

MINUTES
ST. ALBANS CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NORTH MAIN STREET
6:30 PM MONDAY, JANUARY 12TH, 2026
APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON 2/9/26

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

Council Members Absent: None absent.

City Staff present: IN PERSON: Chip Sawyer (Director of Planning & Development); Sarah Macy (Director of Finance & Administration); Martin Manahan (Director of Operations & Business Development); Katie Haseltine (Minute Taker)

Members of the public present: IN PERSON: Janis Appel; Michael Nicholas VIA ZOOM: Josh Ellerbrock; Carl Watkins

2. **T. Smith convenes Open Session with Pledge of Allegiance at 6:34 PM.**
 - a. T. Smith led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **Public comment on non-agenda items within Council Purview - None**
4. **Consider certification of highway mileage, C. Sawyer (D&V)**
 - a. C. Sawyer states this is an annual certification because there are certain state block grants that the City receives for the mileage of certain types of roads. This year, there are a couple additions from V-Trans doing a couple small measurement updates with their own system and the City adding 0.15 miles of road when Federal Street Extension was created. A few additions this year (.15 miles when they created Federal Street extension).
 - b. T. Smith asks C. Sawyer to provide the definitions of Class 1, 2, and 3 roads.
 - c. **C. Boudreau motions to approve the certification of highway mileage as presented. E. Johnson seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.**
5. **Public hearing and discussion on update of City Plan, C. Sawyer**
 - a. C. Sawyer explains that updates to the City Plan are required every 8 years, and while the plan is advisory, it is necessary for zoning compatibility and includes data on public safety, demographics, transportation, etc. Part of this plan considers a response to recent state legislation with Act 181, which ties into Act 250 exemptions for housing projects. Alongside this, the Northwest Regional Planning Commission has been quickly updating their regional plan in response to the new legislation and needed the City to expedite the update to the City Plan before they go before the Vermont Land Use Board.
 - b. T. Hawkins asks if there has been any project that has been present within the city limits that has stopped because of Act 250. C. Sawyer explained that they do have the option to consider Tier 1A Act 250 exemption, but they will have some time to consider if they want to pursue that.
 - c. T. Smith appreciated the list of accomplishments from the last plan being included.
 - d. E. Johnson inquires about “proposed” wording the plan had, C. Sawyer clarifies and goes onto explain that they are looking at Fairfield Street and Lake Street as being corridors to downtown, and some potential zoning changes there to create other districts.

6. First reading of updates to Taylor Park rules, C. Sawyer

- a. C. Sawyer explains that they installed new signage displaying rules in Taylor Park this past summer and some of the new rules need to be integrated into the City Ordinances.
- b. T. Hawkins questions the 2-hour limit, expecting there to be some kickbacks from some residents. C. Sawyer explains that it is a rule that can be used in helpful circumstances but is not necessarily something that will be heavily monitored and enforced.
- c. T. Cioffi explains that they discussed this at their Public Safety Committee and the officer who monitors the park found them to be very useful.

7. Consider board appointments (D&V)

- a. Planning Commission: Janis Appel
 - a. **T. Smith motions to reappoint the J. Appel to the Planning Commission with a term expiring 12/31/2028. C. Boudreau seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.**
- b. Downtown Board: Jennifer DiNatale, Cody Hooper-Kaufmann, Bobby Powell, Jeremy Read, and Shannon Smith.
 - a. **E. Johnson motions to approve all five candidates for the downtown Board with terms expiring 12/31/2028. T. Cioffi seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.**
- c. Police Advisory: Marcus Neabar
 - a. **T. Cioffi motions to reappoint the M. Neabar to the Police Advisory Board with a term expiring 12/31/2028. T. Hawkins seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.**

8. City Budget Development

- a. Staff Presentation, S. Macy
 1. T. Smith welcomes S. Macy to provide an overview of the City Budget. S. Macy explains that the theme is to provide cost stability, continue focusing on public safety and catching up on deferred capital investments. She continues by providing a general overview of major cost drivers and revenues, which include proposals for police vehicles, ECOC rehabilitation, and various infrastructure updates. Debt issuance is planned to fund some of those projects. Non-tax revenues increased by 12%, which offsets some operational costs and professional services funding that was needed last year for the reappraisal.
- b. Finance Committee Comments
 1. T. Hawkins shares that they were presented with this budget last week and reviewed the proposals presented by staff and felt that a 2.2% increase to the tax levy seemed reasonable. E. Johnson felt it was a fiscally responsible budget, and notes keeping the City's increase low with the unknown of education budget. C. Boudreau also agrees with T. Hawkins and E. Johnson and highlights that it is outstanding that it falls almost an entire percent under inflation.
 2. T. Hawkins also draws the board's attention to the budget, including a 4-year look back on budget to actuals and seeing how close they fall was pretty remarkable. He reflects that the City ultimately approves the budget and then we leave it up to the City Manager and staff to manage and shift items as things come up.
- c. City Council Comment
 1. T. Smith reminds that this is only the City Budget, what they can control, and the education portion has not yet been announced.
 2. T. Cioffi acknowledges that the City has a great fire department and asks if there is a plan for improving their space. D. Cloud says it is on their radar.
 3. T. Hawkins asks how the reappraisal affected the CLA. S. Macy shares it is over 100% now with the reappraisal.

