

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

MONDAY, AUGUST 11, 2014

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Greg Van Houten- Chair; Sharyn Brush-Vice Chair; Jim Carroll; Justin Corcoran; John McFadden; Michael Keane; Tom Jacobs

Absent: None

ALSO PRESENT: Stuart Hurd, Town Manager; Dan Monks, Zoning Administrator & Assistant Town Manager; Mike Harrington, Economic & Community Development Director; John Broderick, Shires Housing; Joanne Erenhouse, Chamber of Commerce; Mary Morrissey; Keith Witcomb - Bennington Banner; Linda E. Bermudez – Secretary; (23) Citizens.

1. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 6:00 P.M., **Greg Van Houten** called the meeting to order.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Greg Van Houten, recited by all.

3. MINUTES – JULY 28, 2014

There were no corrections for the minutes of July 28, 2014

Motion: Sharyn Brush motioned and Michael Keane seconded to approve the Minutes of June 28, 2014 as submitted. Motion passed unanimously

4. WARRANTS

The next warrants of FY' 14-15 were reviewed. Tom Jacobs questioned repairs to a Police Department vehicle. He asked that the Board be notified prior to seeing repair payments on the warrant whenever an employee is involved in an accident that damages Town equipment.

John McFadden and the Town Manager discussed ways to follow the budget alongside the warrant payments. The Manager reminded Mr. McFadden that a monthly report is given to the Board to show where the budget is running. Mr. McFadden expressed more concern for

items that were not originally accounted for / unexpected costs. The Manager stated he would work with his staff to see if there is an efficient way to tag those in a report. There were no further questions. Warrants were then circulated for signatures.

5. CITIZENS

Joanne Erenhouse, Chamber of Commerce reminded everyone that this weekend is Bennington Battle Day Weekend. It is the 50th Anniversary of the Bennington Battle Day Parade and invited all to come. Townwide there will be many activities all weekend beginning on Friday and include fireworks Saturday night at Willow Park.

Ms. Erenhouse then reminded everyone that the Garlic Fest is August 30th & 31st, 2014 at the Camelot Village property on West Road.

Robert Reynolds discussed the Water Bond re-vote. He expressed concern after reviewing all the minutes that there was no motion. Mr. Reynolds read a letter from the Manager to Mr. Reynolds explaining the process. He continued by asking a series of questions regarding a motion and asked that the Manager respond in the Banner for all to see.

Mary Garresh stepped forward to speak on the Shires Housing project. She has been out of town during the discussions. Ms. Garresh stated she was crushed to find the hatred and stigma attached to this issue. She asked that Vermonters continue to uphold leadership.

Justin Corcoran asked that the board discuss how they would move forward with the process of the vote for the grant. He would like for all sides to be able to move on. Mr. Corcoran added that if the Board agreed by consensus tonight it could be added to this evening's agenda as a discussion.

The Board agreed by consensus to add this discussion to the agenda this evening.

Mary Morrissey stated she was confused by the discussion since Shires Housing had removed their application. Ms. Morrissey was reminded that at this time it is only a discussion on how to proceed to a vote. Shires Housing will be resubmitting their application.

Citizen's portion of the agenda continued. Kathy Hoisington wanted to address Mary Garresh's comments about hatred. Those who are against this project are not about hatred.

Christopher Wright began by discussing the appeal to FEMA for further reimbursement. He stated he felt that the Town had plenty of time to appeal and should wait. The Manager noted that denials from FEMA are 100% common. At this point we have been able to go from \$0 for reimbursement to now \$2.2 Million dollars in reimbursement through this appeal process. The Town will continue in order to receive the full amount.

Mr. Wright continued by expressing his concerns again, regarding the proposed solar farm for Barney Road (Route 9).

Jim Gulley stated he was a landlord in Bennington. He feels the proposed Shires Housing project will put him out of business.

Peter Brady, resident of Bennington expressed his concerns regarding the proposed Shires Housing project. He does not feel the Silver Street infrastructure can handle the additional apartments. Mr. Brady urged the Board to speak with Mr. Broderick and encourage him to return to rehabilitation work. He felt the North Branch Street project was different and no one fought that one.

