

**St. Albans City Council
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, March 9, 2020
City Hall, Council Chambers**

A regular meeting of the St. Albans City Council was held on Monday, March 9, 2020, at 6:30 pm in the City Hall Council Chambers.

Council Present: Mayor Tim Smith; Aldermen: Michael McCarthy, Jim Pelkey, Chad Spooner and Tim Hawkins & Alderwomen: Marie Bessette and Kate Laddison.

Council Absent: None absent.

Staff Present: Dominic Cloud, City Manager; Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning & Development; Tom Leitz, Director of Administration; Curry Galloway, City Clerk & Marty Manahan, Director of Public Works, Operations & Business Development.

Visitors: See attached sign-in sheet.

1. Executive Session to discuss opioid litigation.
 - a. Consider a motion that premature disclosure would compromise the City (D&V).
A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderman Hawkins to find that premature disclosure of the above matters would compromise the City. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.
 - b. The Council moves to enter Executive Session for purposes of discussing real estate acquisition, contract negotiations and litigation (D&V).
A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderman Hawkins to enter Executive Session along with Counsel Vanessa Kittell for purposes of discussing litigation. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.
A motion was made by Alderman Hawkins; seconded by Alderman Spooner to exit Executive Session. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.
 2. Convene Open Session with Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Smith called the meeting to order at 6:42 pm and led the pledge of allegiance.

Mr. Spooner requested adding two agenda items for election of a representative to the Northwest Solid Waste District and election of a Deputy Town Health Officer as agenda item's 4.a. and 4.b.
 3. Public Comment on items not on agenda.

No public comment was made.
 4. Swearing-in of Mayor and Councilors McCarthy and Bessette, C. Galloway.

City Clerk & Treasurer, Curry Galloway, swore in Mayor Tim Smith for a 2 year term as Mayor.

Ms. Galloway swore in Councilor's McCarthy and Bessette for 3 year terms.
- a. Consider election of a representative to the Northwest Solid Waste District (D&V).

Mr. Spooner stated that Tom Leitz has been the City representative to the NWSWD and would like to continue serving.

A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to reappoint Tom Leitz to the Solid Waste Commission. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.

- b. Consider election of a Deputy Town Health Officer (D&V).

Mr. Spooner stated that the Deputy Health Officer's term expires on 4/30/20.

A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to reappoint Chief Gary Taylor as Deputy Health Officer. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.

5. Election of Council President (D&V).

- a. Nominations

Alderman Hawkins nominated Chad Spooner as Council President.

- b. Voting

A motion was made by Alderman Hawkins; seconded by Alderwoman Bessette to reappoint Chad Spooner as Council President. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.

6. Recess for Liquor Control (see separate agenda).

A motion was made by Alderman Hawkins; seconded by Alderman Spooner to recess for liquor control. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.

7. Presentation of FY 19 Financials, Melanson & Heath.

Mr. Leitz introduced Alina Korsak of Melanson & Heath. She proceeded to present a summary of the FY 19 Financials for the City of St. Albans (See Attached Slides).

Mr. Spooner asked if the LOT money would end up in the unassigned General Fund Balance. Mr. Cloud responded affirmatively. He stated that the City's financial statements look a lot like a startup. He explained that there are two drivers of that; the redevelopment activity and the lack of additional funding sources that the City could use to grow it.

8. Presentation of St. Albans Museum Activities, Alex Lehning.

Mr. Lehning introduced himself. He proceeded to show a short video showing Lake Lessons which is a free enrichment program offered to students from local schools to learn about the water quality of the lake and what they can do to help improve the water quality. Mr. Lehning explained that their goal is to be a museum without walls.

He thanked the City Council, community members and donors for all of their support. In 2018 and 2019, the museum set records for attendance. The general public is welcome as well as schools and classrooms. Mr. Lehning stated that they had veterans from the radar base visit for a tour. They are pleased to be a community partner and part of Last Night and Festival of Trees just to name a few. The museum is equally as proud of their internship program which allows students to get hands on experience in cultural management practices. They are fortunate to have 15 board members and more than 20 volunteers. The museum hosted 5 successful fundraising events this past year and will be holding more this year. They are finding new ways to generate revenue and attract the next generation of supporters. They take stewardship of the building seriously and recently applied for grant funding to repair the roof. The museum staff wants to continue to find ways to be able to steward and sustain the building so it can continue operating as a museum.

