

**BENNINGTON SELECT BOARD MEETING
BENNINGTON FIRE FACILITY
130 RIVER STREET
BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201**

MONDAY, MAY 23, 2016

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom Jacobs – Chair; Michael Keane-Vice Chair; Jim Carroll; Donald Campbell; Jeanne Conner; Jeannie Jenkins; Justin Corcoran

Absent: None

ALSO PRESENT: Stuart Hurd, Town Manager; Dan Monks, Zoning Administrator & Assistant Town Manager; Michael Harrington, Economic & Community Development Director; Linda E. Bermudez – Secretary; (2) Citizens

At 6:00 P.M., **Tom Jacobs** called the meeting to order.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. CONSENT AGENDA (A-B)

A) Minutes – May 09, 2016

B) Warrants

There were no questions.

MOTION: Michael Keane motioned and Jim Carroll seconded to accept and approve the minutes of May 09, 2016 as well as the warrant as submitted. Motion passed unanimously (*Justin Corcoran abstained from the May 09, 2016 Vote ONLY*)

3. CITIZENS

No Citizens stepped forward this evening.

4. SAFFORD MILLS INN & CAFE

John and Lisa Redding stepped forward and introduced themselves as the owners of the Safford Mills Inn & Café. They announced their purchase of the building next door formerly known as Peppermill's/Vermont Steakhouse. Business has grown for them over the last three years so much at their current location; they have run out of space.

The existing Safford Mills Inn & Café will still be functioning however, only for the on-site guests staying there and/or special events/parties. The new additional location for the public shall have an expanded menu, expanded outdoor space and light entertainment. Renovations will be mostly superficial/cosmetic. The actual bar has a lot of history and therefore will only be refinished.

Tom Jacobs asked if they had received good support from the Town and the Management Staff there. Mr. Redding stated he has received great support from the Town and the staff. They have made this a relatively easy process.

Jeanne Conner congratulated them and asked if they would consider being a mentor. Mr. Redding stated they are always open to helping others. If the Town does well then we all do well. Ms. Conner also thanked Mr. & Mrs. Redding for their generosity; always participating and donating to raffles etc.

Michael Keane asked how they market outside of Bennington. Mr. Redding stated he uses mostly Facebook for advertising and an international reservation web-based program.

Jim Carroll congratulated the Reddings. Tom Jacobs stated that the vitality of a town is not always based in the large employers; it is often the smaller businesses that thrive.

Tom Jacobs then asked if they have decided on a name for the new/expanded location. Mr. Redding stated they have decided on "Miller's Toll". He then gave the history of Samuel Safford, his multiple mills owned in Bennington and what a "miller" and their toll was.

Mr. Jacobs thanked them for coming this evening and wished them luck moving forward.

5. APPLGATE LOAN DEFERRAL DISCUSSION

The Manager reviewed the history of the deferral loan process for Applegate Housing. Matt Moore, representative, stepped forward to answer any questions. The Manager continued by stating Applegate Housing is financed by three entities: Town of Bennington at a 20-year deferral, VHCB at a 30-year deferral and VHFA (Federal) at a 40-year deferral. Applegate Housing would prefer all three organizations to agree on a 30-year deferral plan. However, the Federal government sits firm on a 40-year deferral plan. Therefore, they are requesting Town of Bennington change to a 40-year deferral plan on their loans.

Discussion continued by stating the Town is not effected in any way by this new deferral term. We did not expect to receive any money and it is a great way to cooperate with affordable housing and the community's needs. Tom Jacobs clarified by stating there is no "new money" involved and does not change's the Town's priority. This is simply extending existing deferred loans to meet with the other financier's terms.

Jim Carroll asked to ensure local contractors have an opportunity to bid on any work to be done within the scope of work proposed (efficiency upgrades). Mr. Moore stated he could not guarantee the work would be *granted* to local contractors due to Federal regulations (for Federal Grant money) but he will advertise locally etc to receive bids.

Mr. Carroll and Michael Keane asked if they could see which local contractors actually bid and the list of sub-contractors confirmed before signing contracts.

Motion: Michael Keane moved and Jim Carroll seconded to approve the Applegate Loan Modification and Extension as presented. Motion passed unanimously

6. FINANCIAL INCENTIVES DISCUSSION - ADOPTION

Michael Harrington stepped forward. He noted all edits requested have been made. Some were then reviewed.

