

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

MONDAY, MARCH 09, 2015

MINUTES

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

Absent: John McFadden; Justin Corcoran

ALSO PRESENT: Stuart Hurd, Town Manager; Dan Monks, Zoning Administrator & Assistant Town Manager; Mike Harrington, Economic & Community Development Director; John Broderick, Shires Housing; Keith Whitcomb - Bennington Banner; Linda E. Bermudez – Secretary; (16) Citizens.

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

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

At this time Greg Van Houten introduced each member of the Board, the Town Manager and the Recording Secretary.

Mr. Van Houten also announced construction has begun on the Benmont Avenue Bridge. The Southbound lane of traffic from Northside Drive is now closed for the duration of the project.

Townwide roads are now shifting and heaving due to the weather. Please be careful this will happen over the next several weeks but shall settle out at some point.

Mr. Van Houten also announced that there would be no formal discussion regarding the outcome of the Fluoride advisory vote this evening. Discussion shall be conducted at the next regularly scheduled Select Board meeting.

2. MINUTES – FEBRUARY 23, 2015

There were no corrections for the minutes of February 23, 2015.

Motion: Michael Keane motioned and Sharyn Brush seconded to approve the Minutes of February 23, 2015 as submitted. Motion passed unanimously (*John McFadden; Justin Corcoran absent*)

3. WARRANTS

The next warrants of FY'15 were reviewed. There were no questions. Warrants were then circulated for signatures.

4. CITIZENS

Greg Van Houten announced that at the next Select Board meeting, "Citizens" shall be moved towards the end of the meeting. All presentations would be conducted and then citizens may ask questions based on the actual presentation, not speculation.

Dick Bower then stepped forward. He identified himself as a resident and a participant in the Bennington Oral Health Coalition. A follow-up statement to the board had been written by the Coalition regarding the Fluoride Advisory vote outcome. Mr. Bower read that statement. It included a request for a follow-up conversation with the Select Board on how to move forward with alternate ways to improve the oral health culture in Bennington. They would like to formally be placed on the agenda.

Greg Van Houten stated they will look for placement on the March 23, 2015 agenda.

5. APPLGATE BLOCK GRANT DEFERRAL REQUEST

Michael Harrington stepped forward to present. He noted a memo had been distributed in the Select Board packet this week with all information regarding this request. Applegate has been working on a "Re-investment Plan" over the last several years. This type of deferment request is a regular action in the industry. They have previously requested and were granted (2) 1-year deferments in order to complete the "re-investment plan". They are now ready to move forward and need a more extensive deferment to implement that plan.

Mr. Harrington continued by explaining the benefits to the extensive deferment. It allows equity to be built and remain in the property; it allows for quality affordable housing to remain in the area; and the maintenance of such housing allows the Town to hold leverage for quality housing.

Nancy Owens, President of Housing Vermont (owner/partner of Applegate) stepped forward to also present. She noted her organization is a statewide non-profit organization that operates affordable housing. She thanked the Board for the two previous deferments that allowed them to complete the re-investment plan. She continued by explaining how affordable housing operations work and how they are able to keep them "affordable". Mostly this is due to the deferment grants that allow organizations to use the rent collected to go towards maintenance of these properties and not have to pay down the initial principal investments.

Ms. Owens stated that Applegate Housing currently spends \$75-80,000 per year on heating costs alone. A major component of this re-investment is to implement alternative and innovative heating solutions to reduce these costs.

Michael Keane asked how customary a 30 year deferment request is. Ms. Owens stated it is very customary.

Tom Jacobs asked how old the Applegate complex was. Ms. Owens stated it had been built by a previous developer in 1972. Housing Vermont partnered with another organization and purchased it 17 years ago. The original loan was a 15-year term which was common back then. We have modified it twice bringing us to the 17 years.

Mr. Keane and Ms. Owens discussed how Housing Tax Credits work and the various different banks that participate in such funding and tax credits.

Jim Carroll asked about assurance of local contractors working on this project. Ms. Owens stated that they do not require local contractors to be hired. They certainly post bid requests and advertisements locally so they may participate in the process. It is strongly encouraged to use local contractors when they can but it is not a requirement.

Michael Harrington noted that a sample of a previously modified agreement was included in the Select Board's packet for their review/reference. Applegate (Housing Vermont) submits an Annual Report that includes financials and the annual audit results for our review each year.

Greg Van Houten reminded the board the vote would take place at the next meeting. He asked Mr. Harrington to make sure the two absent Board members receive all information for review. This modification must be signed by the end of the month if we were to allow them to move forward; therefore it is very important that a vote be taken at the next meeting.