4. T. Smith noticed there were still trees on the budget. C. Sawyer explains that line item is in the stormwater budget.
5. E. Johnson asks how many miles of paving the budgeted amount can achieve. M. Manahan doesn't have exact mileage but explains they run on a 10-year cycle.
- d. Public Comment - None.
- e. Possible motion reflecting Council sentiments (D&V)
 1. **T. Hawkins motions to accept the city budget as presented. C. Boudreau seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.**
 2. D. Cloud explains there will be a public hearing for this, which will be announced on the St. Albans Messenger, and some mailings. T. Cioffi asks if it can also be announced via the City's Facebook page. D. Cloud confirms.

9. Consideration of bond vote for refurbishment of water tower

- a. Project Overview, M. Manahan
 - a. M. Manahan explains that the state requires the City to have a redundancy water supply available. Right now, Fairfax is producing about 850,000 gallons a day where Maquam is producing about 200,000. Currently the system is using about 1 million gallons a day. To meet the requirements, the City built a new tank in 2023 at the cost of \$2.6 million, and part of that requirement is rehabbing the original tank. The tank was built in 1953 and has never been taken offline. The estimated cost is not to exceed \$1.6 million and includes work such as sandblasting, lead paint containment, structural repairs, and the installation of a mixing system.
- b. Financing Overview, S. Macy
 - a. S. Macy explains that the project cost is estimated at \$1.6 million and is eligible for 50% forgiveness through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund. \$800K would be paid back over 40 years at 0% interest. This subsidy is contingent on the City meeting specific milestones, the next of which is to schedule a bond vote for March 2026.
 - b. T. Smith seeks confirmation that no vote is needed. D. Cloud confirms, and shares this will be lumped in with the warning for City Budget that council will need to sign.

10. Mayor's Report

- a. Lemnah Drive - Had heard that the retention pond had frozen up and then thawed and overflowed onto the road. M. Manahan explains it hasn't overflowed since before they put up the structure. T. Smith will check back on who spoke to him about this.

11. Council Reports

- a. Ward I - T. Hawkins
 - a. Paving - reflecting that roads have taken a hit with the winter weather this year, frost heaves and potholes are everywhere. T. Hawkins appreciates Public Works and the repairs they can do with the budget.
- b. Ward IV - T. Cioffi
 - a. Lilacs on Driscoll Drive - T. Cioffi had a resident inquire wondering why they were trimmed in the first place and if there is any plan to put any back. M. Manahan explains that there are no plans to put any back.
 - b. Bank & Congress - Another resident shared concern of people parking on both sides of the street and wondered if a one-way street or no parking sign can be put up. In addition to that, they observed that there are no curbs on that street, so stormwater is washing away their yards. M. Manahan will take a look, but notes that the water issue is a resident who has a sump pump and is pumping out onto the lawn.
 - c. Sidewalk on Lemnah Drive - Another resident shared that they would like to see a

sidewalk put in there. C. Sawyer explains that it is on the Federal Street connector plan.

- c. Ward V - E. Johnson
 - a. Barlow/Diamond - E. Johnson asks M. Manahan if he can have Public Works trim some growth in that area since it has overgrown into the sidewalk again. M. Manahan will do that.
 - b. Upper Gilman - E. Johnson wonders about getting sidewalks on one or both sides of the road with the new homes going up there. C. Sawyer explains that they've never had a requirement in zoning to mandate sidewalks. M. Manahan adds that Upper Gilman doesn't have any runoff infrastructure and in creating curbs and sidewalks, they would also need to consider putting in some drains.
- d. Ward II - L. Hunn
 - a. Public Works - thank you to the road crew for keeping the roads safe.
- e. Ward VI - C. Boudreau
 - a. Rec Department Events - Plugs upcoming events like the Winter Carnival (2/21), and the Father Daughter, Mother Son dances.

12. Consider approval of meeting minutes: 12/8/25 Reg. Mtg. (D&V)

- a. *T. Hawkins motions to approve the minutes for 12/8/25. T. Cioffi seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.*

13. Consider approval of warrant: 12/31/25 (D&V)

- a. *T. Hawkins motions to approve the warrant for 12/31/25. T. Cioffi seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.*

14. Adjourn

- a. *T. Cioffi motions to adjourn very early. E. Johnson seconds. Motion passes with all in favor. T. Smith adjourns meeting at 7:45 pm.*