Mr. Lehning explained that over the last 3 years, the museum has brought in traveling exhibits and have been developing new exhibits. They are currently redesigning the railroad room and will have a special youth activity area. Mr. Lehning stated that they've added new exhibition and educational programs and are doing everything they can to make the museum a true gathering space. They are always looking for new revenues, new grants and new partnerships to be a cultural and educational leader in order to keep the museum operating for another 50 years.

Mr. Spooner noted that he recently visited Charleston and commended Mr. Lehning for the efforts to maintain the building. He thanked him for revolving and changing the exhibits and asked if there is

anything that can be done as a City to assist him. Mr. Lehning responded that continued engagement and support is critical. Mr. Spooner suggested putting local 5013C's on the City website to allow the public options to volunteer and donate.

9. Consider a motion to approve annual certification of highway financial plan, C. Sawyer (D&V).
Mr. Sawyer stated that this is a required submission to VTrans.

A motion was made by Alderman Hawkins; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to approve annual certification of highway financial plan. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.

10. Consider a resolution to execute VCDP Grant Agreement for Maiden Lane Housing, C. Sawyer (D&V).
Mr. Sawyer stated that the City was awarded \$1 million from VCDP for the affordable housing apartment building that will be going on Maiden Lane and run by CHT. The City will use \$150,000 to complete brownfield on the site and \$850,000 will be used by CHT.

A motion was made by Alderman Hawkins; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to approve resolution to execute VCDP Grant Agreement for Maiden Lane Housing. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.

11. Consider a resolution to approve inter-fund loan for public safety building, T. Leitz (D&V).
Mr. Leitz stated that the auditors want to see an executed agreement for the inter-fund loan for the public safety building. Mr. Hawkins asked if this has ever been done before. Mr. Leitz responded that the City's cash is pooled and this is a way of formalizing it. Mr. Hawkins stated that he believes it's a great idea.

A motion was made by Alderman Hawkins; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to approve inter-fund loan for public safety building. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.

12. Grey Hound Bus Stop

- a. Consider authorization for the City Manager to negotiate an agreement with Greyhound Lines Inc. for City Hall to serve as a ticketing agent and provide a nearby bus stop in order for St. Albans to serve as a stop on the Boston to Montreal line (D&V).

Mayor Smith recalled that there is an initiative led by Mr. Levy and his wife to bring the Greyhound bus service back to the community. They met with the Town early in the process and originally thought the ideal pick up location would be by exit 19. They then had conversations about bringing it downtown and discussed the idea with a number of the merchants.

Mr. Levy stated that 20 years ago, there was Greyhound bus service between Montreal and Boston and was an intricate part of the attractiveness of the area. There came a point in time where Greyhound's business model was to get passengers as quickly as possible between Montreal and Boston. With that in mind, they decided to forego the stop in St. Albans without input from the community. He had tried to reactivate the proposal with Greyhound to reincorporate St. Albans and when he recently spoke with the Regional Manager, he learned that Greyhound has redefined its business model. Many people that get on the bus in Montreal want to get off in Burlington or White River Junction and Greyhound recognized that the new transportation model should serve the citizens of smaller communities. He was ultimately put in touch with the Route Manager based in Connecticut who met with the Mayor and City Manager. Mr. Levy stated that this is a regional initiative and will benefit the entire county.

Greyhound has communicated that they would prefer a ticketing agency in the center of town. Mayor Smith, Mr. Cloud and Mr. Levy approached several downtown merchants to see if they had interest to serve as a ticketing agency with no desire. City Hall gradually became an ideal location and the Route Coordinator supported City Hall as a ticketing agent location. The responsibility would be having a computer that links to the Greyhound network and allows people to purchase tickets. The

average number of tickets sold each day in person would be 3. He has been assured by Greyhound that it is not a problem for the ticketing agency to be closed during the weekend. He added that there are also restrooms on the bus. Initially, there would be 2 busses a day; one heading south from Montreal, arriving in St. Albans at 10 am and a bus leaving Boston and arriving in St. Albans late in the afternoon. In time, he sees potential for the number of busses to grow. Mr. Levy explained that if we are able to make this happen, St. Albans will be the only present stop between Montreal and Burlington which will bring great promotional opportunities to the region. He added that Wes Pennington, the Route Coordinator is happy to answer any questions.

