

**St. Albans City Council  
Minutes of Meeting  
Monday, October 8, 2018  
City Hall, Council Chambers**

A regular meeting of the St. Albans City Council was held on Monday, October 8, 2018, at 6:30 pm in the City Hall Council Chambers.

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

**Council Absent:** Alderman Tim Hawkins.

**Staff Present:** Dominic Cloud, City Manager; Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning & Development; Marty Manahan, Director of Operations & Business Development, Tom Leitz, Director of Administration and Kristen Smith, Community Relations Coordinator.

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

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance.  
Mayor Smith called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and led the pledge of allegiance.
2. Public Comment on items not on agenda.  
No public comment was discussed.
3. RiseVT: Presentation of City's report card, Jessica Frost, RiseVT  
Jessica Frost of RiseVT introduced herself. Ms. Frost explained that RiseVT works with schools, municipalities, businesses and individuals. They meet with all of the municipalities in Franklin and Grand Isle County and rate each town with a score card. The City is one of two Gold municipalities. RiseVT has a list of best practices for municipal planning such as smoke free signage in the parks, improving connectivity and making towns pedestrian friendly, and planning for recreational areas. She added that the thriving farmer's market comes into play as well as the sidewalk work and the Route 7 project that the City and Town have partnered on. Ms. Frost presented the Gold Municipality certificate to Mayor Smith. Mayor Smith asked Ms. Frost who she works with at the City. Ms. Frost responded that she has been working with Mr. Sawyer.  
  
Mayor Smith asked Ms. Frost what is left to be accomplished. Ms. Frost responded that some of the goals for the City to focus on are reducing the visibility of alcohol and tobacco products and advertisements throughout content neutral policy and in zoning changes and could be applied in areas around the schools. The second is determining the role and frequency of alcohol at family focused events and creating a culture where there isn't always alcohol present at a family event. Mayor Smith asked Ms. Frost to elaborate on some of the initiatives that the City school has done. Ms. Frost responded that City School is also a Gold school member and have multiple Gold classrooms. They are one of the few schools that have a 30 minute recess and have paved the way for a lot of the schools in the area. Mayor Smith added that RiseVT has also conducted health assessments.
4. Mayoral Proclamations for 100 Years of Service  
Mayor Smith stated that the community is very fortunate to have some strong businesses to the point where two have reached a 100 year milestone and have been instrumental in the history of St. Albans.
  - a. Heald's Funeral Home

Mayor Smith read aloud and presented the proclamation to Heald's Funeral Home for 100 years of service. Mayor Smith expressed gratitude and appreciation for the compassion, care and attention to detail that Heald's Funeral Home provides. Rhett Heald thanked his staff and associates.

b. St. Albans Cooperative Creamery

Mayor Smith read aloud and presented the proclamation to Mr. Berthiaume of the St. Albans Cooperative Creamery for 100 years of service. Mayor Smith stated that a number of things have been done to commemorate the agriculture community. Although growth has affected the limitations of the co-op, it still remains a valuable business in the community and Mayor Smith explained that he wanted to recognize that with the photo contest and a painted cow that will be presented outside of City Hall. Mr. Berthiaume thanked the City of St. Albans and the community for the support that has been provided to the St. Albans Cooperative over the last 100 years. He recalled going to the cooperative back in the 60's and can certainly attest that things have changed on Federal Street and that wouldn't have been possible without the support of the City who was important in the recent growth and expansion of the footprint of the coop. Today, Franklin County still supports around 3,500 dairy farmer families. Mr. Berthiaume stated that it has been a privilege to work with the dairy farmers and the caliber of people across the State as it relates to agriculture.

5. Continue Emergency Ordinance Re: Truck Traffic on Upper Welden Street (D&V).

Mr. Cloud recalled that the emergency ordinance is limited to 30 days which is approaching and asked Council if they would like to continue the emergency ordinance. Mr. Spooner asked Ms. Laddison if she has noticed a difference in truck traffic on Upper Welden Street. Ms. Laddison responded affirmatively and stated that it has been better. Mr. Manahan stated that Peter Cross stopped a truck and the driver stated that he was following his GPS which directed him down Upper Welden Street to get to Barry Callebaut.

Mayor Smith recapped that in addition to the initiatives that have been taken by the City and in his capacity at FCIDC is a letter that has been drafted and signed by himself, the City Manager and Town Manager. He explained that the letter will be presented to all of the companies at the Industrial Park to be shared with their drivers. He noted that the letter included a color coded map. Mayor Smith explained that the Emergency Ordinance gave the police the capability of pulling the trucks over. He added that there were fines built in but the first priority was to educate and have a conversation with the drivers.

