

MINUTES
ST. ALBANS CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NORTH MAIN STREET
6:30 PM MONDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2025

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON 11/10/25

Council Members Present: IN PERSON: Tim Smith (Mayor); Timothy Hawkins (Ward I); Lindsay Hunn (Ward II); Marie Bessette (Ward III); Trudy Cioffi (Ward IV); Erik Johnson (Ward V); Chad Boudreau (Ward VI); Dominic Cloud (City Manager)

Council Members Absent:

City Staff present: IN PERSON: Chip Sawyer (Director of Planning & Development); Sarah Macy (Directory of Finance & Administration); Nicole Robtoy (City Clerk & Treasurer); Katie Haseltine (Minute Taker); Martin Manahan.

Members of the public present: IN PERSON: Peter Raymond; Pannos Lekkas; Kristen Messier; London Messier; Nate Messier; Katy Daly; Sandra Reed; Brenda Wells; Emily Belanger; Marc Bechard II, Kiersten Bourgeois; Caela Peterson VIA ZOOM: Jill Lombard; Nora Faris; Tara Sweet; Josh Ellerbrock.

1. T. Smith convenes Open Session with Pledge of Allegiance at 6:35 PM.

a. T. Smith led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Public comment on non-agenda items within Council Purview - None

3. Recess for Liquor Control (D&V)

a. Call to Order - T. Hawkins motions to recess for Liquor Control.

a. N. Robtoy introduces K. Messier, L. Messier, and N. Messier

b. New 2025 Liquor License - Char Restaurant, LLC (D&V)

a. Kristen Messier (Owner); London Messier (General Manager)

b. T. Smith asks if they are familiar with both state and local rules. K. Messier confirms.

c. T. Smith inquires when they plan to open. N. Messier shares they hope to open December 1, 2025.

d. T. Hawkins inquires about their plans for outdoor entertainment and noise concerns.

In the past, there have been some problems with that. N. Messier explains that it won't be an area they explore until summer of 2026 but does not anticipate bands to play past 10 pm and if any special events request music beyond that, they would obtain a permit from City Hall so they are in compliance with ordinances.

e. T. Hawkins motions to approve the liquor license for Char Restaurant. T. Cioffi seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.

f. T. Cioffi asks about their restaurant and what they'll be serving. N. Messier explains that they plan to serve steak, seafood, Americana style fare. C. Boudreau asks if K. Messier and N. Messier plan to also get their DLC, even though they are likely not directly doing the serving work. K. Messier confirms they likely will to train staff and just general good practice to have the education.

c. Other Business - None.

d. Adjourn - **T. Hawkins motions to adjourn and move out of liquor control. E. Johnson seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.**

4. St. Albans Creamery Appeal of Health Order Notice

a. City Presentation

1. D. Cloud explains that the memo included in the council packet covers all that he has to say on this matter.

b. St. Albans Creamery Presentation

1. P. Raymond explains that city employees have now been on site and been in the conversations regarding the monitoring of scent. They have installed 6 air monitoring instruments that log measurements every 20-25 seconds. These were installed on October 3rd and since then, they have received a summary report with preliminary data on how those are working. P. Raymond shares copies of that report and some visual graphs.
2. P. Raymond asks P. Lekkas to provide more information on that report. He shares that the initial analysis showed low or undetectable levels of emissions, with one exception of 0.4 ppm on October 8th. P. Raymond emphasized that they were preliminary results, and more analysis would follow.
3. T. Hawkins asks how many days the data covers. P. Lekkas shares it is showing 2 days. E. Johnson asks if those compounds are the ones contributing to the scent. P. Lekkas confirms. L. Hunn asks if these monitoring devices can detect compounds other than the hydrogen sulfide or methyl mercaptan. P. Lekkas explains that they cannot.
4. T. Cioffi asks if these compounds would be present in rotten milk. P. Lekkas is not sure. E. Johnson seeks confirmation of where the sensors are installed. P. Lekkas explains they are situated along the property line.
5. C. Boudreau summarizes that while the results they share show undetectable levels, it is not providing any insight into or correlation to the complaints being received, which doesn't allow much direction in moving forward with a plan.
6. T. Smith asks if the 0.4 ppm reading could be attributed to anything. P. Lekkas explains it was only a 20 second reading, and it is very hard to tell what that is.
7. T. Cioffi asks if it is true that employees have moved their lunchroom. P. Lekkas clarified that the lunchroom had not been relocated in the past two years and that some staff have chosen to take their lunch break to a different building onsite.
8. T. Hawkins asks for a comment on the claim from Chief Mulheron's interview with employees at DFA, that the EQ tank is open to the air with a slab over it. P. Lekkas explains that this is not the case, it is not open to the air, rather, there is a slab that goes on top. P. Lekkas goes on to share more detailed technical information on how that system works.
9. P. Raymond makes final remark in response to D. Cloud's memo that what people perceive as odor can certainly vary, but whether it can be raised as a public health hazard is questionable. He would ask that if the council were going to issue an order tonight, they would request to vacate the notice of intent.

