures, Mr. Cloud noted lines 90, 91 and 92 for Park Maintenance. He explained that there are leftover funds from Houghton Park in the amount of \$20,000 and a revenue transfer occurred, matching that \$20,000. In the 2015 budget, \$12,000 was reserved for Taylor Park and \$5,000 was reserved for Barlow. The 2016 budget proposes to reserve that \$17,000 and add another \$13,000. Mr. Spooner asked what the \$20,000 for Houghton Park will be used for. Ms. Viens responded that it will go toward a matching grant for a playground. Mr. Doyle asked

when the cracks on the courts at Barlow and Houghton will need to be sealed again to support long-term maintenance. Ms. Viens responded that Barlow's court has been replaced so there should not be any cracks. She added that while Houghton's courts are long past their life expectancy, repairs are made annually but cracks will appear every year. Mr. Spooner asked if any maintenance is built into the budget to repair the courts. Ms. Viens responded affirmatively. Mr. Doyle asked if it's correct that maintenance for those courts is budgeted out of the Recreation budget. Ms. Viens responded affirmatively. Mr. Hawkins asked Mr. Cloud what Miscellaneous Revenue is on line 10. Mr. Robtoy responded that miscellaneous revenue accounts for the sale of older Public Works vehicles which then gets split between the General Fund, Water and Wastewater Fund. Mr. Hawkins noted line 47 for Garage Improvements and asked Mr. Cloud if he is anticipating a problem with the garage this year. Mr. Cloud responded that that line should be renamed Garage Maintenance instead of Garage Improvements. Mr. Robtoy noted a lighting project that is ongoing with Efficiency Vermont to replace 16 fixtures at the Public Works garage. Although the overall cost will be \$4,000, the City will be responsible to pay \$1,050 and will come out of that line. Mr. Hawkins noted line 89 for Other Professional Services with \$10,000 budgeted in FY 15 and actual at \$36,070 and asked what caused that expense to drastically increase. Ms. Duffy responded that the increase covered the cost to remove the fountain.

Moving on to Public Works CIP expenditures, Mr. Cloud noted line 107 for the Annual Sidewalk Program. In an effort to be responsive to council's priority to improve sidewalk conditions, revenues were redirected to increase the original \$80,000 appropriation to \$160,000. Mr. Cloud explained that council could choose to increase this line item to \$240,000 which would allow for a \$4 million bonded sidewalk project (line 108). Alternatively, council could choose not to take out the \$4 million in debt and build it into the existing sidewalk program which would result in a 2% property tax increase. Mr. Cloud noted line 123 for paving where the appropriation was increased from \$260,000 to \$270,000. Mayor Gamache asked if that increase was based on the general expectation that costs will increase. Mr. Cloud responded that the At-Grade Infrastructure Assessment influence the proposed number.

For the sake of time, Mayor Gamache paused the FY 16 budget presentation and proposed to discuss the Franklin County Home Health proposal before continuing with the budget discussion.

In the Police budget, revenues are down 14% primarily due to the move of parking revenues. On the expenditure side, salaries are down substantially. Mr. Cloud referred to line 93 for Net Operations and explained that taxpayers are paying \$23,000 less than previous years. Under line 81 which is a CIP item for the building and parking lot, \$33,000 was budgeted for FY 15. To date, \$22,537 has been spent. Mr. Cloud stated that the hope is to address the condition of the building with the remaining balance and an additional \$10,000 budgeted for FY 16. On line 83, staff has eliminated savings for a dispatch console. Mr. Hawkins noted the \$35,000 proposed for FY 16 in line 16 under Parking Program, Tickets. He asked why that line item is substantially higher. Chief Taylor responded that it is higher because staff is anticipating at the rate the Parking Enforcement Officer is issuing tickets and now have a full time Parking Enforcement Officer. Mr. Hawkins noted the reduction in salaries on line 28 and asked if we lost an officer. Mr. Cloud responded that this year staff budgeted \$1.2 million in salaries and \$165,000 in overtime and still has one vacancy. Mr. Hawkins noted line 72 for Supplies and stated that in the last 5 years, the average spent on supplies is \$9,000. He asked why staff is proposing to budget \$14,000 in supplies. Ms. Duffy responded that all of the supply line items were collapsed into one. Mr. Spooner commented that he is happy to see Parks Patrol continuing.