Mayor Smith asked Mr. Cloud if he could get a report from Chief Taylor to determine the findings of the police stops. Mr. Cloud responded that he can get a report for the next meeting. He stated that he suspects there must be something built into the algorithm that detects the stop light. Mayor Smith stated that the thinking is that it is too difficult to get off the interstate access road and take a left turn to the Industrial park because traffic is heavy but if the trucks come to the bottom of Welden, there's a stop light that allows them to maneuver that turn. Mr. Spooner stated that it doesn't seem quicker to go that route with the four stop signs the trucks have to adhere to on Welden. Mr. Pelkey asked about the possibility of getting a light at the bottom of the interstate access road. Mr. Cloud responded that it could be done anytime with Council approval. Mayor Smith asked if it can easily be done since it's dealing with two State road. Mr. Cloud responded that it's a Class 1 road and is part of the permit for the Federal Street and Lower Connector project. Mr. Spooner asked Mr. Cloud how much a light would cost. Mr. Cloud responded that it would cost approximately \$300,000. Ms. Laddison noted that traffic can be terrible in that area when school goes in and out of session. Mayor Smith asked Mr. Cloud if he could explore that option. Mr. Pelkey suggested splitting the cost with the Town. Mr. Spooner commented that on the map presented, there is nothing going up Pine Street and across Pearl for the old Agway building. Ms. Bessette stated that she received a complaint about truck traffic on Pearl Street

and believes it's coming from the old mill. Mr. Manahan stated that he believes they have a designated truck route that they use which prevents them from traveling on Walnut Street.

**A motion was made by Alderman Pelkey; seconded by Alderwoman Laddison to continue the Emergency Truck Ordinance regarding truck traffic on Upper Welden Street. Vote was unanimous, 6-0.**

6. Consider adoption of Certificate of Project Completion for Neighborhood Sidewalks, Tom Leitz (D&V).  
Mr. Leitz stated that this is part of post-issuance compliance for bonds. When debt is issued, there is a certain amount of time to spend it under IRS requirements.

**A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to adopt certificate of project completion for neighborhood sidewalks for year one. Vote was unanimous, 6-0.**

7. First Reading, Proposed Changes to Permitting Fees, Chip Sawyer (D&V).

Mr. Sawyer stated that it's been at least 6 years since the permitting fees have been updated. The basis of the fees is so that some of the costs of doing the permitting from a City staff standpoint isn't all borne by tax payers and the General Fund and those seeking permits and those needing certifications are the ones who bear a great majority of those costs. Staff normally budgets \$30,000 per year in fees and they serve an important principle. Staff has been looking at grounds for a general comprehensive update to the permitting fees and do know that they are lower than other municipalities.

Mr. Sawyer explained that one of the things at the beginning of the memo is a very discreet cost item that is not currently covered by the permitting fee which is a certified mailing. Postage to mail a certified letter to an abutter costs \$6.67 and is currently listed as \$5. The next suggestion is to remove the set fees for providing copies for zoning maps and land development regulations. Mr. Sawyer stated that the per page copy cost even for color is very low. Mr. Sawyer stated that he'd like to clarify the policy for charging \$500 for considering a change to the regulations which is a common fee amongst municipalities. If someone has a project on one property in the community and would like the Permitting Department to consider changing the zoning for a particular reason, the applicant would pay for that service which requires staff time. In other situations, an individual will come in and ask if something has been considered which ends up being the direction the City wants to take. In that instance, he doesn't feel that it's right to charge someone for helping the City implement the City Plan. A footnote has been added that states the Planning Commission can waive a fee if they feel the suggestion made would otherwise implement the City Plan. The final line of the fee page, deletes the reference to the \$10 recording fee and replaces it with language that indicates the fee is set by State statute. Mayor Smith asked if that fee is consistent across every City and Town. Mr. Sawyer responded affirmatively.

The new addition to the fee schedule goes back to the principle that those who apply for services in the permitting office should bear some of the costs. Staff is looking into implementing a digital records system for permitting, assessing and inspections and would have the ability to pull up digitally all the types of records that would go with any property in the City. The problem with the current system is that it's all based on paper and even though items are scanned, there's nothing to show the sequence of events and there's the possibility that items can get misfiled or lost. Digital redundancy would quickly show everything that has been done on a property and will help staff and applicants doing research and bring together the synergies of assessing, building inspections, permitting and PHSO. Mr. Sawyer stated that the product being considered is called Citizen Serve. The City budgeted for the product and benefits many City functions and could be spread across several City departments. He is proposing that Planning and Development and Permitting pay for 50% which would be \$3600 per year. Mr. Sawyer stated that he estimates the department serves around an average of 300 permits, certificates of compliance and hearing notices per year which is where the \$12 records management charge is derived. That charge would cover the permitting piece of that software program.

