

**BENNINGTON SELECT BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING – WASTEWATER BOND
BENNINGTON FIRE FACILITY
130 RIVER STREET
BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201**

MONDAY, OCTOBER 02, 2017

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom Jacobs-Chair; Donald Campbell-Vice Chair; Jim Carroll; Jeanne Conner; Jeannie Jenkins

Absent: Chad Gordon; Carson Thurber;

ALSO PRESENT: Stuart Hurd, Town Manager; Dan Monks, Zoning Administrator & Assistant Town Manager; RJ Joly, DPW Director; Ron Bull, Wastewater Chief Operator; Jon D'Amour, Assistant Chief Operator; Gail Tiffany, Wastewater Lab Director; Linda E. Bermudez – Secretary; (5) Citizens

At 6:00 P.M., **Tom Jacobs** called the meeting to order. He asked all present to stand in a moment of silence in recognition of the recent tragedy in Las Vegas.

1. WASTEWATER BOND – SECOND HEARING

Tom Jacobs noted this was the second of two required hearings for the Wastewater (Sewer) Bond Vote. This is the only item on this evening's agenda. Voting Day is Tuesday October 10th, 2017.

Wayne Elliot, Principal Engineer of Aldrich and Elliot stepped forward to present. He briefly reviewed the history of the plant citing parts of the plant were constructed in the 1960's; while the rest was built in 1985. In 2007 the State of Vermont required its next "20-year Engineering Review", which is required for the Discharge Permit and is where this process began.

Mr. Elliot noted that the 30-year old equipment has held together quite well thanks to good maintenance practices. Most equipment lasts only 20 years. However, if the equipment is not replaced, the plant will continue to struggle. Included in the upgrades will be both energy efficiency and operational efficiency for plant.

The Principal Engineer continued by breaking down the details of each area to be upgraded. He noted there would be two separate contracts covering the necessary upgrades. One will cover the RBC (Rotating Biological Contactors) and the other the general Wastewater Treatment Facility. The RBC's will be self-managed and self-installed (by Town Staff).

Sam Restino (resident) asked how long the electrical upgrades would last. Mr. Elliot stated approximately 30-years.

Tom Jacobs asked what were the minimum amount of RBC's needed to be run. Mr. Elliot stated we must keep 24 out of the 32 running at any one time.

Mary Morrissey asked why this meeting was not being televised. Mr. Jacobs stated CAT-TV was invited. We thought they would be here. Wayne Elliot suggested re-running the last Select Board meeting's presentation as this is just a review of this same information.

Mr. Elliot continued by reviewing the cost breakdown of the project. He also noted comparable size plants and the cost of their recent upgrades. For example, South Burlington's upgraded approximately four years ago at a cost of \$25-30 Million; Brattleboro's upgrade was 2-3 years ago at a cost of \$25-30 Million; Essex upgraded in 2014 at a cost of \$15 Million and St. Alban's is upcoming at an expected cost of \$18 Million.

Mary Morrissey asked if those were fully completed projects. The Town will have more work to be done. The Manager noted the original cost for Bennington's was \$17 Million for the whole project, however the Select Board asked to narrow down to the most necessary pieces. Those items not "most necessary" for bonding will be done through future budgets and reserve monies.

Wayne Elliot stated the Bennington Wastewater upgrade is on the State's Priority List. We qualify for the State Loan Program for funding at a low interest rate (2%). The first repayment for the State Revolving Loan would normally be two years after substantial completion. However, the State is currently in discussion to lowering that to one-year. If they do change the repayment date, the earliest payment would be due Spring/Summer 2020 (FY'2021). Again Mr. Elliot noted they are still only in discussions. No decision has been made yet. At the time of repayment, the single-family rate would need to increase \$37.83 per quarter.

Tom Jacobs asked about the current "Issuance of Discontinuance". The Manager stated if we fail to comply with the schedule of Bond Vote and construction we will be fined, and still need to complete the upgrades.

Jeanne Conner asked about training for the new equipment etc. Mr. Elliot stated this is included in the installation costs.

Charlie Gingo, resident, asked about warranties. Mr. Elliot stated equipment warranties on average are 12 months.

Jackie Kelly, resident, asked if the Town is budgeting for the next catastrophe. The Manager stated it took the Auditors a long time to get the concept of budgeting for depreciation through to the Select Boards. At that time the Boards were more concerned with keeping costs down. We have now begun to do so and will continue moving forward.


Donald Campbell suggested putting a link on the Town's website to the slide show this evening and the previous presentation.

Jeannie Jenkins stated she is disappointed that the Bennington Banner was not present this evening. The Manager did note they presented an editorial in a recent paper in support of the bond vote. Tom Jacobs suggested additional Letters to the Editor regarding this project and vote. We will end up paying more if we have to delay.

Tom Jacobs thanked Wayne Elliot for the presentation and review. There was no other business this evening

Motion: **Jeanne Conner moved and Jim Carroll seconded a motion to close the meeting. Motion passed** *(Chad Gordon & Carson Thurber absent)*

Respectfully submitted,


Linda E. Bermudez
Secretary