Michael Keane stated he thought these were three great tools. He asked about tracking the progress of work that each loan is granted for. Mr. Harrington stated those are already in place in the general guidelines for the loan program as a whole. Mr. Keane also asked if there had been any inquiries yet. Mr. Harrington stated he has already received 5-7 inquiries as to when these will be finalized and available for application.

Jim Carroll asked if there was a maximum amount allowed. Mr. Harrington stated that was a Board decision. It can be on a case-by-case basis, or the board may set a cap.

Tom Jacobs stated he would prefer to keep this on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Harrington and Mr. Carroll reviewed different ways to let the public know these are now available. Mr. Carroll suggested that tenants also be notified, not just the property owners.

Jeanne Conner asked if Mr. Harrington has ever declined an applicant. He stated he has. These are all high-risk loans and each is treated respectfully, however only those with a chance of success are brought to the Select Board.

Motion: Michael Keane moved and Donald Campbell seconded to approve the amendment to the Town's Loan program.

Discussion:

Jeanne Conner asked if property owners could do the work themselves. Mr. Harrington stated they could with a few requirements. They must be certified and good documentation of all supplies, hours of labor etc must be kept and submitted.

Tom Jacobs requested Mr. Harrington report on a quarterly basis the effectiveness of these new incentives.

AMENDED Motion: Michael Keane moved and Jim Carroll seconded to adopt the Supplemental Incentives Programs amendment to the Town's Loan Program.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously

7. MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager stated the Tax Sale date has been set for June 23, 2016. There are currently (26) properties on the list to be sold for delinquent taxes and/or delinquent water/sewer. The number of properties will likely be reduced by the actual date of auction. Tom Jacobs asked if the Select Board could have a copy of that list. The Manager stated he would provide copies for them.

The PFOA situation has begun to quiet down. The State is still testing in the expanded areas however. Blood draws continue and are scheduled for June 24th & 28th, 2016. The two engineering firms working with the Bennington and North Bennington water systems expect to have preliminary plans for water line extensions at the end of the month. We are excited about the conclusion of the designs so that we can all move forward.

The Manager continued by stating the Federal EPA has now set a new limit for PFOA's. Previously they set the limit of 400 but have now issued a new limit of 70. This does not change how we look at this project however it is very interesting how much they have lowered limit.

The VT DEC has set a date to speak with Bennington for June 27, 2016. They hope to have further information by then regarding where the plume is and if it is changing. We are getting close to the end of this and hopefully St. Gobain remains cooperative and positive.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Jim Carroll wanted to clear up some chatter on Facebook. The Town is not coming after people's dandelions. The "Property Maintenance Ordinance" is not designed for those who make good faith efforts. This is only for those derelict properties making no efforts.

Jeanne Conner announced a music program to be held at the Mount Anthony Union High School track on June 3, 2016 at 7:00pm. There will be 475 voices from third to twelfth grade singing about pride in themselves and who they are.

Tom Jacobs asked when the crosswalks would be painted in town. The Manager stated we need several consecutive nights with temperatures above 45-50 degrees. It has not been warm enough lately; however it should be shortly. In the meantime the Highway crews have been digging culverts and preparing for the scheduled and additional paving projects allowed.

Michael Keane thanked and congratulated the Redding's on both their existing business and their soon to be expanded portion. He also congratulated Mr. & Mrs. Greenawalt on the opening of Holy Cow Yogurt Shop on Main Street. Mr. Keane also reminded the public that Mayfest is this coming Saturday on Main Street from 10am-5pm.

Lastly Mr. Keane mentioned a presentation he attended at Bennington College's CAPP. He encouraged all citizens to look into the "Vermont Futures Project". There is more information available at vtfuturesproject.org. It is regarding economic development for Vermont and other areas nearby.

Tom Jacobs asked the Manager about the Select Board Orientation presentation. The Manager stated available dates are still being processed. He still expects it to take place in June 2016. He will reach out to surrounding communities once a date has been finalized.

Donald Campbell asked how the budget was looking. The Manager stated this year's budget would end in the black. Most departments are below budget.

Tom Jacobs noted there was no need for Executive Session

Motion: Jim Carroll moved and Michael Keane seconded to close this evening's meeting. Motion passed unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

Linda E. Bermudez
Secretary