Mayor Smith recalled that a lot of documents were being scanned in the Clerk's office and asked if that process has been completed. Mr. Leitz responded that that has been completed and the challenge now is cataloging and working with the vendor to determine pricing for online access. Mr. Sawyer added that that that project was land records and we haven't digitized lister cards, other assessing records, all the permitting records, rental registry and building inspection. Mayor Smith asked if that's an ongoing discussion. Mr. Sawyer stated that it could all be accomplished with the Citizen Serve program.

**A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderwoman Bessette to approve first reading of proposed changes to permitting fees. Vote was unanimous, 6-0.**

8. Consider approval of warrants: 9/24/18 & 10/5/18 (D&V).

**A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to approve 9/24/18 warrant. Vote was unanimous, 6-0.**

**A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to approve 10/5/18 warrant. Vote was unanimous, 6-0.**

9. Consider approval of mtg. minutes: Reg. mtg. 9/10/18 (D&V).

**A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to approve 9/10/18 regular meeting minutes. Vote was unanimous, 6-0.**

10. Mayor's Report.

a. Tobacco Litter Clean Up Summary by Franklin Grande Isle Tobacco Prevention Coalition.

Mayor Smith stated that cigarette butt cleanup took place in and around the City and Town and thanked the volunteers that made it possible. He connected Norm Stanislas, the property manager at the shopping center with Amy Brewer of the Franklin Grand Isle Tobacco Prevention Coalition in hopes that they can work together to post signage outside the post office where many people are smoking. Mr. Stanislas stated that he will advocate for the cleanup because the maintenance is costly. Mr. Spooner noted that sometimes Ms. Brewer has access to grant funding that might fund those signs.

Mayor Smith stated that Mr. Spooner, Mr. Hawkins and himself toured 99 High Street and will discuss next steps for the property. The consensus is that it could be a beautiful building. Mr. Cloud stated that he and Mr. Manahan will work to put together some marketing RFP notice type of materials to see if they can attract someone interested in the redevelopment work and will circle back to council. Mr. Spooner asked if there's an opportunity to add a one car garage with an apartment over it on that property to make it more marketable. Mr. Manahan responded that there is room for a garage and that modification would have to go through permitting. Mr. Cloud stated that the number of units and the configuration can be decided by council. Mr. Spooner stated that if the building is cleaned up, he thinks it could draw a higher level renter. Mr. Cloud stated that it could also be owner occupied with someone that has a need for an ancillary use.

11. Other Business.

Ms. Bessette stated that she received a complaint from a constituent who was mowing their lawn on Spruce Street and was shot at by someone on the other side of the fence by a bb gun. She stated that Hoss' seems to be a gathering place for a lot of problems. She's unsure if the police were contacted. Ms. Bessette stated that it happened on Friday between 3 and 4 pm. Mr. Cloud stated that he will look into it.

Mr. Spooner stated that he is wondering if the school could come and present their budgets, any projects they're working on and what is projected. He stated that the school is really good at educating

the parents of students but the older generation doesn't always know what's going on at the school. Mayor Smith agreed that it would be a good idea.

Ms. Laddison stated that she went to the Glow Run on Saturday and was a great event put on by the Recreation Department. She also thought it was very neat that the Soul Mates production crew was in the City shooting a movie. Mayor Smith stated that he will ask Liz Gamache how the production impacted the community between catering and hotels. Ms. Laddison added that the production crew also made a donation to the Jim Bashaw Fund.

Mr. McCarthy stated that he met a couple who was looking for history on the City Hall building and thought it would be great to have a one page document that would allow people who are interested in what has been done to the building to find out more about it. Mr. McCarthy stated that there are a lot of people interested in the historic preservation. Mr. Pelkey stated that there are a lot of historic buildings on Church Street and thought it would be a good idea to have a booklet on all of the historic buildings in the City.

Mayor Smith stated that he met some bicyclists from California who were staying at the hotel and thought the City was one of the nicest communities they've visited. He thought it would be a good idea to have a sign in book in City Hall.

Mr. Spooner stated that the asphalt curbs in front of Tim's house do not look good. Mr. Cloud did not disagree and stated that the larger conversation is that as we get into the final third of the existing bond, council's priorities need to be established. He stated that there will be a shortfall but doesn't have it quantified yet. He's not sure staff is ready to make that decision until we get through year three. Throughout the project, the City has gone above and beyond and is why it's been such a successful project but is also why there will be a shortfall on the back end.

Mayor Smith stated that he is hoping to have a quick agenda in November and then move upstairs to do a goal setting session. Mr. Pelkey stated that perhaps council could send goals that they have in mind and send them to the Mayor beforehand.

12. Adjourn.

**A motion was made by Alderman McCarthy; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 pm. Vote was unanimous, 6-0.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristen Smith

Community Relations Coordinator