

1 **BENNINGTON SELECT BOARD MEETING**

2 **BENNINGTON FIRE FACILITY**

3 **130 RIVER STREET**

4 **BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201**

5 **OCTOBER 9, 2017**

6 **MINUTES**

7 **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Thomas Jacobs-Chair; Donald Campbell-Vice Chair; Jim Carroll; Jeanne Conner;
8 Chad Gordon; Jeannie Jenkins and Carson Thurber.

9 **BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** None.

10 **ALSO PRESENT:** Stuart Hurd-Town Manager; Dan Monks-Zoning Administrator and Assistant Town Manager;
11 Forest Weyen-Bennington Rescue Squad Executive Director; Brian Peat-Bennington Rescue Squad Board of
12 Directors Chair; Jeff Grimshaw; Chris Cipperly; 4 citizens; Mike Cutler-CAT-TV and Nancy H. Lively-Secretary.

13 At 6:00 pm, Chairman Thomas Jacobs called the meeting to order.

14 **1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

15 Recited by all present.

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17 **2. CONSENT AGENDA**

18 **A. MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 25, 2017 AND OCTOBER 2, 2017**

19 **B. WARRANTS**

20 *Donald Campbell moved and Jeanne Conner seconded to accept the Consent Agenda as submitted. The*
21 *motion carried with Carson Thurber and Chad Gordon abstaining on the Minutes of October 2, 2017.*

22 **3. CITIZENS**

23 Jeff Grimshaw introduced Chris Cipperly, Assistant General Manager and Defensive Coordinator of the
24 NEFL Champion Southern Vermont Storm football team. Mr. Grimshaw noted that the Storm is the largest
25 NEFL team in the country and have had issues with facilities where they could play. The championship was
26 won at the middle school field with 600 in attendance and over 2,500 watching on television, and he feels that
27 they have earned the right to play in “the Big House” which is Spinelli Field. Teams travel from all over New
28 England and utilize the lodging and restaurants in town. They had been in Manchester for a time but people
29 wanted the team back in Bennington.

30 Mr. Cipperly added that the team has been in existence since 2005. There are 13 teams in the
31 conference, 48 in the league, and this is their first championship.

32 Mr. Gordon stated that the MAU School Board has been approached but Spinelli Field, a grass field, is
33 overused and torn up. The Town needs a turf field which will hold up better than a grass field.

34 **4. RESCUE SQUAD PRESENTATION**

35 Forest Weyen, Executive Director of the Bennington Rescue Squad, did the following Bennington
36 Rescue 2017 Mid-Year Update presentation to the Board as promised during the meetings of January 2017:

- 37 • The Bennington Rescue Squad (BRS) is the only Critical Care Licensed Agency in Southwest Vermont.
- 38 • The BRS received the 2017 Mission Lifeline Gold Plus Award making them Vermont's First Gold Plus
- 39 Agency.
- 40 • The BRS received 5,736 calls for service in 2016 which is down a little from 2015 due to our work in the
- 41 community to identify a person's needs so they don't have to call us. Financially, we are "shooting
- 42 ourselves in the foot but it is the right thing to do for the patient". For example, we have a Falls
- 43 Reduction Program team that help patients identify things in their home that would cause them to fall.
- 44 "The goal is to have the right care for the right patient at the right time."
- 45 • 64% of our calls are medical; 26% trauma; 8% unknown; and 2% are standbys and special events.
- 46 • The EMS reimbursement system only pays if a patient is transported. 29% of our calls do not result in
- 47 transport.
- 48 • Expense reductions are as follows: 1. Reduced staffing to minimal levels. We do not staff on other
- 49 agency days based on the hospital rotation system. 2. Insurance shopping for reduced premiums on all
- 50 insurances and a decreased workers compensation expense. 3. Reduced benefits, such as the
- 51 dental/vision benefit. 4. Renegotiated contracts with vendors. The dollar amount saved for these
- 52 reductions will be provided at budget time.
- 53 • Increasing revenue as follows: 1. Internal billing services, such as difficult/delinquent accounts and
- 54 denials and appeal processes are addressed weekly and processes for estates, deceased patients,
- 55 collections, and hardship were established. 2. External billing services by providing billing services for
- 56 other EMS agencies. 3. Fundraising, such as our annual letter campaign which raised \$27,000+ last
- 57 year; RescueFest which is also for community involvement; and grants and donations. 4. Other, such
- 58 as increased CPR and EMS education courses.
- 59 • All products on the ambulances are kept current, ready to go, and we plan with other emergency
- 60 services within the town for a disaster emergency. We also have a mass casualty trailer than can
- 61 handle 30 to 50 casualties at a time depending on the severity.
- 62 • Some surrounding towns are not paying for advanced life support (ALS) services and we cannot bill the
- 63 patient's insurance so we have sent notices to surrounding agencies in Vermont and New York to
- 64 request contractual agreements for ALS services. If there is no agreement, bills will be sent to the
- 65 transporting agency, and if not paid, will be sent directly to the towns. We do have some contracts in
- 66 place already.
- 67 • We try to send the appropriate unit for the appropriate call, however, due to timing and crew
- 68 utilization, sometimes a paramedic ambulance will go to a call where only the basic life support (BLS)
- 69 service is necessary, and vice versa. This also explains why you may see two ambulances at one call at
- 70 the same time.
- 71 • A comparison of BRS to Rutland Regional, Rescue Inc. in Brattleboro and Manchester Rescue was
- 72 shared with the Board.
- 73 • Ambulances are not automatically rolled out for all fire calls. The fire department calls if an ambulance
- 74 is needed.
- 75 • If an ambulance is not carrying a patient, it is ready to respond even if it's just coming back from a
- 76 transport.
- 77 • EMS charges are based on three components - 1. Type of care provided, i.e., emergency or non-
- 78 emergency; 2. Level of care provided, i.e., ALS or BLS; and 3. Mileage - number of loaded miles
- 79 travelled - with the rates being different for different mile ranges.
- 80 • There is no charge if the call results in a cancellation or if the patient refuses transport.
- 81 • We are only paid for allowed expenses regardless of how much you bill, and 'Medical Necessity' is
- 82 getting harder to justify, even on emergencies.
- 83 • The hospital uses an ambulance rotation of 4 EMS services to assign transfers, so this means that there
- 84 are 2 days that the BRS does not get any transfers. However, the patient has the choice of which EMS

