

**St. Albans City Council
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, January 29, 2018
City Hall, Council Chambers**

A special meeting of the St. Albans City Council was held on Monday, January 29, 2018, at 6:30 pm in the City Hall Council Chambers.

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

Council Absent: Alderman Mike McCarthy.

Staff Present: Dominic Cloud, City Manager and Gary Taylor, Police Chief.

Visitors: See attached sign-in sheet.

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance, Mayor Gamache.

Mayor Gamache called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and led the pledge of allegiance.

Mayor Gamache proposed amending agenda item # 4 to also include a resolution certificate and a declaration of intent which is part of the process required regarding indebtedness.

A motion was made by Alderman Pelkey; seconded by Alderman Spooner to amend agenda item # 4 to include a resolution certificate and a declaration of intent to reimburse expenditures through proceeds of indebtedness. Vote was unanimous, 6-0.

2. Public Comment.

No public comment was discussed.

3. Overview of Warning and Introduction of TIF Ballot Item, City Manager and Police Chief.

Mr. Cloud presented the Town Meeting Day Warning and explained that Article 1 is to elect a Mayor for a term of two years, a City Clerk and Treasurer for a term of two years, a City Councilor to represent Ward Five for a term of three years, a City Councilor to represent Ward Six for a term of three years, two Trustees for the St. Albans Free Library for a term of three years each and any other officer or officers required by law to be elected.

Article 2 includes the City Budget that Council voted to adopt several weeks ago totaling \$8.6 million with an estimated tax rate of \$0.90.

Mr. Cloud explained that Article 3 is for a \$20 million redevelopment project across the street. It is a public/private partnership and is a trifecta for the City. It addresses a long term need for a new public safety facility for the police department, creates new economic development opportunities with grand list growth in the downtown and addresses some critical housing needs in the downtown as well. Mr. Cloud explained that the proposal would include the purchase of the existing CCV building by NEDDE Real Estate who would be the private partner on the project. NEDDE would lease the existing CCV building to the police department which is a remarkably good fit to be repurposed as a police station. The lease is likely to be a 10 or 15 year lease with an option to purchase it at the end. That creates the opportunity for CCV to come downtown and an opportunity to create a three story mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented retail and commercial building of approximately 24,500 square feet. It would be located on City-owned land across from City Hall on North Main Street, wrapping around Congress Street and extending up to Maiden Lane. The top floor would be occupied by Northwestern Medical

Center and the second floor would be occupied by CCV. On the ground floor, there would be four 1,000 square foot neighborhood scale storefronts for small local businesses priced to fit in the St. Albans retail market. This momentum would make it possible to address some of the housing issues on the back of the lot. Currently, 20 units of low income housing exist which have housing conditions that could be improved under this project. The proposal would include acquisition of that property and the City would work with a developer such as Champlain Housing Trust to replace those 20 units with another 20 units to serve the same resident population under the same income requirements. On the remainder of the lot, the City would construct 20 market rate units using the balance of the land and would allow parking to be located underneath the units, creating more onsite parking for patrons of the office space.

Mr. Cloud stated that this project can be accomplished with up to \$2.5 million in Tax Incremental Financing. The question on the ballot to the voters reads, "Shall the voters authorize the City to use Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) and issue general obligations bonds in an amount not to exceed \$2.5 million for the purpose of land acquisition, brownfield remediation, construction of a parking facility and related betterments, professional services and related costs, reimbursement of project costs, and public street, sidewalk, water and wastewater improvements on properties located at the confluence of Main Street, Congress Street and Maiden Lane?"

Chief Taylor stated that he is very pleased with this selection and believes it is a good fit. The department has outgrown the 3,800 square feet of the current facility. He explained that it is very difficult to recruit in the present environment across the State of Vermont. Chief Taylor stated that the proposed building will meet the needs of the department and will be a respectable facility.

Mr. Spooner asked Mr. Cloud how much the City pays now for the current facility. Mr. Cloud responded that the City doesn't pay anything. Mr. Spooner asked if the Tax Incremental generated would offset the cost of the lease of the building. Mr. Cloud responded that the cost of the City moving into the lease of the Public Safety facility is projected to be about \$280,000 a year. Ms. Monroe noted the potential lease-to-buy purchase arrangement and asked Mr. Cloud if there would be any credit for the money already paid as part of the lease. Mr. Cloud responded that it's yet to be negotiated but typically is a right to buy at a percentage of the fair market value. At this point, it is not structured to be a rent-to-own but is structured to be a long term lease.

Ms. Krupp asked Mr. Cloud if the Fire Department would be located at this proposed facility as well. Mr. Cloud responded that the full-time personnel of the Fire Department will be relocated with the Police. At this point, there isn't a plan to move the fire apparatus but there is plenty of potential at the existing CCV building to build out for the Fire Department.

Ms. Laddison asked if a public hearing would be taking place in the future. Mr. Cloud responded that the public hearing is embedded in the warning and will take place on February 26, 2018 at 6:30 pm. Mr. Cloud added that staff has been working with Champlain Housing Trust to craft a letter to the residents of Maiden Lane so they don't read about it for the first time in the newspaper.

4. Consider a Motion to Approve Town Meeting Day Warning (D&V).
A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to approve Town Meeting Day warning and to include Resolution Certificate and Declaration of Intent. Vote was unanimous, 6-0.
5. Other Business.
Mr. Pelkey noted the sight line issues coming out of the parking lot at the courthouse on Lake Street due to greenery.
6. Executive Session to discuss personnel matters.

- a. Consider a finding that premature disclosure of personnel matters could compromise the City or person involved (D&V).
A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderwoman Bessette to find that premature disclosure of personnel matters could compromise the City or person involved. Vote was unanimous, 6-0.
- b. Consider a motion to enter Executive Session for purpose of discussing personnel matters where premature disclosure could compromise the City or person involved (D&V).
A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to enter Executive Session at 6:49 pm for purpose of discussing personnel matters where premature disclosure could compromise the City or person involved. Vote was unanimous, 6-0.

7. Adjourn.

A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to adjourn meeting at 7:38 pm. Vote was unanimous, 6-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristen Smith
Community Relations Coordinator

Approved by Council