Dispatch revenues are down due to the changing marketplace. Overall, revenues are down 2% but have eliminated a staff position for the FY 16 budget which reduces the salary line item by \$40,000. He added that net operations are \$130,000 less than last year. Mr. Corrigan asked how administrative costs dropped to zero from \$25,000. Mr. Cloud responded that when staff prorated costs across all dispatch centers, that was a charge that was meant to recognize all of the overhead contributed from City Hall. With increased competition in the marketplace, Mr. Cloud explained that it was decided to eat that cost. Mr. Hawkins asked Mr. Cloud to explain the grant expense on line 27. Chief Taylor responded that the line item is for some of the grants they receive throughout the year cannot be anticipated. In terms of Animal Control, Mr. Cloud noted that based on the actuals, staff was over budgeting and the proposed budget for FY 16 has been cut significantly.

Moving on to the Fire Department, Mr. Cloud stated that one of the big line items includes the need for a Pumper Tanker. Chief Taylor explained that NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) recommends that a primary fire attack vehicle, also known as a pumper, spend 10 years as a primary vehicle and 10 years as a secondary vehicle. Based on that recommendation and the fact that infrastructure in the City is growing; Chief Taylor stated that the department should have an additional pumper. Chief Taylor explained that if the pumper is being used to pump water while firefighters are fighting a fire within the fourth floor of a building, it is not possible to provide rescue assistance. Chief Taylor noted that the former Fire Chief granted the State of Vermont a waiver for a more expensive pump system but cannot commit the primary fire vehicle to pumping water at the State building or at the Parking Garage knowing that it is the primary fire vehicle. He added that there is also a change in philosophy in the Fire Department under his leadership. The former philosophy was that the water sits on the ground where needed in a hydrant system which he believes to be short-sighted. Chief Taylor explained that his philosophy includes the need for onboard water during a fire call which supports his need for a pumper tanker and not just a pumper. A new pumper tanker would provide 2,000 gallons of water on board and a 15,000 gallon per minute pale pump and would allow the ability to move the current fire vehicle which has served the department well since 2000 into its secondary role. Chief Taylor explained that there are more federal regulations about SCBA's (self-contained breathing apparatus') and where they can be on the vehicle. By 2017, regulations will change regarding the placement of SCBA's and will require a different truck or apparatus. If the budget item for a new truck is approved, it won't be ordered until after July 1<sup>st</sup> and will not be on the road until 2017 which means the primary vehicle will be 16 years old, nearing its useful life of 20 years. Mr. Spooner asked if the new truck would help with mutual aid. Chief Taylor responded affirmatively. Mr. Spooner noted his support for a new fire truck and the importance of having reliable equipment for the morale of the department.

Before moving on to discuss the Recreation Budget, Mayor Gamache proposed to take a 5 minute recess and then address agenda item # 6.

Mr. Cloud explained that the Recreation budget is an aggregate of many small programs along with the pool. Any impact of the City Hall renovations would be accounted for in the Recreation budget. Under line 5 for Miscellaneous Program Revenue, proposed revenue for FY 16 is down by \$15,000. In addition, there is a decrease in revenue proposed under line 16, City Hall Auditorium Rental. On line 112 for Improvements under Pool Expenses, there is \$10,000 budgeted for improvements to the floor in the locker room. Ms. Viens explained that the floor in the pool house is the original concrete floor which has been sanded down a few times and repainted. The \$10,000 would cover sandblasting down to the original concrete and the application of a coating and would drastically increase the life of the floor without ever having to paint it again. She added that the aesthetics alone would be improved greatly and the floor would be slip resistant. Mr. Spooner asked if the floor would extend into the lobby. Ms. Viens responded affirmatively and stated that it would

include both locker rooms and the lobby. Mr. Hawkins noted that this Recreation budget is in his eyes, the most realistic budget he has seen.