85 provider they want, and they should request Bennington Rescue. Transfers help us to fill time and can
86 help to lower our need for additional funds.

- 87 • The medical director position was currently filled but had been budgeted for two years without finding
88 the right candidate. It is only an 8 hour/month job.
- 89 • We are not asking for an increase in FY2018 from the Town of Bennington. We are requesting the
90 same as last year, \$207,459, or \$12.13/capita, and would like to become a budget line item. We are
91 also asking for the same \$12.13/capita amount for Shaftsbury and Woodford, as well. The per capita
92 rate in Upper Valley was \$37.00/person in FY17 and they're asking for \$42.00/person in FY18, and
93 Newport is currently \$24.00/person and are asking for over \$30.00/person.
- 94 • The BRS FY18 budget will be ready at the end of November or early December 2017.
- 95 • Looking ahead - nationally, there is "a big push" for the work in the community to help keep potential
96 patients out of the hospitals, for EMS specialization, regionalization and merging of services.
- 97 • There will be a full time EMT class starting in January 2018 for 7 weeks. Pay rate is ~\$14.00/hour.
- 98 • All BRS Board Meetings are open to the public and held at the station on the 3rd Wednesday of the
99 month at 6:00pm.
- 100 • Mr. Peat extended kudos to the BRS Board and Mr. Weyen. "We have a great board and a great
101 administrator."

102 **5. TAX SALE PROPERTY - SALE APPROVAL**

103 *Carson Thurber moved and Donald Campbell seconded to approve the tax sale of 186 South Branch*
104 *Street to Dan Cutler in the amount of \$21,500.00. The motion carried unanimously.*
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106 **6. LIBRARY BOARD LIAISON APPOINTMENT**

107 It was the consensus of the Board that Jeanne Conner serve as the Library Board Liaison.
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109 **7. MANAGER'S REPORT**

110 Mr. Hurd reminded everyone of the Sewer Bond vote tomorrow, October 10, 2017, at the Bennington
111 Fire Facility.
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113 Mr. Hurd reported that PFOA related construction may begin as early as next week. Contractors are on
114 site with construction trailers and signs are going up soon. The planned soil spoils site has developed
115 opposition from neighbors and a second site may be developed to mitigate the amount of spoils being placed
116 in the various neighborhoods. The idea is to keep the spoils close to where they came from to reduce
117 transportation impacts and costs. Although these soils contain PFOA, the numbers are below the minimum
118 safe levels as determined by the State.

119 Mr. Carroll asked the effect of PFOA on vegetables, and Mr. Hurd said that there was some concern
120 that has since been mitigated about root crops that grow in the soil with negligible concern about low levels of
121 PFOA for the vegetables that grow above the soil. "Remember, we all already have low levels of PFOA in our
122 systems."

123 **8. OTHER BUSINESS**

124 Ms. Conner clarified a message from the BCIC when they said they "took possession" of some acreage
125 that that meant they now owned it, and Mr. Hurd agreed.

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Mr. Jacobs reminded everyone to vote "YES" tomorrow for the sewer bond.

Mr. Campbell encouraged everyone to attend Octoberfest on Saturday, October 14th .

Ms. Jenkins noted that the Green Mountain Express route signs will be going up soon.

At 7:12 pm, Donald Campbell moved and Jim Carroll seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy H. Lively
Secretary