Mayor Smith stated that he spoke briefly with Ms. Galloway about how this would impact her office. She stated that they do sell GMTA tickets currently and sell less than a dozen per week. Mr. Levy added that an advantage is that many people will be able to travel to the Burlington airport from St. Albans. There is also a stop in downtown Burlington. Mr. Pelkey recalled some discussion about it being an intermodal transportation hub at the railroad. He suggested having a ticket agency near the hotel. Mr. Levy stated that the Hampton Inn was one of the merchants that they approached but the consensus was that it wouldn't work and the franchise owner didn't want to pursue it.

Mr. Hawkins stated that Greyhound has an express bus and a stopping bus and has seen that in Florida. He believes Greyhound and the passengers could have it both ways. Mayor Smith stated that there is the pull off spot in front of the Welden and have also discussed Hudson Street as a pick up location. Mr. Hawkins expressed what a great opportunity this is for the downtown.

A motion was made by Alderman Pelkey; seconded by Alderman Spooner to authorize the City Manager to negotiate an agreement with Greyhound Lines Inc. for City Hall to serve as a ticketing agent and provide a nearby bus stop in order for St. Albans to serve as a stop on the Boston to Montreal line. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.

13. Mayor's Report.

a. Proclamation for Poetry Month.

Mayor Smith stated that he's been asked to make a proclamation for April as National Poetry Month. He proceeded to read aloud the proclamation.

b. Discussion of next steps for pool vote.

Mayor Smith stated that he was pleased with the way Town Meeting progressed for the City. All articles passed with a very high level of support. There were 2,000 voters in the Town and the pool article fell short by 37 votes. He did the St. Albans Today Show with Brendan Deso who made it quite clear that there is a high level of interest in the Town to revisit this moving forward.

Mr. Cloud stated that the City was concerned about construction costs inflating and do not have that concern in the short run. The City's vote is good indefinitely according to the bond council as long as the project doesn't change. There is an important relationship here at stake and believes the City should give the Town some time to reestablish as a new board and decide how to move forward. He believes it's the right project in the right spot. Mayor Smith stated that the Town does have this discussion scheduled to appear on their next agenda.

Mr. Cloud stated that one of the challenges was having both the City and Town speaking at the same time. Mayor Smith received a text from Kelly Viens who was unable to attend and didn't want viewers to perceive her absence as her believing this to not be important. Mr. Spooner stated that he would like to see a deadline set to allow the Town to decide if they are going to join the City on this project or not. Mr. Spooner stated that the City tied the pool to the LOT and a lot of people believe the LOT isn't going to happen because the pool isn't happening right now. Mr. McCarthy stated that he has already requested the draft of the charter amendment to be moved forward and has

confirmed with council that it's not subject to crossover. There should still be plenty of time to get it between the House and Senate and get it passed.

14. Other Business.

Mayor Smith asked if staff is in discussion with the Maple Festival and if there is confidence that the power in the park will work. Mr. Manahan responded that they are meeting tomorrow and would be shocked if the power did not work. Mayor Smith stated that they are also doing another round of window painting.

Mr. Spooner noted that it seems the roads have held up better this winter. Mr. Manahan stated that the frost wasn't as deep and the night crew has been fixing pot holes. He thanked the Public Works crew. He brought up the possibility of making the entire length of Spruce Street one-way for safety.

Mayor Smith stated that he spoke to Mrs. Lemnah who said the truck traffic has diminished substantially on Upper Welden Street.

Mr. McCarthy stated that the election was run very smoothly and thanked Ms. Galloway, Ms. Gabaree and all of the JOPS.

15. Minutes and warrants

a. Consider approval of minutes: Reg. Mtg. 1/13/20 & Special Mtg. 1/24/20 & 2/10/20 (D&V).

A motion was made by Alderman Hawkins; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to approve 1/13/20 minutes. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.

A motion was made by Alderman Hawkins; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to approve 1/24/20 minutes. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.

A motion was made by Alderman Hawkins; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to approve 2/10/20 minutes. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.

b. Consider approval of warrants: 1/23/20, 1/31/20, 2/18/20 & 2/28/20 (D&V).

A motion was made by Alderman Hawkins; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to approve 1/23/20 warrants. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.

A motion was made by Alderman Hawkins; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to approve 1/31/20 warrants. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.

A motion was made by Alderman Hawkins; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to approve 2/18/20 warrants. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.

A motion was made by Alderman Hawkins; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to approve 2/28/20 warrants. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.

16. Adjourn

A motion was made by Alderman McCarthy; seconded by Alderman Spooner to adjourn meeting at 8:37 pm. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristen Smith

Community Relations Coordinator