The Community Justice Center budget remains primarily funded by grants.

In terms of the parking garage budget, it is the consensus of the City's attorneys and auditors that it remains a part of the General Fund. Mr. Cloud stated that it is very conservatively budgeted with expenditures at \$90,800. Capital reserves are budgeted at \$37,800 which is on track based on Desmond's recommendations. What is important is that the demand for the garage is strong and staff is not selling monthly passes until the hotel deal is finalized.

Looking ahead to next steps, Mr. Cloud proposed that discussions continue on Monday, January 19th.

d. Public Comment.

No public comment was made.

e. Franklin County Home Health.

Mayor Gamache stated that Franklin County Home Health has requested an allocation in the amount of \$13,788. Last year, Home Health circulated a petition that led to a ballot item on Town Meeting Day that passed by a favorable margin to support an allocation of the same amount. Mayor Gamache introduced Janet McCarthy, Executive Director of Franklin County Home Health as well as Gail Albertelli and Michael Gawne; City residents and members of the Franklin County Home Health Board of Directors.

Ms. McCarthy thanked City residents for their generous contribution made last year. She explained that Home Health continues to provide services to residents of the City of St. Albans which include newborns, new families, people in need of a hospice care and working individuals facing hardships. Through the Choices for Care Medicaid program, Home Health is able to support those who qualify to live in a nursing home. Last year, Home Health served 314 residents of St. Albans City representing 20,000 visits. Ms. McCarthy explained that they are in the process of petitioning again to be included on the ballot but is hoping that council could include Home Health on the warning without the petition requirement or be included in the budget application process.

Mayor Gamache opened the floor for questions from council. Mr. Doyle asked Ms. McCarthy to discuss Home Health's primary source of funds. Ms. McCarthy responded that 42% are from Medicare, 42% are from Medicaid and the rest comes from charitable contributions. Mr. Doyle asked if there were other organizations that provide similar services. Ms. McCarthy responded that there is another Medicare certified home health agency that provides very limited services in Franklin County. Mr. Spooner asked Ms. McCarthy how many employees they have. Ms. McCarthy responded that Home Health has about 200 employees, 20 of which live in the City of St. Albans. Mr. Spooner asked how many visits per year are made in the County. Ms. McCarthy responded that they make approximately 75,000 visits per year, county wide.

Mayor Gamache noted that Franklin County Home Health is under a time constraint for filing petitions if council chooses not to include their request in the City budget. She noted her support to including the \$13,788 allocation request within the City budget due to the strong support by voters last year. Mr. Hawkins stated that he is supportive of Franklin County Home Health but unsure if he is in support of including their allocation request in the City budget. Mr. Hawkins questioned whether Home Health would have received the same favorable support last year from voters had Council not backed the item. He added that for the sake of timing, he would support including the allocation request in this year's budget but in the future, believes council should create a policy to determine whether any charitable organization be included in the budget vs.

going through the petition process. Mr. Gawne noted that Home Health is fine with being a standalone item on the ballot but would prefer not to go through the petition process if possible. Mr. Spooner, Mr. Corrigan and Ms. DiFranco agreed with Mr. Hawkins' comments. Mr. Doyle stated that he is not in support of putting this item in the City budget as he does not believe it is ancillary to what civic government provides. Mr. Doyle asked Ms. McCarthy what their total operating budget is. She responded that it is almost \$8 million. Mayor Gamache noted that she spoke with Representative Kathy Keenan yesterday who is also a board member for Franklin County Home Health and asked that her support for the allocation request be mentioned.

f. Possible motions conveying sentiments and direction from Council (D&V).