c. Public Comment

1. T. Smith reads the public comment that S. Reed provided, skipping over most of it as it was personnel related and not odor related. S. Reed provides further public comment but is quite hoarse. T. Smith summarizes that an issue arose at the plant that her husband was told to stand down until the engineer fixed it, and there was also an issue with steam or smoke that emitted a rotten milk odor.

d. Council discussion and vote

1. T. Hawkins asks if there are any additional measures being taken to remedy the concerns of odor. P. Raymond notes a wet scrubber is still in process.
2. C. Boudreau asks how long they've been using handheld testing. P. Lekkas explains that they've been utilizing that since the beginning of August. C. Boudreau wonders if any of the handheld monitoring correlated with complaint logs that the city provided tonight. P. Raymond provides data that was shared at the DRB meeting.
3. T. Hawkins asks what may have happened on 9/19 that shows elevated levels in the data and has 5 complaints recorded. P. Lekkas explains that the EQ Tank was likely full.
4. C. Boudreau is inclined to let them finish testing with their consultant by the end of October and compare it to an updated complaint list. The bottom line is that if there are no identified solutions to control the odor, they will need to move forward with the Public Health Order.
5. P. Raymond shares that complaints being transmitted to the creamery as timely as possible would be useful. P. Lekkas asks if the city staff or M. Mulheron would like the creamery to test any other substances. D. Cloud explains that none of them are experts in the identification of substances causing these odors and would need an expert to provide guidance on that, which is on the creamery to seek out.
6. C. Boudreau wants to convey that regardless of what the City is looking M. Mulheron is not an expert. P. Lekkas can check with the engineer.
7. L. Hunn asks how they receive complaints and what the most effective way to get the information is. D. Cloud refers to the Health Order Notice calling on the creamery to establish a call line.
8. T. Cioffi asks how difficult it would be to establish a line for DFA to receive calls. P. Raymond explains that DFA does not have a designated staff person near a phone to take complaints.
9. T. Smith disagrees with D. Cloud and wants the City to remain in the conversation as it is their residents suffering from the odor and the City also needs to have record of this data. L. Hunn reiterates that the information needed in a complaint is the time, location, and description of the smell.
10. C. Boudreau requests to have some context on what level it takes for the odor to be noticeable, referencing decibels can be likened to the noise level of a vacuum. Real life examples can be helpful in conceptualizing the data being discussed.

11. C. Boudreau motions to table this order until the next meeting at which time they'd like to hear a plan. T. Hawkins seconds. T. Smith notes to St. Albans Creamery that the likelihood of extending the order again is low. Motion passes with all in favor.

5. Second Reading, ordinance to ban roosters

- a. Staff presentation
 - a. C. Sawyer explains that a noise ordinance is not always the way to address the concern of rooster noise. He references Essex and South Burlington as nearby communities that have done this, and Williston and Shelburne are considering it.
 - b. This would insert into the animal control ordinance.
- b. Public Comment
 - a. Caela Peterson shares that identifying roosters can take some time, up to 6 months. C. Sawyer indicates that the ordinance accounts for that.
 - b. K. Daly lives in the City, not near any farms, but does live near a rooster and it has been very aggravating. She came tonight to voice her support for this ordinance.