6. SHIRES HOUSING VCDP DELIBERATION

Motion: Sharyn Brush motioned to accept the VCDP Implementation Grant on behalf of Shires Housing. Michael Keane seconds the motion.

Discussion:

Jim Carroll noted that over the last (6) months there was a lot of pressure to hold Mr. Broderick to the Shires Housing mission statement. Mr. Carroll admitted he had been a bit rough on Mr. Broderick at the last meeting. When he then asked different Bennington residents about what/how he did, they in turn gave Mr. Carroll a rough time. He will support this project.

Greg Van Houten noted that at the last meeting Mr. McFadden had numerous questions. Mr. Broderick and Mr. McFadden had met several days later to answer all those questions to his assumed satisfaction.

***VOTE:* Motion passed unanimously (John McFadden; Justin Corcoran absent)**

7. BALD MOUNTAIN TRAIL HEAD / PARKING AREA GRANT RESOLUTION

Michael Harrington stepped forward to present the next component of this application. The presented resolution states that the Town would hold the land "in perpetuity" and that the Town would be responsible for the "match funds". Green Mountain Club (GMC) has fully committed to raising the match funds; however the Town must sign that it would be responsible in order for the grant process to continue.

Mr. Harrington also noted that the obtaining the proper easements have not been a problem.

Motion: Tom Jacobs motioned and Michael Keane seconded to approve and sign the resolution as presented tonight regarding the Bald Mountain Trail Head/Parking Area Grant. Motion passed unanimously (John McFadden; Justin Corcoran absent)

The resolution was circulated for signatures

8. DELINQUENT TAX SALE PROPERTIES – REAL ESTATE DECISIONS

The Manager noted there were only (2) bids for the two properties. The Select Board can either accept or reject either bid. If either of the bids were rejected, they may be re-bid at a later date.

209 Maple Street = \$1,000 (by a neighbor)

Maple Street properties in this area are very close together. This neighbor would like to purchase the property and tear down the building to extend his own yard.

207 Silver Street = \$20,000 (area resident)

This would be a rehabilitation project.

Jim Carroll asked if others showed interest. The Manager stated there were a total of (7) bids sent out to those who expressed interest. Only (2) were returned.

Motion: Tom Jacobs motioned and Michael Keane seconded to accept BOTH bids submitted. Motion passed unanimously (*John McFadden; Justin Corcoran absent*)

9. 2015 LIQUOR LICENSE APPLICATIONS

The Manager noted all those presented tonight for signatures are renewals.

10. MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager had no formal report this evening. He noted however, that we are at the end of our salt budget. The storage area is full of salt and there is approximately \$3,000 left in this line item. Overtime Labor however is overspent; not dramatically but it is a combined total of \$7,800. We hope we are nearing the end of the storms.

The Manager also wanted to report that FEMA had received our Final Submission. We are in direct contact with Senator Leahy and Congressman Welch. They are up to date and are scheduling a "face-to-face" meeting with FEMA

11. OTHER BUSINESS

Tom Jacobs wanted to recognize the MAUHS Wrestling "Dynasty" as New England Champions again.

Sharyn Brush also wanted to acknowledge the State Champion Wrestling Team. Ms. Brush also wanted to thank Dan Monks for all of his hard work, due diligence and steadfast perseverance in the FEMA reimbursement process.

Jim Carroll also wanted to acknowledge the MAUH Wrestling Team record as (27) consecutive State Champions, (9) New England Champions – (3) of which have been consecutive. Mr. Carroll also wanted to thank the voters of Bennington for re-electing him.

Greg Van Houten congratulated Donald Campbell on his election to the next Select Board and Jim Carroll on his re-election. He also thanked all the other runners for those positions and the Town Clerk for all the hard work that goes into the election itself.

Mr. Van Houten continued by noting again the Advisory vote outcome shall be discussed at the next Select Board meeting. There are other suggestions on how to follow-thru with better oral health in Bennington. We are looking forward to hearing them.

Mr. Van Houten noted again how the streets are heaving/moving and the snow is melting which can re-freeze and be dangerous. Please be safe.

Greg Van Houten noted there was need for Executive Session.

Motion: Michael Keane motioned to close the meeting and move into Executive Session. Sharyn Brush seconds the motion. Motion passed unanimously (*John McFadden; Justin Corcoran absent*)

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Contract Negotiations

Respectfully submitted,

Linda E. Bermudez
Secretary