**A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderman Hawkins to accept Franklin County Home Health's request to include the allocation of \$13,788 in the FY 16 City budget. Motion carried, 5-1 with Alderman Doyle opposed.**

6. Presentation and consideration of plans for restoration of Taylor Park fountain (D&V).

Mr. Sawyer reiterated that St. Albans Rotary is funding the restoration project of the Taylor Park fountain and will have more information soon as to how community members can contribute. The plan for restoration was presented to the public at a meeting last Tuesday and all details of the project were well received. Mr. Sawyer stated that various site work needs to take place such as construction of an underground pump vault. A light package has also been requested from Robinson Iron with multi-colored, controllable LED lights. Mr. Sawyer stated that the pool is in great shape and will put that portion of the project out to bid soon. There will be a full replacement and re-pouring of the fountain pool so not to miss the opportunity to reconstruct the pool if it is feasible. The granite rings will also be reappointed. Mr. Sawyer explained that the concrete steps on the west side of the fountain are currently used to hold up the western part of the pool and will be replaced with a sloping, earthen berm.

The key part of the fundraising will focus on a circle of recognition where names of those who supported the project can be etched and will no longer be brick material. Mr. Spooner asked what the depth of the pool will be if it is reconstructed. Mr. Sawyer noted that there are no safety codes that the engineers could find specific to fountains and will maintain the current depth of the pool. Mr. Doyle asked if additional details surrounding the earthen berm would be brought to council at a later point. Mr. Sawyer responded affirmatively. Mayor Gamache stated that she received feedback from members of the public who were very impressed by the presentation at the public meeting held. With regard to the circle of recognition, she also received feedback and wants to make sure that it doesn't inhibit wheelchairs or anyone with disabilities. Mr. Sawyer responded that it will be a level, at-grade surface on the eastern edge and will be four feet in width.

**A motion was made by Alderman Hawkins; seconded by Alderman Doyle to give favorable consideration of the plans for restoration of the Taylor Park fountain. Vote was unanimous, 6-0.**

Megan Manahan stated that on behalf of Rotary, they are very happy to be a part of the restoration project and appreciate the City's partnership and support. Mayor Gamache thanked Rotary for all of their support.

7. Permission for GMP to replace utility pole (D&V).

Mr. Sawyer explained that in association to the power request for the pump vault is the request for GMP to replace a utility pole on Church Street.

**A motion was made by Alderman Hawkins; seconded by Alderman Spooner to grant permission for GMP to replace the utility pole on Church Street. Vote was unanimous, 6-0.**

8. Certificate of Highway Mileage (D&V).

**A motion was made by Alderman Hawkins; seconded by Alderman Spooner to approve certification of highway mileage as presented. Vote was unanimous, 6-0.**

9. Warrants: 12/19/14 & 1/9/15 (D&V).

**A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderman Corrigan to approve warrants from 12/19/14 & 1/9/15. Vote was unanimous, 6-0.**

10. Minutes: Reg. Mtg. 12/8/14 & Special Mtg. 12/17/14 (D&V).

Mayor Gamache noted "x's" on section 10 of the 12/8/14 minutes. **A motion was made by Alderman Hawkins; seconded by Alderman Spooner to approve regular meeting minutes from 12/8/14 with corrections. Vote was unanimous, 5-0 with Alderman Corrigan abstaining.**

**A motion was made by Alderman Hawkins; seconded by Alderman Spooner to approve special meeting minutes from 12/17/14. Vote was unanimous, 6-0.**

11. Other Business.

Due to technical difficulties, this portion of the meeting was not recorded.

12. Adjourn.

**A motion was made by Alderman Hawkins; seconded by Alderman Doyle to adjourn meeting Vote was unanimous, 6-0.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristen Smith  
Admin. Coordinator

Approved by Council