- c. E. Belanger lives on Huntington Street, has recently moved to the area, and is in support of this ordinance, good policy because it is fair and it allows all parties to have a standard to point to. She adds that this could also have some effect on property values and real estate sales, noting she may not have purchased the home if she knew a rooster lived nearby.
 - c. Consider adoption of ordinance to ban roosters (D&V)
 - a. **T. Hawkins motions to approve the ordinance to ban roosters. C. Boudreau seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.**
- 6. **Public information presentation on State Grant SRIN(45) pedestrian improvements, C. Sawyer**
 - a. C. Sawyer introduces Caela Peterson, who provides a brief presentation on the project background, research, and where they've landed on doing intersection improvements:
 - a. Installing button-operated flashing beacons at the Taylor Park mid-block crosswalk on North Main Street.
 - b. Installing button-operated flashing beacons at the North Elm Street crosswalk to Bellows Street.
 - c. Installing flashing LED lights on the STOP signs at the intersection of Aldis Street and North Elm Street.
 - b. T. Smith asks about the location of the one along North Elm Street. C. Sawyer provides clarification.
 - c. T. Cioffi asks what the dollar value of this grant is. Caela is not sure. D. Cloud explains that when the city did some research on the cost of a flashing crosswalk sign in the past, it was upwards of \$10,000/piece.
 - d. M. Manahan asks how they are powered. Caela believes they are solar, but could be wired, but would have to look.
 - e. T. Smith states that he has received several requests to have a lighted crosswalk sign at the intersection between BFA and From Scratch and wants C. Sawyer to be aware of this should any future projects come available that could make this attainable.
- 7. **First Reading, no parking from 8:00 am to 10:00 am on Bishop St., C. Sawyer**
 - a. C. Sawyer explains that M. Manahan concluded that it may benefit to prohibit parking during the morning hours on Bishop Street.
 - b. Mike, a resident in the area, was concerned with being able to have on street parking for residents when they have company over. M. Manahan shared this as a solution that has been used in the past and he was in favor of giving it a try.
 - c. T. Hawkins notes an edit to the writing and C. Sawyer makes a note.
- 8. **Consider Errors & Omissions for April 2025 grand list, C. Sawyer (D&V)**
 - a. C. Sawyer shares there are a few more corrections to the grand list. Quirks of the data as they transition from the old software to the new one. There were also some developments from residents in response to the reappraisals.
 - b. T. Smith asks if the council has any comments and thanks C. Sawyer for his work on this.
 - c. **T. Cioffi motions to approve the errors and omissions for April 2025. M. Besette seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.**
- 9. **FY25 Year End Financial Report, S. Macy**
 - a. S. Macy explains that the City had a solid year. The auditors came in and left a day early, which is a sign of success.
 - b. T. Hawkins highlights tax delinquencies being at their lowest since at least 2012 and is disappointed to see the deficit with Pool operations.
 - c. T. Smith brings attention to deferral of Q1 tax payments. S. Macy explains that this will be

recognized in FY26 because of the extension, but from what she can recall, the tax payments were down, but not anymore than they've seen in the past.

- d. T. Cioffi asks if there is a resident incentive for St. Albans City residents to go to the movies versus other people. S. Macy explains there is not currently. T. Cioffi thinks it would be worthwhile to pursue given there is a structure like that at Hard' Ack.
- e. E. Johnson asks if there is a capital fund for theater/recreation. S. Macy explains there is not one for that, they manage capital as the needs arise. However, she acknowledges that they are still learning about this part of the business. E. Johnson just wants to look out for city residents who are paying the bulk of the money to support the local recreation.
- f. L. Hunn asks if S. Macy knows what percentage of ticket and concession sales goes back to purchasing those items. S. Macy explains that 60% of ticket sales go back to the production companies, so the money maker for the theater is really in concessions. For that, the mark up is twice the wholesale cost to the consumer. L. Hunn shares her recent experience at theaters, noting the Majestic in Essex sells concessions much higher than the Welden (shares that a small popcorn and two sodas at the Majestic came close to \$37 and two popcorns at the Welden was about \$7).
- g. T. Hawkins feels the outcome of this budget is a good example of when they go over the budget with the city manager and city staff and the council is always trying to trim expenses or keep revenue down, it is often hard to swallow some of the items the city manager brings up, but the approach of maintaining a balanced budget allows for flexibility when unexpected expenses arise.

10. Consider a motion to authorize Revenue Anticipation not from NSB, S. Macy (D&V)

- a. S. Macy explains that last month, she received council authorization to seek short-term borrowing for \$600,000 for the purchase of the Messenger building. They have been working with Northfield Savings Bank, who has offered a short-term note at 4.85%, it was the best rate they could find outside their relationship with the local bank.
- b. *T. Hawkins motions to authorize Revenue Anticipation note from NSB. E. Johnson seconds. T. Smith asks if it is a fixed or variable rate. S. Macy explains it is a fixed rate for 12 months. Motion passes with all in favor.*

11. Review internal Financial Control Checklist for Municipalities, non action necessary

- a. S. Macy explains that they have a much more robust system of controls in addition to what this checklist requires, noting that their auditors are not shy in sharing their recommendations.
- b. T. Smith asks about the checklist item referencing loaning money to town employees. S. Macy provides clarification on that item noting it is outlined in their personnel policy and relates to the way the City's health plan is structured. They have a high-deductible plan, and if someone had an event at the beginning of the year, before funds are set aside, and needed access to a large amount of money, the staff could request a loan from the City that would then be repaid through payroll deductions.