Jeanne Connor introduced herself as a resident of Bennington and a new member of the Shires Housing Board. She stated she was shocked at the reaction from this town and how Mr. Broderick is being treated. Ms. Connor stated that this community should strive for better and conduct civil discussions when on opposing sides. She also encouraged those who support the

project to step forward and speak. Many are intimidated by the “angry mob” influence. The meetings have seemed very one-sided because of this.

6. KOCHER DRIVE STREETSCAPE

Dan Monks provided an update on the Kocher Drive streetscape. He reviewed the project up till this point. Mr. Monks noted that the State of Vermont has now granted an additional \$150,000 to close the gap in the budget for this project. A 20% match will still be required by the Town of Bennington.

Mr. Monks stated that all that is required of the Board this evening is approval to move forward into the design phase (conceptual plan). No money at this time is required.

Motion: Justin Corcoran motioned and Michael Keane seconded to grant approval to move into the Design Phase (Conceptual Plan) for the Kocher Drive Streetscape. Motion passed unanimously

****Additional Agenda item: SHIRES HOUSING GRANT PROCESS**

At this time the Board proceeded with a discussion regarding how to move forward with the process of voting on the Shires Housing grant.

The Board agreed a special meeting (not at a regularly scheduled Select Board meeting) should be held to allow both sides to speak before the vote. The very next regularly scheduled meeting could then hold the vote. Several dates were discussed. Monday September 15th, 2014 was decided to be the *tentative* date as long as the Firehouse Facility was available. The vote therefore would be placed on the agenda for the regularly scheduled Select Board meeting to be held on September 22nd, 2014. This shall be confirmed with availability.

7. MANAGEMENT EVALUATION POLICY

The next draft of the policy was discussed. Tom Jacobs discussed more flexibility with the Chair of the Board. The option/addition of a “sub-committee” was discussed. Setting a particular time of year for the annual review was also discussed. Several options were debated including just before budget meetings in January and the end of the fiscal year.

The idea of an evaluation policy verses the actual evaluation process was then discussed. To further determine guidelines for the actual evaluation process a sub-committee was determined to be necessary. Three Board members volunteered to serve on this sub-committee. They are John McFadden, Michael Keane and Sharyn Brush.

Tom Jacobs noted he would like to have the adoption of the Evaluation Policy on the next Select Board agenda.

8. APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Motion: Michael Keane motioned to appoint Scott Fox to the Bennington Housing Authority Board of Commissions. Sharyn Brush seconds the motion. Motion passed unanimously

9. PROCLAMATION – CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Sharyn Brush read the proclamation. It then was circulated for signatures

10. MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager stated that every (5) years a new license is required for the operations of a Salvage Yard. Josh Greene on Chapel Road is applying for his new license. He complies with all the rules and regulations as required by the State of Vermont and the Town. Once the Board signs this document, Mr. Greene will pay the required fee and the application shall be sent to the State. The application was then circulated for signatures.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

John McFadden asked how the Manager was progressing with the data collection he requested. The Manager stated he was still moving forward with the collection. There is a lot of data to compose.

Jim Carroll asked about the status of Safford Street for the Parade on Sunday. The Manager stated that full efforts are being given to have Safford Street accessible by Friday. Curbing should be complete, however the sidewalks will not be poured until after Battle day weekend.

Sharyn Brush and Michael Keane both encouraged all to attend the festivities this weekend and to support the parade on Sunday.

Tom Jacobs asked about the project on River Road. The Manager stated that the “super saturation” problem was found to be much deeper than originally thought. The repairs are a much bigger project and will now need to be bid out to an appropriate contractor. Therefore, barriers will need to remain in place.

Greg Van Houten reminded the public that the Town Offices would be closed on Friday in observance of the Bennington Battle day holiday. He thanked the Fire Departments and all the volunteers who work hard on the weekend events.

Motion: Michael Keane motioned to close the meeting. Justin Corcoran seconds the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda E. Bermudez
Secretary