12. Sign Houghton Park Loan Documents, S. Macy

- a. S. Macy explains this received voter approval back in March, it is for the underground storage at Houghton Park. It is \$3.9 million through the State Revolving Loan Fund. A portion of this is forgivable. Approximately the first \$1 million would be forgiven once the City moves into repayment. Tonight, the land documents from the bond bank need to be signed. T. Cioffi asks what the interest rate is. S. Macy explains that there is no interest, but a 2% administrative fee.
- b. T. Smith asks C. Sawyer for more information on bids. C. Sawyer explains that they are

currently under \$1 million but expect that the difference between that and the total amount of the loan to be eaten up by soil removal.

13. Consider approval of water & sewer allocation applications (D&V)

- a. Allocation memo from City Manager
 - a. T. Smith opens the discussion noting that the September meeting brought some questions regarding how water applications are handled.
 - b. D. Cloud has provided a memo to the council and explains that the allocation ordinance outlines the primary review criteria to the plant capacity and establishes priorities for the remaining capacity. City and Town properties are the highest priorities under the ordinance. The applications before the council tonight are low priority because they are outside the city or the town, but they are for water allocations, so the capacity issue is really a non-issue.
 - c. D. Cloud continues to explain that any new infrastructure costs are born by the developer, and then that infrastructure is turned over to the City. In the water business, it's really about economies of scale. The more ratepayers they have for servicing bonds and operating costs, the more the costs get for everybody. This analysis looks different on a wastewater project because it's a fixed capacity, meaning a project outside the city or town would be the lowest priority, and something the council might start to question granting it to a project outside the city or town depending on what capacity is left.
 - d. E. Johnson asks if there was also question of fairness because we have an agreement with the town and city that we don't have with some of these requests tonight. D. Cloud confirms but reminds of the influence by the difference between water and wastewater and it is water allocation applications before them tonight.
 - e. T. Cioffi asks about the affiliation fee and if it involved water in the past. D. Cloud explains that the affiliation fee is no longer in effect but did apply to water and wastewater. T. Cioffi follows by inquiring if it was previously in place for the town, why wouldn't it be in place for Swanton? D. Cloud explains that is not the way the ordinance reads, but the Council could discuss putting that back in place if they wish.
 - f. S. Macy explains that the affiliation fee was difficult to manage administratively, but as they go into budget season as they are looking at the enterprise fund budgets, the council could consider some strategies for addressing this. She adds that if they'd like to differentiate between city, town, and other, the better way to accomplish that would be in the rate structure and to keep that in mind.
- b. Camping World, 457 Swanton Road, St. Albans Town
 - a. **T. Hawkins motions to approve the water allocation to Camping World at 457 Swanton Road. T. Cioffi seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.**
- c. Stephen & Kristina Polak, 15, 19, & 23 Jewell Street, St. Albans Town
 - a. **T. Hawkins motions to approve the water allocation to Stephen & Kristine Polak at 15, 19, & 23 Jewell Street. T. Cioffi seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.**
- d. Marc & Ann Bechard, 189 Pearl Street, St. Albans City
 - a. **T. Cioffi motions to approve the water allocation to Marc & Ann Bechard at 189 Pearl Street. E. Johnson seconds. Motion passes with all, except T. Hawkins, in favor. T. Hawkins abstains.**
- e. Richard Cummings, Lydia's Ridge, Swanton
 - a. **C. Boudreau motions to approve the water allocation to Lydia's Ridge between Bushey & Sholan Roads in Swanton. T. Hawkins seconds. Motion passes with all in**

favor.

14. Mayor's Report

- a. Dog Park Appearance - Some concerns have been brought up, and it sounds like L. Hunn will be stepping up to try and resolve those, so thanks to her for that. People are leaving chairs there, might put some benches in to discourage that. It is starting to look a little trashy and that isn't the look the City wants when entering the complex.
- b. CDBG Grant / Hope Grove Recovery Center - Congrats to C. Sawyer on the approval of the grant and helping lead them through the process. C. Sawyer acknowledges that Kate Blouin and her constituents are mainly behind the project so congrats to them as well.
- c. Mural Downtown - this has been painted, and it will soon be mounted between Rail City Market and Red House Sweets, thinks it will be a nice addition.
- d. Purchased Property Timeline - thank you to D. Cloud for including that piece in the mayoral newsletter regarding property that the City has purchased, where appraisals have grown and what impact that has had on the grand list. T. Smith adds that if people want to know why the city is buying property, the memo gives a good overview.
- e. Recognition of Councilor Marie Bessette - *see Agenda Item 18, prior to adjournment.*

15. Council Reports

- a. Ward II - L. Hunn
 - a. Public Safety Meeting 10/7 - held in Taylor Park, it went well, not a ton of attendance, and L. Wetherby came by.
 - b. Spooky Saturday Event 10/25 - excited about that, heard about it through the BEI Committee and wanted to remind everyone of the event coming up.
 - c. Northwest Farmer's Market - went by this past weekend and it was beautiful.
- b. Ward III - M. Bessette
 - a. Departure/Last Meeting - has enjoyed being part of this council and believes that everyone brings a lot to the city. M. Bessette goes on to commend her constituents, noting they should be proud of all they do. She feels they are all fortunate to have staff at City Hall that work really well together. Kudos to D. Cloud for all that he has done. T. Smith is a great face for the city and is always open to having discussions. She has been on the council for almost 9 years, and she's enjoyed it all, it's been a wonderful thing to be a part of.
- c. Ward VI - C. Boudreau
 - a. Downtown Atmosphere - recently had a date night with his partner and rarely gets out in the evening to see St. Albans in it's prime - everything looked great, the theater was great, popcorn was good, film quality was good, overall, a great night out.
- d. Ward V - E. Johnson
 - a. Barlow Street Parking Signs - curious about the timeline for those getting installed. M. Manahan shares that they have been ordered, but is still waiting for them to come in.
- e. Ward IV - T. Cioffi
 - a. Public Safety Meeting - In regard to loud cars, paper plates, and tinted windows, Lt. Wetherby felt that state statute could really help allow for some enforcement of those rules because a lot of those vehicles should be inspected based on how those mechanisms are being installed. So, T. Cioffi is going to reach out to some state representatives to talk to them about those concerns. Additionally, Lt. Wetherby did mention they could do a saturation patrol focused on those concerns, but it would

need to be considered in the budget. T. Cioffi is going to bring concern to state legislatures.

- b. City School Drop-Off/Pick-Up Traffic - Last meeting there was discussion around this, and at the recommendation of T. Hawkins, the Public Safety Committee went down to observe how the traffic flow was in live time. The school was very cooperative and already put many of their recommendations into play. For the volume of cars and children being dropped off, the flow of traffic is good. T. Cioffi would like to continue to support the school and if there are complaints, directing them to the Public Safety Committee. They did not receive any communication or engagement from the concerned resident that was at last month's meeting. However, in regard to that individual, there are some overhanging branches that are obstructing the view of the roadway and wonder if the school can legally trim the tree. T. Hawkins confirms that they can legally trim what is hanging over into their property but given the nature of the relationship they may not be comfortable trimming in the chance it might spill over into the residents' property.
- c. Ordinance for 1-way on Bellows St. - T. Cioffi shares their suggestion is to table that for now as the school is doing a lot of work to remedy these concerns.
- f. Ward I - T. Hawkins
 - a. Reid Commons - two things - also noticed at the new development on Lake & Maple
 - a. Flat wooden piece on the front of the building looks to be part of the decking, not painted or anything, and believes it is going to eventually weather and look poor.
 - b. Pile of debris under a pine tree, mostly concrete slabs, as well as some weed growth, could use some cleaning up, making it unsightly.
 - b. Second Parking lot on Lake Street - where the meters/signs were, has grown up a bit and could use some attention and clean up. C. Boudreau adds that he is hearing some of Heath's tenants are parking there and not sure if they are paying or not but doesn't think they should be able to park. There is continued discussion around parking rates and longevity in the City.

16. Consider approval of meeting minutes: 9/8/25 Reg. Mtg. (D&V)

- a. *T. Cioffi motions to approve the minutes for 9/8/25. E. Johnson seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.*

17. Consider approval of warrant: 9/30/25 (D&V)

- a. *T. Cioffi motions to approve the warrant for 9/30/25. C. Boudreau seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.*

18. Adjourn

- a. T. Smith presents the honorable M. Bessette, Ward 3 Alderperson of the St. Albans City Council, with a plaque that reads: *"In sincere gratitude for the dedicated service, assistance, guidance, and outstanding leadership you've provided to the citizens of St. Albans for 8 years. Your efforts on the City Council have had a significant impact on our community and will be felt for years to come. You have shown what it means to be involved in your community and set an example to be followed in the future and cherished by those of us that were fortunate enough to experience it ourselves. From your friends and colleagues on the St. Albans City Council and in City Hall."*
- b. *T. Hawkins motions to adjourn. E. Johnson seconds. Motion passes with all in favor. T. Smith adjourns meeting at 8:55 pm.*